



Built from Scratch: How a Couple of Regular Guys Grew The Home Depot from Nothing to \$30 Billion

Bernie Marcus, Arthur Blank

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One of the greatest entrepreneurial success stories of the past twenty years

When a friend told Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank that "you've just been hit in the ass by a golden horseshoe," they thought he was crazy. After all, both had just been fired. What the friend, Ken Langone, meant was that they now had the opportunity to create the kind of wide-open warehouse store that would help spark a consumer revolution through low prices, excellent customer service, and wide availability of products.

Built from Scratch is the story of how two incredibly determined and creative people--and their associates--built a business from nothing to 761 stores and \$30 billion in sales in a mere twenty years.

Built from Scratch tells many colorful stories associated with The Home Depot's founding and meteoric rise; shows that a company can be a tough, growth-oriented competitor and still maintain a high sense of responsibility to the community; and provides great lessons useful to people in any business, from start-ups to the Fortune 500.

Great Stories

"Ming the Merciless": The inside account of the man who fired Arthur Blank and Bernie Marcus

"My people don't drive Cadillacs!" How Ross Perot almost got involved with The Home Depot

"Take this job and shove it!" The banker who put his career on the line to get The Home Depot the loan that enabled it to survive

"Folks, I tell ya, if these Atlanta stores were any bigger, we'd be paying Alabama sales tax." Home Depot's first good ol' southern advertising campaign

A Company with a Conscience

When disasters like the Oklahoma City bombing or Hurricane Andrew happen, Home Depot associates don't ask for permission to respond. They react from their hearts--whether that means keeping their store open all night or being on the scene with volunteers and relief supplies.

The Home Depot doesn't just contribute money to organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Christmas in April, but also provides its people to help lead and grow these community efforts.

Great Lessons

Know your customer: In The Home Depot's case, customers don't pay for wider aisles and a pretty store, but for a wide assortment and low prices

Why everyday low prices mean more sales overall: The marketing philosophy The Home Depot learned

from talking with Sam Walton

Market leadership: Why The Home Depot never goes to a major new market with plans to open just a few stores

The strategy for profitable growth: How The Home Depot redefined its U.S. market from its \$135 billion traditional "do-it-yourself" base to a much larger pond of \$365 billion

How to change the rules of the game: How The Home Depot bypassed almost all middlemen, allowing it to pass on huge savings to customers

Built from Scratch is the firsthand account of how two regular guys created one of the greatest entrepreneurial successes of the last twenty years.

Opening the First Store

"What the hell happened? Who screwed up the store? . . . Whatever time remained before the doors were scheduled to open for the first time, we sped around in forklifts, stomping on the brakes, scuffing up the flooring so it would once more look like a warehouse."

Customer Service

"If ever I saw an associate point a customer toward what they needed three aisles over, I would threaten to bite their finger. I would say, 'Don't ever let me see you point. You take the customer by the hand, and you bring them right where they need to be and you help them.'"

Giving Back

"When The Home Depot went public we realized that we had the financial capacity and wherewithal to give back to the communities where we did business. There is a concept in Judaism called tzedaka, which means 'to give back.' It is considered a mitzvah, a good deed, to give to someone who doesn't have, and we believe strongly in giving back to the community."

Selling the Vision

"We had to be psychologists, lovers, romancers, and con artists to get vendors aboard. Our ability to paint a picture of how that would take place--lowest prices, widest selection, and great customer service--was what convinced skeptical manufacturers to sell merchandise to us during the early years."

The Importance of Values

"I have never had anybody work for me in retailing who didn't work for me out of love, as opposed to fear. We carried this approach into building The Home Depot. We care about each other and we care about the customer. The things that we do for customers inside and outside the stores demonstrate our commitment to them. And then when something happens within the company, we circle the wagons. We help each other."

From the Hardcover edition.

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