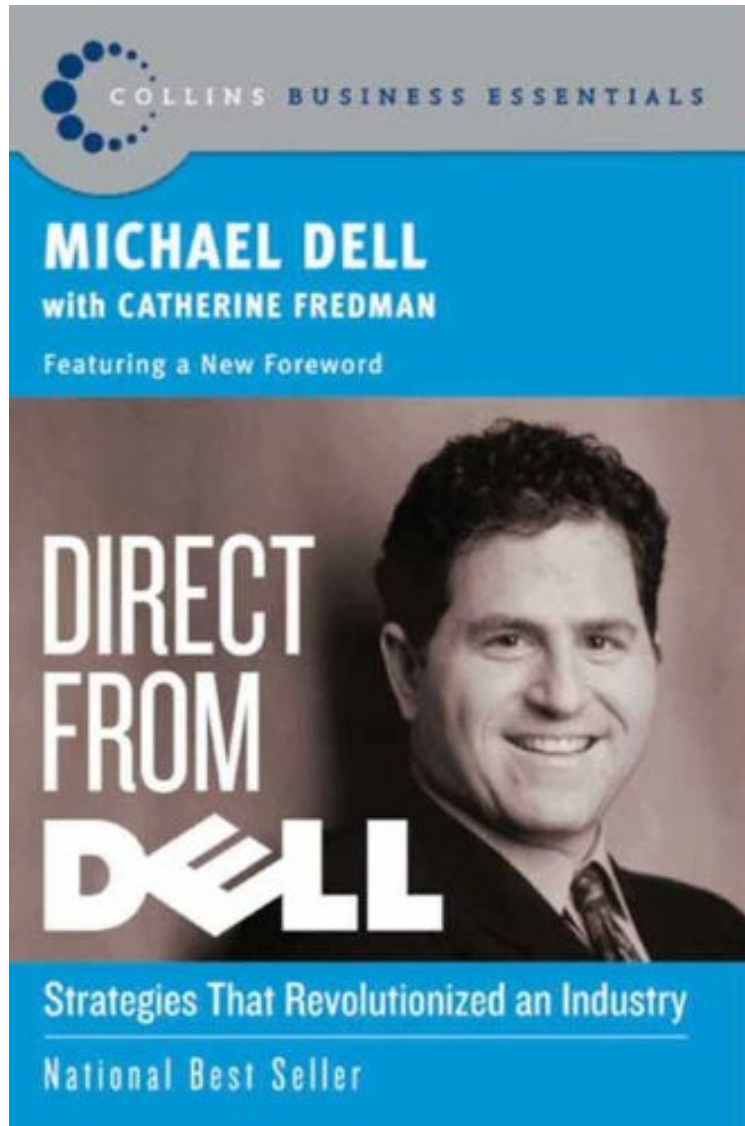


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## Direct From Dell: Strategies that Revolutionized an Industry (Collins Business Essentials)

*Michael Dell, Catherine Fredman*  
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**Michael Dell, Catherine Fredman : Direct From Dell: Strategies that Revolutionized an Industry (Collins Business Essentials)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Direct From Dell: Strategies that Revolutionized an Industry (Collins Business Essentials):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Direct from DellBy Dattatraya R. KordeLet me tell you a story. There was this kid, 12 years old, who saw that his local post office was raising money by organizing a stamp auction. This kid had a truck load of old stamps with him, as stamp collection was his hobby. So he goes out and organizes an

