



This was a fairly quick read that I picked off the shelf in Foyles when going to pick up another book that I ordered online.

This was an interesting tale of the everything store. It provided some interesting insights on what, I am sure will become the world's biggest retailer.

The book opens with the following quote:

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*“When you are eighty years old, and in a quiet moment of reflection narrating for only yourself the most personal version of your life story, the telling that will be most compact and meaningful will be most compact and meaningful will be the series of choices you have made. In the end, we are our choices.” – Jeff Bezos*

The author described Amazon as a company that was among the first to see the boundless promise of the Internet, and the company that ended forever changing the way we shop and read. He goes on to say that the company has nearly perfected the art of instant gratification, delivering digital products in seconds and their physical incarnations in a few days.

Throughout the book there are many analogies that talk about Besos's single mindedness who is indifferent to the opinions of others. He is described as an avid problem solver, a man who has a chess grand master's view of the competitive landscape, and he applies the focus of an obsessive-compulsive to pleasing customers and providing services like free shipping.

The book talks about the idiosyncratic customs of the company. For example Power Point decks or slide presentations are never used in meetings. Instead, employees are required to

write six page narratives laying out their points in prose.

When opening Amazon Bezos's original aim was to provide an everything store; something nearly 20 years on he has nearly achieved. However he initially wanted to capture it's essence - unlimited selection - in at least once category - Books. It was interesting to read that there was initially a negative response from publishers over the review features on the site (as it allowed both negative and positive reviews).

The book talks about how e-commerce allowed customers to have a personalised shopping experience, something that was not possible with traditional retail. However he did take ideas from other traditional ideas; particularly drawing ideas from Sam Walton of Walmart.

The book also described the way that Amazon attempted to remove the friction of online buying. This was achieved by allowing 'one click' ordering, and also by providing free super saver shipping.

As part of the companies early history it's core values were agreed:

- Customer Obsession
- Frugality
- Bias for Action
- Ownership
- High bar for talent
- Innovation.

Throughout the book it there is constant reference to the fact that value trumps everything and the overarching aim of Amazon is to provide value for money for customers.

The book also touches on Bezos's personal leadership style. He does not have one on one meetings with his subordinates as he feels they are a waste of his time.

All in all a fairly quick read that provides an interesting insight into the company that I love to hate!