



Escape from Cubicle Nation: From Corporate Prisoner to Thriving Entrepreneur

Pamela Slim , Guy Kawasaki (Foreword by)

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Despite grim headlines about the economy, you DON'T have to stay in a job you intensely hate. There's a better opportunity waiting out there, and escaping from cubicle nation is easier than you think.

Pamela Slim spent a decade traveling all over the country as a self-employed trainer for large corporations. She was surprised to find that many of the most successful employees at these companies harbored secret dreams of breaking out to start their own business. They would pull her aside after a meeting and whisper, "I would love to work for myself, but have no idea how to get started. How did you do it?"

So Pamela started a blog-Escape from Cubicle Nation-to share her experience and advice. Soon, questions and stories poured in from corporate prisoners around the world. As her blog gained popularity, she also interviewed some of the brightest experts in entrepreneurship on topics from finance to branding to marketing via social networks.

This book includes Pamela's very best material, based on thousands of conversations and reader submissions. It provides everything you'll need to consider before making a major change-not just the nuts and bolts of starting a business, but a full discussion of the emotional issues involved. Pamela knows firsthand that leaving corporate life can be very scary, especially if you have a family and other obligations. Fears and self-defeating thoughts often hold people back from pursuing an extremely gratifying solo career.

Get ready to learn your real options, make an informed decision, and maybe, just maybe, escape from cubicle nation.

Escape from Cubicle Nation: From Corporate Prisoner to Thriving Entrepreneur Details

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Author : Pamela Slim , Guy Kawasaki (Foreword by)

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Caroline Cameron says

What I liked most about this book is that Pamela Sim tells it like it is! With insight, humour, research and experience she explains both the up and downsides of quitting your day job to follow your passion and make a living from it.

Whilst highlighting the opportunities and potential pitfalls, she provides a great resource with helpful tools to know what to look out for and what to do.

As an executive career and lifestyle coach I'll certainly be recommending Cubicle Nation to many of my clients who are contemplating their great escape.

Justus says

I suspect this may be a book (like Cradle to Cradle) which I read thinking, "hmm not bad..." and five years later think "what the heck did I see in that book?" But that said, since I'm only toying with the idea of starting a firm, I think it was a useful book to get the brain thinking about the issues. Its clearly written, encouraging but not too rah-rah, and a quick read. And yes, its definitely a book geared towards "consultants" and not brick/mortar businesses.

I'll leave it to real entrepreneurs as to whether it is a valuable book, but I will say that I will keep studying and thinking about the startup, and there are a bunch of books/sites I'm gonna follow up on, so as an intro book, its done its job.

K.M. says

This book is full of practical information that answers just about every question I had, as well as many I didn't have, but should have. It was written several years ago but I feel it's every bit as relevant today. I read it in 2 days; I couldn't put it down. Read this book.

Mihai Rosca says

So I jumped into this book, both feet forward, just after the 100\$ Startup. All of this in an orchestrated effort to increase my chances of succeeding in leaving my current job and setting out to embrace new opportunities in my life. This is the place where you're expecting a "And you know what? I did it!". Well, not so fast. I just finished the book. The results I'm sure will come later.

But more on the actual book.

Without a doubt I actually believe Pamela Slim when she talks about what to do and what not to do when starting a business. One of the main rules when creating a business is that you actually have to know what

you are talking about if you want to have an important progress. And with Pamela Slim, her experience somehow transpires from those pages making this book very believable. That's why I finished it and that's why I stand behind my rating.

At first glance I almost missed the way of putting together all of the chapters. For instance the chapter where you have to do some soul searching and you have to envision your perfect life. "Well, that's all nice and idealistic but I need some down to earth advice here", right? Right. You'll get that too along the way, but when you take two steps backwards and realize that the book not only tries to tie up all of the practical aspects, but also put you on the perfect track for you, right from the design phase, that's when things get interesting.

I'm not going to give you spoilers, I'm just going to tell you that it's a book worth reading and that you should have it close to you. Sooner or later, you'll come back to it.

Gina says

The life coach that I'm working with recommended this book for me to read. I read the first 5 chapters since those are the ones that have the exercises for you to figure out what floats your boat. The exercises laid out make sense and I believe if you really follow through, you will discover many things about yourself.

