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E-Retailing and Brick-and-Mortar Stores in India

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Abstract

E-tailing or E-retailing refers to the practice of selling, and retail goods through the Internet. People are able to go beyond the market area where they live and are able to access and/or sell the things of their interest. Internet functions as the crucial medium. Through the use of this medium, more customers are reached. There is increase in visibility of goods for sale and purchase. And the medium offers excellent convenience to the customers. Even though there are growth prospects for online retail in India, we also have challenges that need to be addressed. This study compares e-retailing and brick-and-mortar stores and explore the status of e-commerce in India, constraints faced by it and what could be done to attract people from rural areas, etc.

Keywords: E-commerce, E-retailing, Brick-and-Mortar stores, constraints faced by e-retailing, Indian retail sector, Consumers.

Introduction

E-commerce is defined as “business that is transacted by transferring data electronically, especially over the internet” (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/e-commerce>). E-retailing refers to the practice of selling retail goods through the Internet. In general, retail business is referred to as Business to Consumer (B2C) and also Business to Business (B2B). Use of the Internet and growth of the use of smart phones have made Indian e-retail sector as one of the top-five retail markets. Some reports suggest that the Indian e-commerce market “is on its way to becoming the third largest consumer *market in the world*” (<https://retail.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/e-commerce/e-tailing/indian-e-commerce-market-to-touch-84-billion-in-2021-report/68167996>). About 10% of the overall growth of the e-commerce market is E-retailing.

The increase in the E-retailing market is popular in urban India. Middle-class consumers and salaried class in India are frequent users of e-retailing market. Greater disposable income and comfort and convenience seem to guide their preference. New products and brands and the patronizing behaviour of urban middle-class provide a base for the retail sector's growth.

In addition, the increasing number of working women, changing lifestyles, growing size of urbanization of economy, etc. also help. The success of e-retailing depends on the influential website design, return and replacement process, quick and convincing responses to e-customers' queries, prompt delivery, etc. A descriptive analysis of the websites of leading e-tail companies such as *amazon*, *Flipkart*, etc. would reveal the basic elements that any e-retail company should have.

Malls have become an essential feature of every town in most states in India. In particular, in Tamilnadu, Malls are very common in every district and taluq headquarters. It is important to recognize that the stores in the Malls (**Brick-and-Mortar** stores) also offer competition to online retail. "Brick and mortar refers to a physical presence of an organization or business in a building or other structure. The term brick-and-mortar business is often used to refer to a company that possesses or leases retail shops, factory production facilities, or warehouses for its operations" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brick_and_mortar)

Around the world, 5 Reasons were identified why shoppers continue to prefer Brick-and-Mortar stores. These are the major reasons:

- "Personalized Shopping Experience. ...
- Ability to Preview Products In-Person – Before Purchase Commitment. ...
- Quick, Hassle-Free Returns. ...
- Easy, Quick and Detailed Customer Service. ...
- Ability to Take Items Home Immediately."

(<https://www.starmicronics.com>)

In Brick-and-Mortar stores, **Store design** is more attractive, and the goods are well organized for easy access. The customers are attracted to go through all the rows, looking for their goods they want to buy or want to check. Assistants are all around to help the customers to identify and choose what they want. There is always a coffee/tea restaurant also within the store or adjacent to it. Discounts are offered in most goods on display and such discounts have become a very popular feature in the brick-and-mortar stores. In general, the organized retail stores are getting well organized with customers in mind. Seasonal discounts, periodic discounts, selected goods discounts, etc. are all found in the brick-and-mortar stores on a regular basis. Festive seasons are frequent in a multireligious country like India with a variety of regional festivals. Marriage seasons are another important milestone. People do wait for such opportunities and are willing to spend money to buy what they have been planning for the occasion.

Credit cards and debit cards play an important role in both e-retail and brick and mortar retail.

