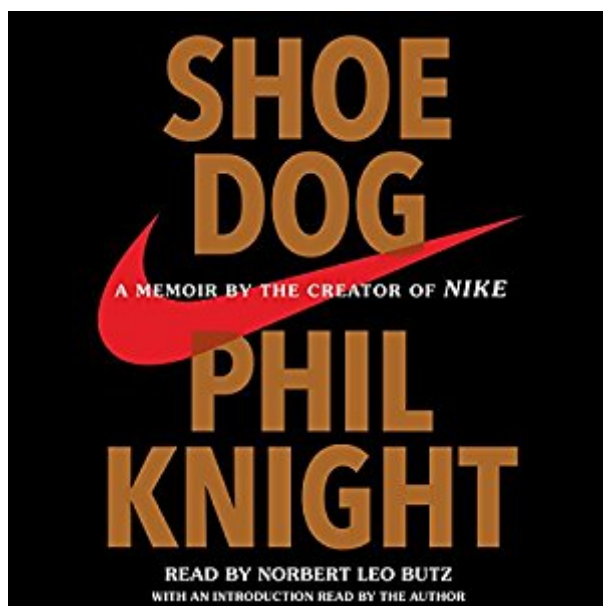


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Shoe Dog: A Memoir By The Creator Of Nike



Synopsis

In this candid and riveting memoir, for the first time ever, Nike founder and CEO Phil Knight shares the inside story of the company's early days as an intrepid start-up and its evolution into one of the world's most iconic, game-changing, and profitable brands. In 1962, fresh out of business school, Phil Knight borrowed fifty dollars from his father and created a company with a simple mission: import high-quality, low-cost athletic shoes from Japan. Selling the shoes from the trunk of his lime-green Plymouth Valiant, Knight grossed \$8,000 his first year. Today, Nike's annual sales top \$30 billion. In an age of start-ups, Nike is the ne plus ultra of all start-ups, and the swoosh has become a revolutionary, globe-spanning icon, one of the most ubiquitous and recognizable symbols in the world today. But Knight, the man behind the swoosh, has always remained a mystery. Now, for the first time, in a memoir that is candid, humble, gutsy, and wry, he tells his story, beginning with his crossroads moment. At 24, after backpacking around the world, he decided to take the unconventional path to start his own business - a business that would be dynamic, different. Knight details the many risks and daunting setbacks that stood between him and his dream - along with his early triumphs. Above all, he recalls the formative relationships with his first partners and employees, a ragtag group of misfits and seekers who became a tight-knit band of brothers. Together, harnessing the transcendent power of a shared mission and a deep belief in the spirit of sport, they built a brand that changed everything.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most business memoirs are self-serving, boring, and poorly written. To put it bluntly, they are

“crap between covers.” There are very few business memoirs that are even good, since most of them make the person writing the memoir seem like a business savant who always knew the right answers and knew things would come out right. Great business memoirs are different. They portray a business situation as it was. Phil Knight’s *Shoe Dog: A Memoir by The Creator of Nike* is a great business memoir. Let’s cut to the chase. This will be a great read for anybody, but if you’re thinking about starting a business, especially a business that you expect to grow, this book belongs on your must-read list. You’ll learn things that you won’t learn anywhere else and you’ll learn things that you can only learn from a story. You’ll learn about the constant struggle to fund growth. Most of the books about entrepreneurship don’t tell you about that. If you start a business and that business starts to grow, you are funding the process out ahead of your cash flow. The result is that you’re chronically cash poor, even when you’re fabulously profitable, and that is both counterintuitive and very tough to manage. You’ll also learn about the plusses and minuses of going public. There’s a lot here about relationships and values, and staying true to what you think is important. There are lessons about how putting people in the right job makes all the difference. And, there are lessons about balancing being a hero at work with being a parent at home. There are also important lessons about not taking yourself too seriously. Knight describes the “executive retreats” that Nike would have. They called them “Buttface sessions.” The name came from one of the early employees who said that Nike was the only company their size where you could shout out “Hey, buttface!” and the entire management team would turn around. There’s another important thing, too. If you think that innovation is only something that high-tech companies do, or that it requires coding, read this book. A lot of Nike’s success comes from being an innovator in shoes. *Shoe Dog* is superbly written, and you’ll enjoy it if you just read it as a story. But if you’re in business, and especially if you’re starting a business and wanting to make it grow, this book should be on your must-read list. Keep it handy, right near Ben Horowitz’s *The Hard Thing about Hard Things*. Toward the end of the book, Phil Knight says this: “God, how I wish I could relive the whole thing. Short of that, I’d like to share the experience, the ups and downs, so that some young man or woman, somewhere, going through the same trials and ordeals might be inspired or comforted. Or warned. Some young entrepreneur, maybe, some athlete or painter or novelist, might press