One thing I didn't like was the swipes that the author, Pamela Slim, keeps taking at Timothy Ferris, author of The Four-Hour Workweek. Mostly they are snide little snarky barbs which seems to indicate to me that she didn't really read his book, as she accuses people of not doing with "Do What You Love, The Money Will Follow" by Barbara Sher. Aside from that, I think it's a great and very helpful book.

The rest of the book is focused toward people starting their own business. Since I'm not doing that right now, or possibly ever after completing my self-discovery journey, I passed on reading it.

I highly recommend this book.

~*~*~*~*~*~*

05/01/10: I did end up reading a few more chapters, mostly skimming and hopping around; and that decided me to change my ranking from 4 stars to 3. It's obvious that Pamela Slim prefers everything completely planned out to the nth degree, written on exhaustive lists and takes things very literally. (Which, if you are starting a business, is good.) Among the the additional chapters I read I found more swipes at other authors. Personally I think that when someone begins a sentence with "I don't mean any disrespect...", disrespect is exactly what they mean. While everyone is entitled to their opinions and biases, I don't think it's professional to tear down other people to make your point look better. Slim mentions that she went to the Martha Beck life coaching training and worships the ground Ms. Beck walks on. Yet tearing down other authors left a bad taste in my mouth for Ms. Slim and her mentor's teachings, even though they have very great value in helping a person define what it is they want to do in life. IMHO, a better approach to mentioning other books would have been to say that the other books are great at giving you the possibilities for your life and if you need more of a step-by-step approach, you'll find it here in my book.

Also I've read many books put out by Penquin Publishers and have not been exceptionally impressed by their editing before publication. I found a sentence that made no sense whatsoever, no matter how many times I re-read it and a placeholder for a table insertion.

I still recommend this book, and will, myself, be working through some of the exercises in the earlier chapters to help figure out the direction I want to pursue next. My recommendation: read many of the books

on the market and take what you need from each. No one person has all the answers.

Vivek says

When people dream of quitting their jobs while banging away at a rock in BigCo they keep searching for information that will help them take the first step.

Unfortunately the most likely kind of information one would find is blog posts online about technology startups. And a lot of them. Also you'd find a long list of books which delved into the "theory" of quitting, the courage it takes and other things of little value.

This book though is different. It has very concrete and practical methods on figuring out what you want to do and how to get there. The author realizes that every person is different so a one size fits all solution that is bandied about by other "parachute" books fall short in real life.

What you need is practical advice. Try A then try B and then C etc ... And this is exactly what Pamela Provides in this book. Infact it even has some "rah-rah" stuff in an aim to be a comprehensive book which takes you from thoughts all the way to your first steps in getting out of that damn cubicle.

Yes it'll be hard - very hard but it'll be worth it. I think everyone is allowed to be unhappy at their job for 1 year. If your unhappy after that then quit - it doesnt matter what your doing. 1 year of unhappiness is more than enough for 1 lifetime.

Best of luck on making the leap! But buy the book and read every page before you do!

Chad Warner says

Have you ever dreamed about quitting your day job to launch a business? Most people have, but almost none of them venture beyond dreaming. When you're ready to seriously consider your escape from cubicle nation, this is the book for you! I found it both inspirational and practical.

After listening to Pamela Slim's Escape from Cubicle Nation Podcast for over a year, I decided to read her book. This comprehensive guide to entrepreneurship is an excellent blend of concepts, anecdotes, and instructions. What sets this book apart from others about starting a business is how it addresses the emotional nature of the transition from corporate life to self-employment. It's also packed with advice about the usual entrepreneurial topics: choosing a business, finding mentors, branding, finances, legal issues, and insurance and benefits.

Many entrepreneurial books preach that you should embrace your dreams and take a leap of faith. Slim's advice is the opposite: be realistic about the entrepreneurial life and carefully plan before jumping. Create a very specific, detailed "ideal life plan" and use it as a blueprint. You can download this Life Plan from the book's website. This plan defines your ideal work style, work environment, target clients, financial goals, and how you spend your ideal day. It helps you set goals in preparing for self-employment and building your business, and keeps you moving toward your ideal life.

Echoing Jim Collins, Slim says that there are 3 factors for figuring out what work you should do: what people will pay you to do, what you have passion for, and what you're "genetically encoded" to do. You can achieve business success without all 3, but you'll more naturally reach satisfying, fulfilling success when you have them all.