Online retail offers more variety of goods, but the customer may do well if he or she plans in advance when they want the goods. On the other hand, a visit to a local Mall and the local brick-and-mortar store enables the customer to get what he or she wants almost immediately. While ready-made garments look good and may be preferred by young customers, women especially need and desire a personal visit to the brick-and-mortar store to choose their sarees and blouse pieces. In addition, they may even be able to try the clothing they want to buy, and check the colour matching, design, etc., and take an important and instant decision. In addition, we have now several brick-and-mortar large stores even on the same street. This helps the customer even to compare the goods available and their prices in different stores. In fact, families visit brick-and-mortar stores almost as if it were a picnic. Cafes and restaurants in the Mall offer a picnic atmosphere. People from rural areas come to the town to visit the Malls periodically even in non-festive and non-marriage seasons.

The following factors have helped the growth of online retailing:

1. Growth in the possession of mobile phones. Accessing the Internet is easier 24/7.
2. Variety of goods in different brands are seen online and accessible to the customer. We can compare the items using the links provided.
3. The opinions of customers who bought a particular item are available and could guide the prospective buyer in taking a decision.
4. We can either pay instantly using our debit/credit cards or wait for the item to arrive and make the payment on delivery of the goods. This facility is available in most online retail services. Some online retailers have introduced monthly instalments facility without any interest charged for the due amounts.
5. Goods once sold will not be taken back continues to be basic principle adopted in brick and mortar stores. On the other hand, leading online retail companies have some provisions to return the goods purchased.
6. Offering a variety of products is an important element of online retailing. On the other hand, brick-and-mortar stores are somewhat constrained because of space and other problems. They do overcome this problem by carefully choosing what could be the customers' preferred brands and offering frequent price cuts.

7. **amazon**, Flipkart and Alibaba have massive online product catalogues. While **amazon** and **Flipkart** focus more on the individual buyers buying items for their personal and family use, etc., **Alibaba.com** describes itself as “manufacturers, suppliers, exporters, and importers from the world’s online B2B marketplace.”

8. Comparatively speaking, Online stores can be launched more quickly than starting a brick-and-mortar business.

9. Order fulfilment is often a problem faced even by large e-retailing corporations. This situation became more evident during the covid-19 pandemic period. Brick-and-mortar stores are no exception to this condition.

10. Although the Internet and smart phones provide easy access to e-retailers round the clock, a good number of people in India are yet to get acquainted with the process. Growth of Indian e-retail will be still larger and much quicker, if prospective customers are trained through visuals by the e-retailing companies. Such an effort by Indian e-retailers seems to be conspicuous by its absence. Schools in rural areas and first-generation learners may be focused upon by the Indian e-retail companies.

11. Payment through debit/credit cards and payment on delivery of the goods sound easier, still many have great difficulty with this process. By tradition, most Indians are used to cash payment or purchase through installments. Leading e-retailers such as **amazon** and **Flipkart** will do still better if they have either a good number of agents or their brick-and-mortar stores in towns where their goods are delivered and from where the customers who ordered goods may collect their goods by making cash payment. Cash payment on delivery is a good strategy, no doubt. But delivery system sometimes is found to be very unfriendly. There is a need to look into these problems with greater attention by leading e-retailing corporations.

Customer security and privacy, Capturing the attention of the consumer through multi-channels, and Maintaining growth and profitability in the long-term are some of the other important items.

Conclusion

The Indian retail sector and its employment capability are developing fast. Retaining the e-consumer is a difficult challenge. The new wave of consumerism and urbanization with paradigm shifts with inside the demographic and psychographic dynamics has pushed the retail purchasers regularly to use the website to look for product data and buy products. The on-line customer is not the same as the everyday consumer. To attract and keep on-line retail customers, the retailers, especially the e-retailers, need to take extra effort. It is easy to lose an e-consumer. A

sturdy mix of marketing tools which includes public relations, advertising, promotions, direct marketing, and Internet advertising need to be used to keep on-line customers. E-trade is making gradual and consistent progress in India. With increase in computer use, more people are turning to online purchases. Infrastructural bottlenecks, monetary disparity, vulnerabilities of the charge gateway structure, insufficient legal framework, etc. are situations that need to be addressed to promote e-trade in the country.