on. I think he achieved his goal. If you want some seasoned advice to help you run and grow your company, or if you just want to read a great business memoir, pick up a copy of *Shoe Dog: A Memoir by The Creator of Nike*.

I love biographies, but this is one of my favorite biographies ever. I respect the Nike Company even more. I will only buy Nike from now on. I grew up in Oregon and always felt a sense of pride that Nike came from Oregon. I drove by the Nike campus everyday on my way to work in Hillsboro. I wished I could work there. Never got the chance. I respect Phil Knight because he followed his passion, built relationships and wasn't focused on only making money. He seems real and approachable and honest. The only thing I disagree with is what Oregon school was better.....I graduated from Oregon State in 1993. I can assure you of one thing...you will always find the swoosh on my feet for the rest of my life. Kellie

I had never been a fan of Nike until I read the book. Three points that made it worthwhile to me: 1. The entire book covers the period before Nike goes public, when it was a small (ish) company and at many times in real danger of going under. The story of Phil Knight's ups, downs, and struggles brought to life the day-to-day insecurities of an ultimately hugely successful, non-tech entrepreneur. 2. Phil Knight writes this almost as if he is looking back on his life and serving as his own worst critic. I expected boundless ego; I found heartening humility. 3. Scenes from 40 years ago are written with crisp, vivid descriptions, only possible if he had written volumes of journals throughout his life. Many of those scenes were more moving than most fiction I've read. Enjoy, and plan on having plenty of time when you start, because it's hard to put down!

In total, a pleasant, funny and insightful account from a legend. The book ends supersede the middle content - as the beginning third provides great insight into the tiny origins of the now behemoth. The final third is poignant, emotional and fully engaging. The middle third is good, but lacks emotional connectivity, as it focuses most of its energy on vendors, suppliers, rubber, nylon, bankers and accountants. Sure, all things needed to create Nike, but not overly interesting for a non shoe dog like myself. A worthy read, with the best parts saved for the final pages.

On a time when running was not for everyone, literally a sport of professionals or bums such as Forrest Gump, a gentleman called Phil Knight, a promising track and field college runner, decided to join forces with his running coach to create a running shoes company because he believed if

everyone run a few miles per day the world would be a better place. With nothing but a dream, Phil built an incredible team, incredible company, incredible culture but run out of cash and on the verge of losing the contract with his only shoe supplier and going bankrupt reinvented his business model, leveraged the company through creative new financial partnerships and decided to start making his own shoes. He never gave up. He believed in quality. He believe in running shoes that delivered on the promise, he believed that running should be a sport for everyone. Fast forward 50 years this company is the largest and one of the most recognize sports apparel brands in the world. The name of this company is Nike. this is an amazing story of courage, persistence, adversities, failures and victories in business and life. Very inspiring for crazy people like us.

I savored this book. The passion they all had at Nike was remarkable, and their motivations so authentic. It made me love and hate the business community. You have to be so resilient to hang in there, to flow with the ups and downs and not get eaten up when others deceive you. Anyone who thinks making money in our free economy is easy, or that money is just handed out, should read this book. It should also be required reading for all students of business and companies applying for ISO ratings.

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