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Joy, Inc.: How We Built A Workplace People Love



Synopsis

• A guidebook for how leaders can motivate, engage, and recognize their people all the while growing the business profitably. • "Forbes.com Every year, thousands of visitors come from around the world to visit Menlo Innovations, a small software company in Ann Arbor, Michigan. They make the trek not to learn about technology but to witness a radically different approach to company culture. CEO Rich Sheridan removed the fear and ambiguity that typically make a workplace miserable. With joy as the explicit goal, he and his team changed everything about how the company was run. The results blew away all expectations. Menlo has won numerous growth awards and was named an Inc. magazine "audacious small company." • Joy, Inc. offers an inside look at how Menlo created its culture, and shows how any organization can follow their methods for a more passionate team and sustainable, profitable results.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If low pay, constant lay-offs and cheating the IRS brings Joy, well, then you'll love the book. First, I'll tell you what Menlo does right - they make great software. I was really proud of the software we wrote when I was there. And you'll learn what it is like to work in a collaborative environment. I would recommend any company hire Menlo for software development. That said, workers at Menlo are not as joyous as Rich makes it sound. Like any business, SOME people love it, some people hate it. Any "joy" at Menlo comes at a price. Rich has admitted on a podcast that the pay at Menlo is on the low side. Maybe "joy" is worth it ... but keep reading. For all this talk of "joy", I think most

people want a job with consistent work (and pay). For all the hype, Menlo has not been able to keep people employed. Rich tried to open a second office in Chicago - it failed. As a Menlo employee, you'll face constant layoffs as the company struggles to get work. Layoffs are common. Part of this is due to having too much process. Menlo charges a high fee (as admitted by their head project manager in a blog post). The high fee is due to large teams assigned to every project. In theory, the team means high quality, but process is taken to extremes at Menlo. One competitor to Menlo is Thought Works. Both companies have a similar model. They compete in the Agile Software market. Thought Works employs sales people to get work. Menlo has openly shunned a sales force - and the lack of consistent work is the result. The on-again, off-again part was a bit too much for me. When I was being hired, other employees took me aside and told me the contact was illegal. So I had my employment contract reviewed by an attorney.

Several hours after I finished reading Rich's book, I sent him an email saying how much I enjoyed and appreciated what he had to say. After all the books I pored over back when I was a business consultant, Joy, Inc. shows wisdom and heart that truly make for great business and fulfilling work life. From the blurbs I had read before opening the book, I expected dramatic crises with big salvation, which seems to be standard fare among business books. But Rich isn't a crisis, confusion, scream and heroic savior kind of guy, and I already knew that from working with him and his team a few years ago. And my company adopted and has used for at least five years our own hybridization of Menlo Innovation's the "ten o'clock shout out"/"weekly show and tell", so I know the value of these practices. I'm sure this isn't the only reason the current staff at my company is the best team I've ever had the pleasure to work with, but I believe it is an important factor. Rich shows the everyday work flow and problems in good economic times and bad and how his team has chosen to succeed across all situations. A couple of things he mentions, but may be lost on the reader, the successes of Rich's company had already proved themselves in his previously failing company: what it took was confidence he and his partners could do it again without the part of the company that had failed. Rich's company is located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which is an incredibly creative, accepting and forward thinking town, which during Michigan's deepest unemployment, peaked at around 7%. If you're going to start or relocate a business, or go to work for one, you might want to find a town like Ann Arbor. Also, something Rich doesn't mention is that he himself is an imposing personality of great good, patience and knowledge.

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