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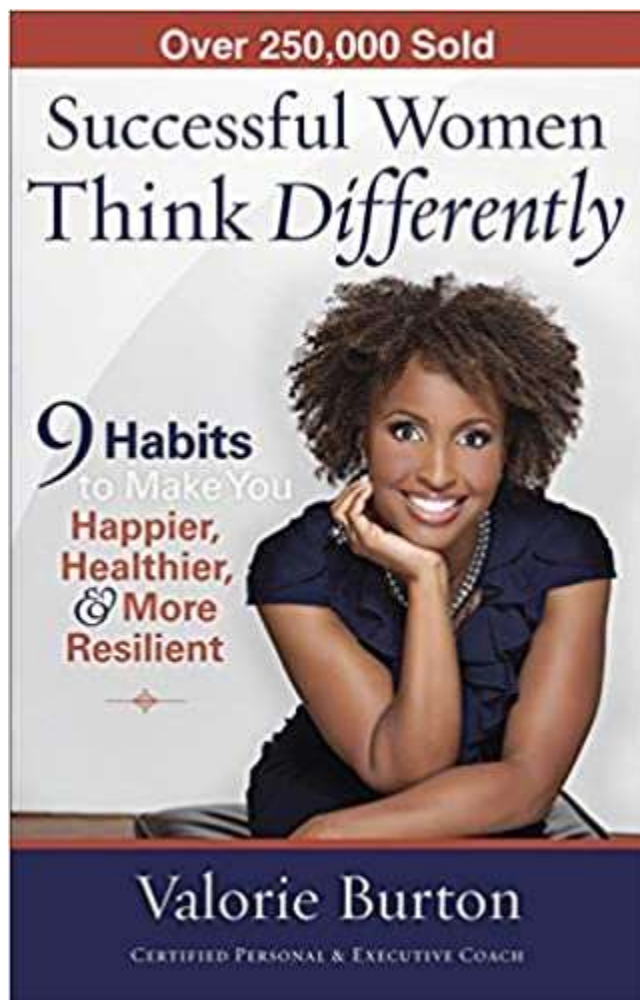
Introducing a Book:

Successful Women Think Differently:

9 Habits to Make You Happier, Healthier, and More Resilient

Author: Valorie Burton

Kindle Edition



Courtesy:

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Successful+Women+Think+Differently%3A+9+Habits+to+Make+You+Happier%2C+Healthier%2C+and+More+Resilient&i=digital-text&ref=nb_sb_noss

This book is highly valuable for our girl students in colleges and universities. In India, especially in South India, we have colleges exclusively for boys and girls. This trend is somewhat changed with the growing number of private colleges. Many colleges are now coeducational. The needs of girl students to develop their leadership qualities, executive skills as well as getting involved in innovations, etc. need some special attention. Moreover, with growing number of first generation learners among the girls, adequate introduction to modern enterprise is important in addition to achieving competitive academic excellence. ***Successful Women Think Differently: 9 Habits to Make You Happier, Healthier, and More Resilient*** by Valorie Burton is indeed an especially useful handbook for our girl students and those who are already employed. Leading online corporations have employed a good number of women in various positions. These corporations do some training to their newly recruited interns/employees, both men and women. Yet general guidelines that will be helpful to women throughout their career are available in this book.

