#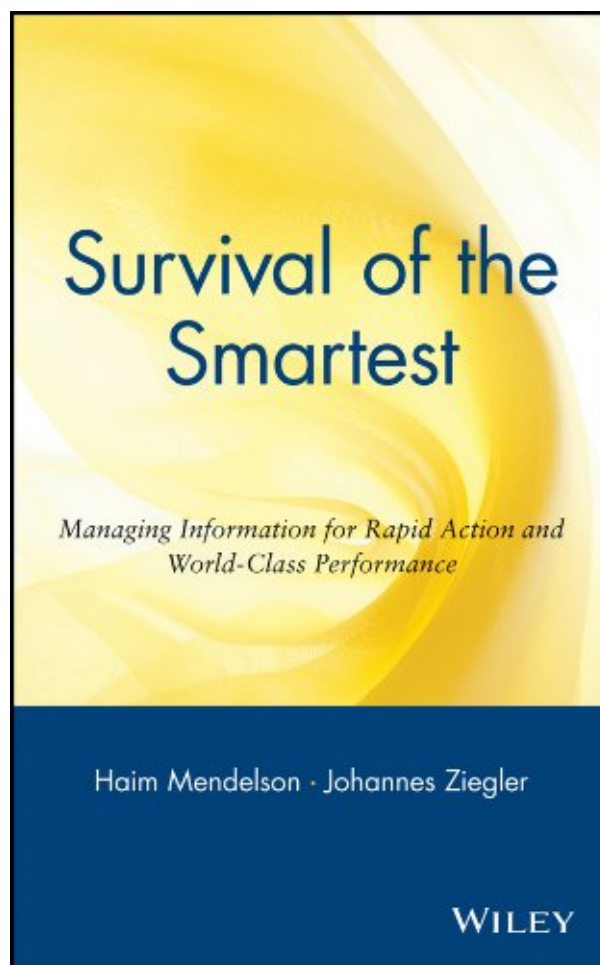 SURVIVAL OF THE SMARTEST: MANAGING INFORMATION FOR RAPID ACTION AND WORLD-CLASS PERFORMANCE BY HAIM MENDELSON, JOHANNES ZIEGLER

Survival of the Smartest

Managing Information for Rapid Action and World-Class Performance

Haim Mendelson · Johannes Ziegler

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Haim Mendelson, PhD, is the James Irwin Miller Professor of Information Systems at the Stanford Business School, leader of the Technology, Organizations, and Markets area at the Stanford Computer Industry Project, co-director of the Stanford Executive Program on Strategic Uses of Information Technology, and a consultant to leading high-tech firms and financial institutions.

Johannes Ziegler, PhD, is the cofounder of Synesis Management Consulting. Synesis helps senior executives in leading high-tech companies, including Hewlett-Packard, Cisco, 3Com, and Intuit, to measure and improve their Organizational IQs. Before founding Synesis, Dr. Ziegler was a consultant with McKinsey & Company.

- Sales Rank: #2748559 in eBooks
- Published on: 2008-05-02
- Released on: 2008-05-02

- Format: Kindle eBook

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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.
Great summary of high tech management keys
By A Customer
In Survival of the Smartest, Haim Mendelson and Johannes Ziegler explain what I believe are the Key Success Factors of successful management in the Information Age. And best of all, they do it in a factual, no-frills way that is rich with actual examples. An organization's ability to:
1) Consistently collect the right information from the necessary internal and external sources, 2) Effectively manage that information: getting it to those who need to know quickly and easily 3) Consistently have the right people making good decisions quickly with the right information 4) Rapidly communicate those decisions to all who need to know
are the information management processes at the heart of all high tech businesses (and more and more for all businesses). The brilliance of Survival of the Smartest is in showing how these processes can be measured and quantified into an Organizational IQ; much like a human's IQ. The difference, of course, is that Organizational IQ can be dramatically improved in fairly short order - as many of the real-life examples in the book document. The concept of the Organizational IQ allows managers to quantify and therefore improve their organization's performance along these dimensions.
Survival of the Smartest is based on a unique blend of insightful thinking, original research with over 100 leading high tech companies, and hands-on experience. With the in-depth case examples and the "how-to" chapter at the end, this book is by far more practical and the concepts are more applicable than those of any other business book I've read so far along these lines. I've actually put a number of the concepts from Survival of the Smartest to the test at my company (MySoftware Company: Nasdaq: MYSW). And as any MYSW shareholder will tell you, as the 9th best performing stock on all US capital markets in 1998 - and up another 40% so far this year - the proof of the Organizational IQ pudding is sweet indeed.
Gregory W. Slayton President and CEO MySoftware Company

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
Informative and entertaining
By A Customer
This really is a great book -- it tells you not only what works, but why it works and how to make it work. The book is interesting, entertaining and useful. The authors come up with a way of measuring the "IQ" of an organization; using a variety of cases and examples, they demonstrate what IQ means; and they give you a step-by-step guide for improving the IQ of your own organization.
The book starts with a lively discussion of the components of IQ. In the second part, "Getting Smarter", the authors explore in-depth three case-studies of companies that tried to improve their IQ. And in the third part, "Your Turn", they detail a blow-by-blow account of their own work with one company.
You should really start reading this book from the end: the authors' description of their experience in turning around a company is both engaging and compelling. You should then flip back to the first part, to understand in more depth what IQ is all about. If you are in high-tech, you will surely identify with what these authors have to say. If you are not, you will soon be there!
I most enjoyed the story of "Modex", recounted in one of the chapters. Second in line was the story of British Petroleum, which showed how IQ works in companies that are not in high-tech. But the entire book was refreshing and entertaining, free of heavy jargon and babblespeak: just straight talk and to the point. The

authors' Organizational IQ" is measurable, it's actionable, and it's fun to read about.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.
a large leap forward for humanity -and IQ - of organisations
By Christopher Macrae
The importance of this book can be judged by any employee asking why can't we work in an organisation which is better developed on the author's 5 Organisational IQ factors:
1 EXTERNAL INFORMATION AWARENESS, ie each part of our organisation captures external information (customers, technology opportunities, competitors' actions) quickly and accurately
2 EFFECTIVE DECISION ARCHITECTURE, ie in our organisation decisions are made at the right level (by the people with the best information and perspective). As a result decisions : are made quickly, have high quality, instill ownership and accountability
3 INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION, ie each part of our organisation knows what it needs to know when it needs to know it. Effective information flows 4-dimensionally: Horizontal, cross functional Top-down, org-wide goals and priorities Bottom-up, operational challenges and opportunities Learning, review over time of all of above
4 ORGANISATIONAL FOCUS, ie organisation systematically fights overload and complexity by: Limiting scope of the business; focusing on core competences; simplifying processes
5 CREATING AN INFORMATION AGE BUSINESS NETWORK, ie Organisation maximises the value of eternal partnerships by applying the above 4 High IQ factors to the entire business network
Would love to share experiences with anyone working or reading up on how to improve organisations IQ factors
chris macrae, chief infomediary, brandknowledge.com e-mail wcbn007@easynet.co.uk

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