Slim strongly suggests that you test your business idea as side job before quitting your full-time job. She calls this "making sure there's water in the pool before you jump". Keep the side business until you're too busy to keep your day job, since this is the sign that your business has a market. Always have a backup plan (or several) in case you fail (remember, be realistic!).

Slim references many popular authorities in the entrepreneurial world, including Timothy Ferriss, Jim Collins, Michael Gerber, Seth Godin, and Guy Kawasaki. I thought that incorporating and expanding on their best advice made her book better. You'll get more out of this book if you're familiar with their works.

Here are a few additional ideas I liked, to use once you've started your business:

Embrace "beginner mind": the curiosity and openness that arises from knowing that you don't know everything. Steer clear of "expert mind", the mindset in which you think you're a master and have nothing more to learn.

Charge based on the value you deliver to your clients; avoid charging hourly, because it doesn't scale.

Avoid analysis paralysis; prototype rapidly to keep moving forward.

Use "just-in-time learning"; we learn best when we have a clear goal and can immediately apply knowledge, so don't spend too much time learning ahead of time.

Ben says

Similar in vein to The 4-Hour Workweek in that it describes the process to take to become an entrepreneur. I think Pamela Slim did a better job of extracting what that process is whereas The 4-Hour Workweek told a specific account based on Tim Ferris' own experience of how to start and run a business.

Both of these books seem to focus on internet based businesses, or at least starting on the internet. While I agree that there is more money to be had there, I feel like books that describe this process are lacking. For example, if one wanted to start a chip manufacturer, would you start by building a website and clients? What about a defense contractor? What about a company that helps rural poor in the 3rd world?

I thought the exercises contained in this book were/are extremely helpful. There are a lot of people in my life that don't know what they want out of it yet who could learn more about themselves by doing these exercises.

Slim's formula for starting a business is simple: 1. Find you. 2. Find your business idea(s). 2.5. Find your network of mentors, etc. 3. Test the ideas. 4. Plan like mad. 5. Make sure you've accounted for all of the loose ends. 6. Make the decision to quit your job or not.

She doesn't recommend quitting your job, especially if you don't know what you want to do next. I appreciate this book more as a reference than as a narrative (which is not how it was written) and will return to it again in the future.

Jonathan Putera says

The first half of the book was brilliant. Pamela Slim shares some good insight on how to take carefully jump

from the corporate world to the entrepreneur lifestyle. It does tend to get a bit repetitive on the latter parts of the book but still overall still a good read for those of us who are still unsure of making the change that most of us want to happen at one point in our lives.

Devin says

If you work in a cubicle, you already know how bad it is whether you'd like to admit it or not. This book will make you admit it and then have you running and screaming out of the office and permanently far away from ever participating in a corporation ever again while at the same time inspire you to do something better.

Horacio says

Some very good advice, testimonials, tricks and tools buried in a lot of fill and somewhat disorganized info. I think it would be most useful to evaluate if you got what it takes to change the corporate life with self-employment, but maybe not so useful to use as a reference when you already took the decision.

Linda B says

I think this book is better for people who want to become successful consultants or life coaches. I want to open a bookstore, and the bulk of this book focused on:

- a. having the guts to quit your job (um, did that months ago)
- b. deciding what type of business to open

Also, this really is meant only for corporate workers who are already extremely familiar with business terminology. My background is in Latin American Studies, so I think I need a book that breaks down business basics.

This book is good for those who are scared of quitting their job, because the author basically reassures you that you can quit for half the book. Nothing wrong with that, just not what I was looking for. Great title though.

Lonnie Tapia says

Pam's spirit is infectious. I knew I found a kindred spirit when I met her. And I knew I had to read her book. Reading this book is like sitting by the fire and talking about your dreams and goals - then getting off your ass and doing something about it.

This guide helps the reader create the path they want out of life through a whole lot of open heart dialogue, examples, fantastic resources and a little humor.

Quinn says

My biggest issue with this book is half of it was written by someone else in another book and then quoted by Ms. Slim. If you want to read this book you should just read the following more enjoyable, more informative books:

Good to Great

Freakanomics

4-hour Work Week

How to Win Friends and Influence People

Kien says

Writing this book is no piece of cake. The book was evidently written in a long time, with lots of dedication. The author must have gone through loads of conversations, interviews, books, blogs, and websites to give this many examples of all topics. The knowledge presented here is very broad and covers every essential point for any entrepreneur to start his or her own business.