The 9 habits Valorie Burton recommend include the following:

“Habit One: Believe You Can Do It. *How you explain your success and failure predicts more about your potential than you think.*

Habit Two: Get off the Hedonic Treadmill. *Why we are poor predictors of our own happiness and how you can get it right.*

Habit Three: Stop Trying to Fix Your Weaknesses. *Why you should stop obsessing about what’s wrong with you and start building on what is right.*

Habit Four: Build Your Muscle of Self-Control. *Why your talent isn’t enough and how to develop the trait that will you to the top.*

Habit Five: Cultivate Positive Emotion. *How a surprising but easy formula will save your relationships and transform your life.*

Habit Six: Be Prepared for Battle. Be prepared for Battle. *Why you must expect obstacles and have a proven plan to overcome them.*

Habit Seven: Don’t Be a “Maximizer”. *How overabundance can rob you of satisfaction and make you ineffective.*

Habit Eight: Don’t Go It alone. *Why authentic connections are more important than ever and how you can cultivate them.*

Habit Nine: Write It Down. *The revealing reasons you need to tap into the power of the pen starting today.*

The author presents in the **Introduction** Seven Key Decisions women may have to take. Each **Habit** is dealt with in separate chapters. Every chapter offers interesting and realistic examples.

The book is useful not only for women but also for men. This should be treated as a Handbook and our students may read it chapter by chapter following a personal and steady

schedule. Examples are there from the life-story of career women. Reading it several times will help us understand the full implications of the principles and the narratives presented. Certainly, it is a valuable and useful book, multiple copies of which may be bought for use by girl students. We should consider that reading such books help our students plan for a positive and prosperous life ahead.

Valorie Burton presents this contrasting picture. Although this contrasting picture comes in the beginning part of the book, we may consider it as depicting what is most desirable.

| Successful Women | Unsuccessful Women |
|---|--|
| Courage in the face of fear | Feel sorry for themselves when things don't go as planned. |
| A belief in their ability to navigate obstacles when they come | Give up once they fail |
| Relationships that strengthen them rather than weaken them | Relationships that drain their time and energy |
| Goals that are authentic to their deepest needs and desires | Define success by society's standards rather than their own |
| A sense of purpose and vision | Put successful women on a pedestal, as though there is some secret success formula they don't have access to |
| A perspective on life that accepts failure and mistakes as a normal part of the journey | Strive as though success is a destination, a place where she arrives |
| A habit of saying "no" to good opportunities in favor of purposeful ones | Focus on what they don't have rather than what they do have |
| A willingness to take risks | Are eternal procrastinators who won't get started because they fear failure and imperfection |

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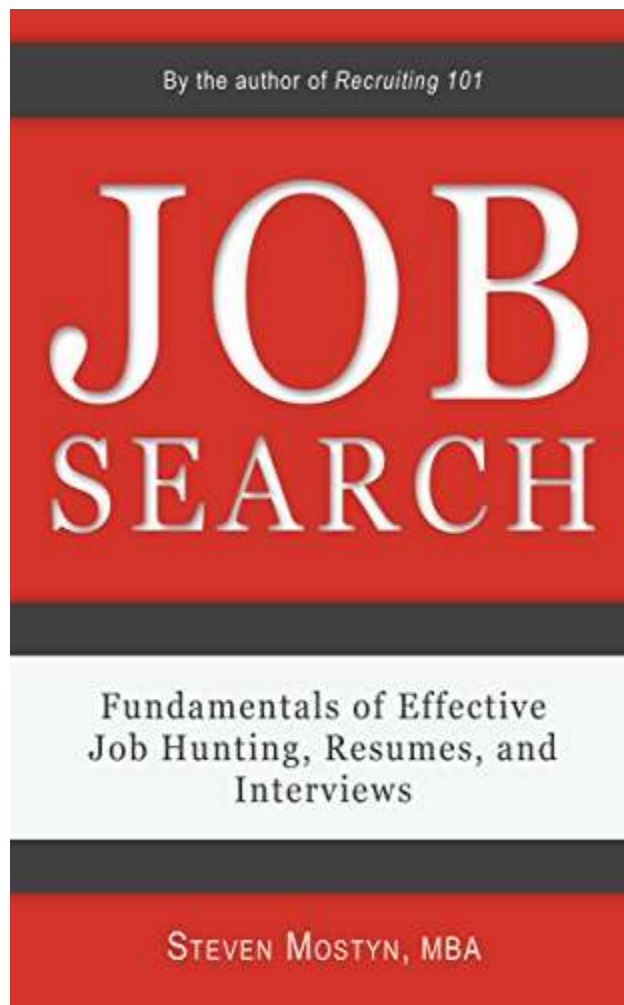
Introducing a Book:

JOB SEARCH:

Fundamentals of Effective Job Hunting, Resumes, and Interviews

Author: Steven Mostyn, MBA

Kindle Edition



Courtesy: https://www.amazon.com/Job-Search-Fundamentals-Effective-Interviews-ebook/dp/B07969MF3X/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=JOB+SEARCH%3A+Fundamentals+of+Effective+Job+Hunting%2C+Resumes%2C+and+Interviews&qid=1617245765&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

This is a very useful and this has been reviewed with great appreciation because of its usefulness to young people seeking jobs. This is very much applicable also to our students and research scholars as well as those who have completed their doctoral studies.

The book has 31 chapters followed by a short overview presenting the conclusion. The chapter titles are indeed descriptive and these point to the contents within the chapter.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Never Give Up | 2. Be Focused and Realistic | 3. The Job Hunting Lifecycle |
| 4. Creating an Effective Resume | 5. The Value of SEO in Your Job Search | 6. Resume Templates |
| 7. Creating an Effective Cover Letter | 8. Understanding Job Boards, Job Alerts & Quick Apply Application | 9. Creating a LinkedIn Profile that Stands Out |
| 10. Looking for a Job on LinkedIn | 11. Using Indeed to Find a Job | 12. Using Monster to Find a Job |
| 13. Using CareerBuilder to Find a Job | 14. Using ZipRecruiter to Find a Job | 15. Looking for Jobs on Facebook |
| 16. Looking for Jobs on Google | 17. Using Glassdoor on Your Job Research | 18. Your College Alumni Association and Your Job Hunt |
| 19. Developing Relationship with Recruiters | 20. Researching Companies and Applying on Their Websites | 21. Networking |
| 22. Build Your Personal Brand | 23. Beware: Your Social Media Profile Can Cost You a Job | 24. Paid and Unpaid Internships |
| 25. Manage Your Time and Search Seriously | 26. Interview Techniques | 27. The Offer Stage |
| 28. What if You're Unemployed? | 29. Getting a Job as a New Grad | 30. Online Job Boards & Resources |
| 31. Recruitment Agency Resources | Conclusion | |
| | | |

Steven Mostyn, MBA had extensive experience as a recruiter in North America. He has helped over 1000 job seekers to get job in various professions. But he noticed that all these job seekers, whether those seeking jobs for the first time or those seeking higher positions, “had one thing in common: they lacked basic job searching skills” (p. 10).

Indeed, the contents of this book are useful not only to the first-time job seekers but also for all others who seek change in positions and/or higher positions using their qualifications.

The language and style used in this book are easy to follow and use when we plan to seek jobs. We highly recommend this book to students, new graduates and also the teachers who are assigned to help the college graduates to get jobs as soon as they graduate. The book is useful for the graduates who earnestly wait for campus recruitment teams to arrive on their campus.

Steven Mostyn, MBA presents the form, function and structure recruiting channels available to graduates in western countries. In colleges and universities in India and South Asia, those who are in charge of helping the graduates in getting jobs will do well if they identify local channels, in addition to traditional on-campus recruiting companies. Each company/corporation has its own form and manner of recruitment. However, reading this book and keeping it as a book reference will help all of us.

Please read once again the list of chapters and note the order in which the chapters are presented and the likely comments and help, they would help all of us. The author Steven Mostyn, MBA comes side by side with us when we think and worry about seeking jobs after graduation, etc.

Chapters 20. Researching Companies and Applying on Their Websites, 26. Interview Techniques and 23. Beware: Your Social Media Profile Can Cost You a Job help us to focus on developing our skills in finding vacancies in India. All of us who are already in various jobs in private sector, have our own stories to tell others how we worked hard in a systemic manner to get the positions we are in. Getting a job in government service in various states in India is unfortunately a different story.

