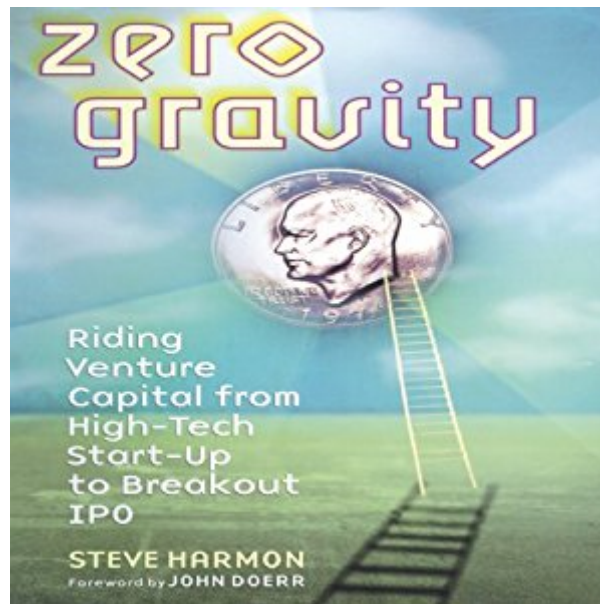


The book was found

Zero Gravity: Riding Venture Capital From High-Tech Start-Up To Breakout IPO



Synopsis

How do fledgling companies make it from idea to multimillion-dollar Internet IPOs? Steve Harmon, whom CBS MarketWatch calls one of Wall Street's top Internet stock analysts, shows how an innovator can convert sparks of imagination into a money-making Internet business. Harmon describes the Internet environment as "zero gravity", a place where information, communication, and wealth flow up, down, and sideways as in an astronaut's weightless environment. The result is nanosecond commerce - easy, inexpensive, customized - with a market not bound by locale or time. In this book, Harmon introduces you to leading entrepreneurs and venture capitalists who describe how they built companies in cyberspace. From finding funding to structuring your financing, he provides myriad valuable resources to help you along the way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I originally bought this book because John Doerr was a "co-author". He only wrote the foreward, a few hundred words at most. Most of the book is filler and anecdotal examples, like "a good vc is important, just look at Netscape..." The valuation section does not really even talk about methodology, but gives a list of deals from the VentureOne database. About a quarter of the book is a venture capital directory. This will be moderately useful but there are plenty available on the web. The only real value I got out of the book is the interviews with some good VCs. This book had a lot of potential, but the value could be condensed into ten pages. I was disappointed in that I expected much more.

I had high hopes for this book given my favorable view of Harmon's analysis when he worked at Internet.com. However, this book is a major disappointment and appears to be nothing more than a PR ploy. Let's forget about the typos and repetitive charts and tables and focus on the superficial nature of the information. This is not even close to the "inside" story it professes to be and is, in fact, less comprehensive than what can be found by piecing together a variety of articles from Fortune, Upside, and Red Herring. Harmon seems to be more concerned with tooting his own horn now that he is out on his own than in providing some value to readers who have an interest in this subject matter. Give me a break, tips on how to dress from him? I have noticed that he now begins any interview with words like "I noticed CMGI when it was at \$2 a share" in order to remind us of his prowess. Because he has made a few good calls, are we to accept that he has instant credibility with respect to an area such as VC funding? Now Harmon has become a venture capitalist and it appears that this book is designed to give him more credibility in this area because it is "co-written" by John Doerr and has all of the usual high profile names mentioned in it. I for one am not buying into it. There's nothing new here. The fact that someone identified several good internet stocks a few years ago does not give them credibility in this subject matter. It has to be earned and this book is a poor effort at doing so.

This book read like it was put together in a weekend. The writer seemed peculiarly interested in promoting himself, rather than the ideas he was explaining. Lots of hype (anecdotes about quick success, making a splash, etc). Very little on the mechanics of raising money, negotiating with VC's, haggling over valuation...ie, the stuff that you really need to know as an entrepreneur. Overall, a low signal-to-noise ratio.

The book promises to explain the in's and out's of getting \$'s from VC's. Unfortunately, it falls way short of the mark. It is practically inevitable that any entrepreneur realistically ready to access VC funding will have already come across the information contained in this book. If, on the other hand, you find the information contained in the book helpful you probably are no where near the stage you need to be to access VC funding. Thus, to some extent, the book succeeds in letting its reader know where their entrepreneurial effort stands. As others have suggested, I think much more interesting and relevant insight can be attained by reading internet-business magazines (Red Herring, The Industry Standard, Business 2.0, Upside).

I really wanted to like this book, since the subject needs updated attention. But it reads as if it was rushed to market (some typos, lots of jargon and repetition), contains many many pages of relatively useless charts (here is a list of 'Net companies that might or might not still be around; here is a list of famous VCs; here they are again and again; here is a list of money raised by round...) and little meaningful content (the valuation section -- key for the entrepreneur -- was a major disappointment). The interviews with Mr Harmon's VC friends and entrepreneurs were interesting and revealed a human side -- but nothing that was not already easy to get your hands on via magazines and newspaper articles. Mr Harmon seems like a really nice person as did all of the interviewees -- but know what you are looking for when you order this.

Despite the name recognition of those who sing the praises of this book (they are all in it) I found it nothing special. It seems more like a vehicle to get Harmon's name in lights now that he has left Internet.com and started his own shop. A lot of dated material and I agree with the other reviewer who indicated that this appeared to be rushed to press. Anyone with an idea or concept that is in a position to get VC funding or attention will already know most of what is in this book. Harmon's expertise lies in his analysis of individual stocks, not in providing an "inside look" at how to get VC funding. It appears as though it is more a venue for him to drop names, something he has been doing a lot of lately. Check it out of the library.

What a disappointment. First, giving John Doerr co-author status (as it appears here at least) is really misleading. Doerr just wrote a two-page introduction, and says nothing there he hasn't said a million times before. But even worse is how lazy and thin the whole thing is. Take away the pages of print-outs of VC address and companies stats (all available on the web for free, BTW) and the softball Q&A sessions cut-and-pasted from Harmon's email and you've got what amounts to a magazine article. And not even a particularly good one at that -- you can get better insights reading the Red Herring for a few issues, or even Business 2.0. The whole thing feels like it was thrown together over a long weekend. Anybody who has a chance with any of the VCs Harmon recommends already knows everything in this book. Don't waste your money.

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