auction of his own and raises \$2,000 at the end of the event. Over the next few years his entrepreneur skills keep growing. Next at age 16, he takes a summer job of selling a local newspaper subscription. After a few days, he analyses the trend of the sell and finds that his major customers are either newly married couples or those who have recently bought a house. So he stops making random calls, finds the list of people who are going to be married from the local marriage registrar office and reaches out to them, similarly he finds details of those who are looking to buy a new house and reaches to them directly. At the end of the summer this kid had \$18,000 in his kitty, more than his teacher had made that year. This kid was none other than Michael Dell. Armed with these skills, Michael, found out that during the initial computing days when he was still finishing school, the big computer companies were selling standard configurations and at much higher cost. So he started a business out of his dorm room, of assembling computers according to the requirements of his customers and started selling assembled computers at a much cheaper rate and importantly giving the customers what they wanted. This initial experience thought Michael that there are two things he had to stick to, if he had to succeed: 1) Give the customer what they want, not what you have 2) Sell directly to the customer. These two became the guiding principles for Dell Computers which experienced amazing growth of more than 50% every year. In "Direct from Dell" Michael has given very minute details of how Dell actually grew from a \$1000 out of the dorm room company to a \$60 Billion company. The book is exceptionally detailed, to an extent that I was surprised that a CEO will provide such details of his company. But clear communication is something that Michael has stressed on right from his initial days. This book also details at length about the learning's Dell gathered from their mistakes. One of the learning's which attracted me was Dell's organizational structure. Dell was growing at an exceptional rate and while everybody was busy catering to the customer demands, the internal organization (People Infrastructure) was stretched and disorganized. Michael then got some outside help and redefined the organization and came up with "Segmentation". What it meant was that, to run the company smoothly, it was broken down into smaller companies each with their own support and sales structure. Since Dell was always a customer centric company, sticking to its principles, the segmentation was done according to the customers. So a customer like GE had its own small Dell company dedicated to it. I have personally worked in one such segmented organization in the past and can vouch for it. Dell was one of the pioneers of the "Direct" selling model wherein they eliminated the resellers and sold directly to the customer. The results of this model were multiple: 1) Savings were passed to the customer. Other companies used to sell through the resellers, which meant increased cost 2) Customer feedback was immediate. Other conventional companies had very few ways to find what the customer actually felt about their products. 3) Online retail thrived. Prior to Dell selling computers on the internet, retail through internet was very limited. Dell however opened up a whole new line of retail which is now exploited by wide range of businesses. This book also outlines how Dell came up with the "Build to Order" model and further reduced the computer costs and passed the savings to the customer. By working in close contact with the three integral pieces, Customer, its employees Suppliers Dell came up with ways to reduce inventory to as low as "8" days while other companies had inventory as high as "40" days. What this meant, is that, if there was a change in technology or customer demands which is very prevalent in computer industry, Dell was ready to react while other companies were behind by at least 32 days. Other companies would adjust their inventory losses by increasing the cost of other products while Dell would pass the entire savings to its customers. This was possible however by working very closely with the Suppliers in particular. Overall this book can be a blueprint for starting a new business. This is going on my good books shelf. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Basically a condensed Intro to Management text...no groundbreaking strategies here. By Dan It's a decent book and it's also very easy to read. Just don't expect to find anything here that you can't find in any Intro to Management text. All the strategies described in this book relate one way or another to some topic that you will be taught in an undergraduate introductory management course. There is no strategy in this book that is only specific to Dell. The book is divided into two parts for a total of 15 chapters. The first part which covers chapters 1-7 discusses the inception of Dell Computers, a few of their early struggles, and then their rise to the top and their dominance. The second part which covers chapters 8-15 discusses all of the business strategies that Dell has employed to get to where they are today. If you do not have a management background, you will love this book because all these "strategies" will be new to you. If you have even a basic management background, then this book is really just for entertainment purposes because you will have already been exposed to the "strategies" discussed. I decided to give the book four stars because it is easy to read and it gives you a nice overview of applied management. If you find management textbooks boring, this book should help put them into perspective and clarify the different principles. There is a lot of positivity in this book and I was looking for greater insight into the low points or conflicts that Dell encountered over the years and how they overcame them. It does talk about one or two low points early on but nothing from the most recent years. The way the book is written, you would get the impression that Dell just rose to the top of the computer industry in a linear fashion but I'm sure there were many challenges or dips along the way and I wish Michael Dell would have talked more about them and how Dell's strategies helped them overcome those obstacles. I guess I was looking for the book to be a little more in depth than it is. I think this is still a great business book and it can only help you to be a better manager and it can only help your company. It is also a great read for business students. I recommend it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Very Good

Business Inspiration Book By Brooklyn Joe This book was a very good and inspirational book. It had some motivational insights from one of today's great business leaders. Michael Dell does a great job discussing his humble and challenging beginnings while also giving advice and tools on building a successful business. Many tips can be used in any business and are very valuable towards building a great corporation or enterprise. My only criticism is that at certain points the book seemed a little dull and sometimes repetitive. The author could have condensed some of the info and made it a little shorter. Nevertheless, this book is a good and easy business read that I highly recommend to anyone looking to build a great business. You will not be disappointed.

At nineteen, Michael Dell started his company as a freshman at the University of Texas with \$1,000 and has since built an industry powerhouse. As Dell journeys through his childhood adventures, ups and downs, and mistakes made along the way, he reflects on invaluable lessons learned. Michael Dell's revolutionary insight has allowed him to persevere against all odds, and *Direct from Dell* contains valuable information for any business leader. His strategies will show you effective ways to grow your business and will help you save time on costly mistakes by following his direct model for success.

.com The PC business is full of rags-to-riches stories. But perhaps none is as dramatic as the rise of Dell Computer. In *Direct from Dell*, founder and CEO Michael Dell tells how he started his company from a dorm room at the University of Texas with less than \$1,000 and built it into an industry powerhouse with a market capitalization of well over \$100 billion. What makes Dell Computer unique is not what it sells, but rather how it sells it. Dell was first in the PC industry to pioneer the direct-selling model, a method that competitors such as Compaq and Apple Computer are only now starting to embrace. By cutting out the intermediary and creating a direct link between manufacturer and customer, Dell was able to provide customers with computers that cost less and that were more apt to meet customer needs. *Direct from Dell* is organized into two parts. The first recounts the history and the enormous growth of Dell Computer. The second part focuses on Dell's management approach, from developing customer focus to creating alliances with suppliers. The book manages to avoid most of the promotional and self-congratulatory air that seem to plague so many first-person CEO tomes. Anyone who has followed the PC industry or would like insight into Dell Computer's success should enjoy reading this book. Well written and easy to read. Recommended. --Harry C. Edwards  
From Publishers Weekly The results are impressive: a 19 year-old with \$1000 starts a company, remains at the helm and on top of changes in the industry for 10 years, and watches the stock rise 36,000% over another decade as his company becomes the second largest maker of PCs in the world, and the largest in the U.S. The founder of the Dell Computer Corporation uses anecdotes from his entrepreneurial life and his company's history to illustrate the "direct model" he developed to do it: one that eliminates the middleman via a host of direct-marketing media and incorporates a full-blown philosophy of doing business. While most of that philosophy's components are familiar (internally, "Reward Success by Narrowing Responsibility"; externally, "Teach Innovative Thinking"; "Retail: First in, First out"; "Hyperlink to the Future"), seeing how Dell put these theories into practice will sustain a reader's interest. Rightly, the custom-built and directly shipped computers that are the company's signature product get the most airtime. While the book, like nearly all in its CEO-authored subgenre, is heavy on self-congratulatory propaganda ("The spirit of the company that remains today was beginning to take hold"), Dell makes an agreeable maverick. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal The chair and CEO of Dell, the world's largest direct computer company, explains his success. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.