For every point presented in this book, author Steven Mostyn, MBA presents examples. Most of these examples are from the western nations. But the examples are from various fields of enterprise: politics, industry, scientific research, civil service, military service, movies, and so on. Initial failure in our effort in getting a job we apply for is unavoidable. Steven Mostyn, MBA declares. “the difference between success and failure is that, despite obstacles, a successful person never gives up” (p. 12). We tend to become negative in our approach when we fail to get a job. We put the blame on others. The author Steven Mostyn, MBA wants us to remain positive throughout our career, including when we seek jobs. He also offers ways to remain positive.

All the 31 chapters of this book offer excellent guidelines and encourage the job seekers to proceed step by step to reach their goal of getting a suitable job.

Once again, we highly commend the book ***JOB SEARCH: Fundamentals of Effective Job Hunting, Resumes, and Interviews*** by Steven Mostyn, MBA for the students as well as the faculty members.

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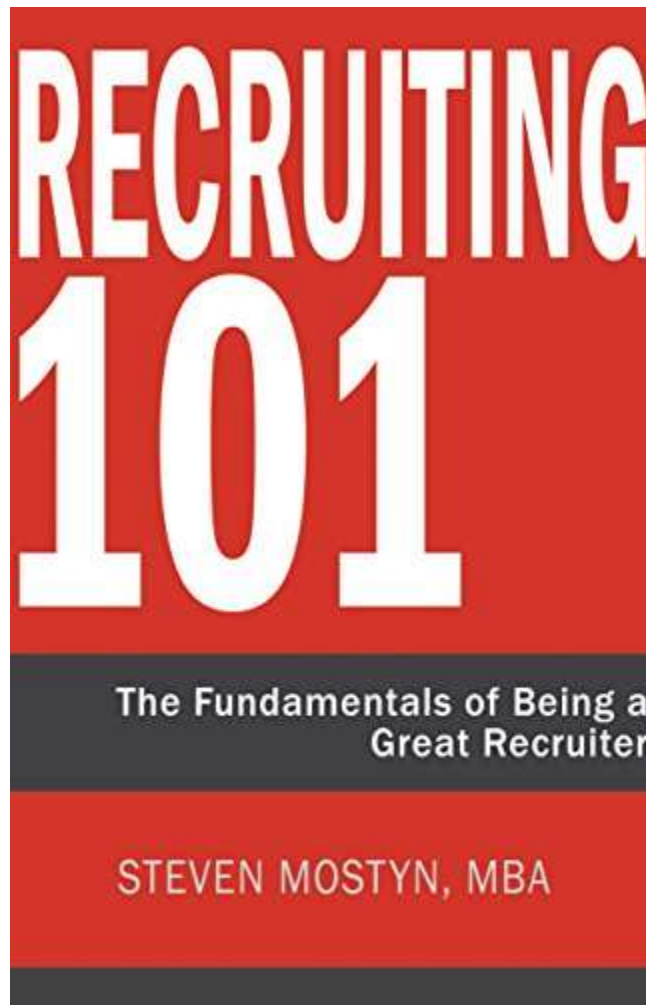
Introducing a Book:

RECRUITING 101

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Courtesy: https://www.amazon.com/Recruiting-101-Fundamentals-Being-Recruiter-ebook/dp/B01M8LXU6Q/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=RECRUITING+101&qid=1617246208&s=digital-text&sr=1-3

Students and Research Scholars as well as the Faculty members who specialize or wish to specialize in HR will benefit greatly reading this book ***RECRUITING 101*** by Steven Mostyn, MBA. The book contains 187 pages with 15 chapters plus a Concluding Section. This is a well-organized and well-structured book. Language used is simple and so all our undergraduate and post-graduate students can easily read it on their own and understand the contents discussed with examples. The book presents vivid examples from leading international corporations. Additional examples can be easily obtained if our students read the business section of our leading daily newspapers such as *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Statesman*, etc.

The author Steven Mostyn, MBA offers “Fifteen Fundamentals to Being a Great Recruiter”. Each fundamental feature is dealt with in different chapters.

- 1: Motivation
- 2: Relationship Management
- 3: Intake Sessions
- 4: Domain Knowledge
- 5: Recruitment Marketing
- 6: Your Own Personal Recruitment Brand.
- 7: Sourcing
- 8: The Art of Cold Calling
- 9: Candidate Engagement and Habits
- 10: Interviewing and Selecting Candidates
- 11: Fast Hiring Process
- 12: Closing Candidates
- 13: The Client and Candidate Experience
- 14: Data Driven Results
- 15: Never Stop Learning

CONCLUSION

The author Steven Mostyn, MBA begins with an experiential truth: “To truly be successful, an individual has to taste some form of failure and move on to greater heights.” The author lists 10 famous individuals who met with some form of failure in their lives and yet came out successfully to help the entire world (Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein, Dr. Seuss, J.K. Rowling, Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey, Steve Jobs, Sylvester Stallone, Walt Disney, and Winston Churchill). Autobiographies and biographies of Great Indian Leaders and Leaders from other

South Asian leaders in politics as well as in business offer interesting and encouraging examples to our students.

Each chapter of this well-written and easy to follow book offers guidelines for us. For example, chapter 1 raises the question how do you stay positive? It offers 10 recommendations.

Chapter 2 focuses on developing effective relationships with our hiring managers. Sometimes the hiring manager may have some misconstrued ideas about the recruiter. The author suggests ways to overcome this situation. He also emphasized the recruiter needs to maintain good relations with all. At the same time, “some relationships are not worth keeping.”

Chapter 3 is on **in-take sessions**. “... an intake session is where a recruiter gets the verbal blue-prints from the hiring manager.” The author argues that if we do not have the right type of intake session, we will simply be wasting time. The chapter presents “the art of a good intake session” and related matters.

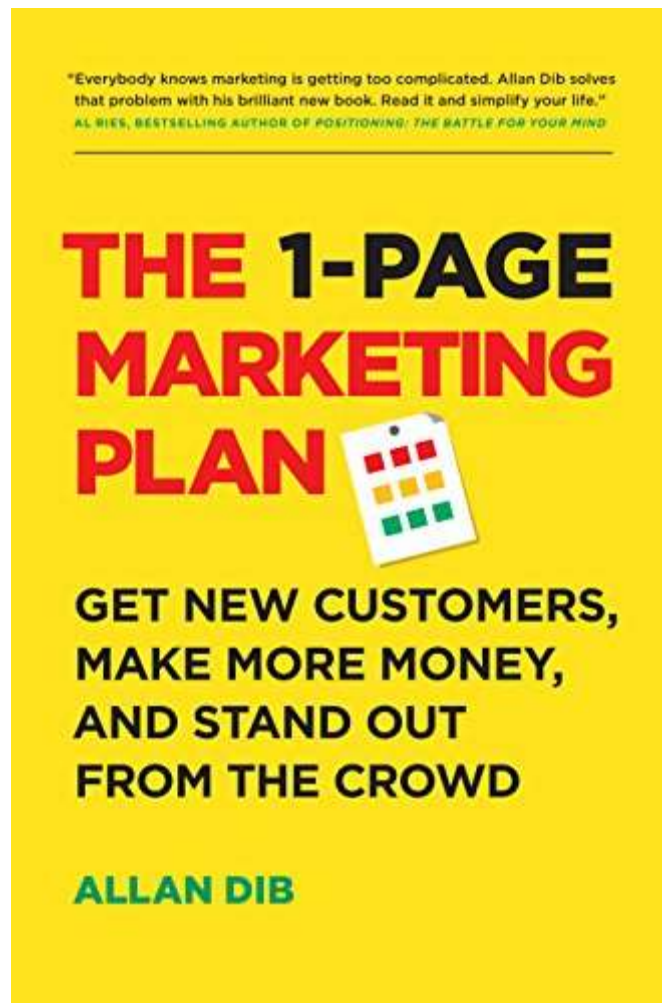
All the chapters carry important aspects of recruiting. The prospective recruiter is guided step by step. We highly commend the book to students and research scholars as well as the faculty members who teach courses on HRD. Indian and South Asian students, research scholars and the faculty members should collect relevant information from existing practices in corporations as well as campus recruitment groups to add to the information and processes suggested in this book. Contextualization of concepts and ideas always will help business enterprise and administration in India and South Asia.

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Introducing a Book:
THE 1-PAGE MARKETING PLAN
Author: Allan Dib
Kindle Edition



Courtesy: https://www.amazon.com/1-Page-Marketing-Plan-Customers-Money-ebook/dp/B01B35M3SM/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1V2VQXQPESC7J&keywords=the+1-page+marketing+plan&qid=1619237907&s=books&sprefix=The+1-page%2Caps%2C272&sr=1-1

The subtitle on the book cover reveals the goal of the book: “GET NEW CUSTOMERS, MAKE MORE MONEY, AND STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD”! The book is divided into three ACTS.

ACT 1 The “Before” Phase has three chapters:

Chapter 1: Selecting Your Target Market

Chapter 2: Crafting Your Message.

Chapter 3: Reaching Prospects with Advertising Media.

Act 2 The “During” Phase has three chapters:

Chapter 4: Capturing Leads

Chapter 5: Nurturing Leads

Chapter 6: Sales Conversion

Act 3 The “After” Phase has three chapters.

Chapter 7: Delivering a World-Class Experience

Chapter 8: Increasing Customer Lifetime Value

Chapter 9: Orchestrating and Stimulating Referrals

At the end we have Conclusion, followed by an interesting note “About the Author”.

The author Allan Dib begins with a truthful statement that we are all going into business to make money. Anyone who has carefully observed the small businesses in our bazars will readily agree to this description: “It’s very common for small businesses never to grow past the point at which they generate just enough profit for the owner(s) to make modest living.” On the other hand, big business owners, such as Mukesh Ambani and others, are able to build their own empire all over the world. Throughout the book, the author Allan Din offers insightful comments based on his observations. For example, he lists the complaints of small business owners:

- “. It’s too competitive.
- . The margins are too low.
- . Online discounters are taking customers away.
- . Advertising no longer works.”

The author emphasizes well-thought out plan for any business we want to start. Our professional qualifications will bring success only if we have a well-thought out plan. We should know the difference between the wrong kind of plan and the correct well-thought out business plan.

The author offers many easy to follow examples for every concept discussed in this book. Consider this quote: “The Internet has literally opened up a world of competitors. Whereas previously your competitors may have been across the road, now they can be on the other side of the globe”. This book offers many solutions to face the current situation with confidence, well thought out plan and diligent enterprise. Traders’ associations in every state in India is complaining about the intervention of online companies such as Flipkart, amazon, and other companies. The challenge before the small business traders now is to how they can get along with these online companies and make money even as they have their own ground business in our bazars. Young entrepreneurs and business administration and commerce graduates must read this book to get an understanding of the problems faced and how these problems could be overcome. The book distinguishes between strategy and tactics. It emphasizes the need to develop tactics. The ultimate goal is to retain the customers and bring in more customers from all directions. Tactics to help retaining customers and bringing in new customers are discussed well in this easy to read book. The book discourages to simply model the marketing strategy of the small business based on the strategies adopted by big businesses. We need to use our money carefully to meet our needs.

The book offers practical suggestion in all the chapters. Anyone who wants to start a small business or who owns a small business or who will soon be joining their family business will benefit reading this book. MBA graduates will sharpen their business counselling skills by reading this book.

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