



## **The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career**

*Reid Hoffman, Ben Casnocha*

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**The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career** Reid Hoffman , Ben Casnocha  
6 hrs and 41 mins

A blueprint for thriving in your job and career in today's challenging world of work by applying the lessons of Silicon Valley's most innovative entrepreneurs.

The career escalator is jammed at every level. Unemployment rates are sky-high. Creative disruption is shaking every industry. Global competition for jobs is fierce. The employer-employee pact is over, and traditional job security is a thing of the past.

Here, LinkedIn cofounder and chairman Reid Hoffman and author Ben Casnocha show how to accelerate your career in today's competitive world. The key is to manage your career as if it were a start-up business: a living, breathing, growing start-up of you.

Why? Start-ups - and the entrepreneurs who run them - are nimble. They invest in themselves. They build their professional networks. They take intelligent risks. They make uncertainty and volatility work to their advantage. These are the very same skills professionals need to get ahead today.

This book isn't about cover letters or resumes. Instead, you will learn the best practices of Silicon Valley start-ups, and how to apply these entrepreneurial strategies to your career. Whether you work for a giant multinational corporation, a small local business, or are launching your own venture, you need to know how to: Adapt your career plans as you change, the people around you change, and industries change Develop a competitive advantage to win the best jobs and opportunities Strengthen your professional network by building powerful alliances and maintaining a diverse mix of relationships Find the unique breakout opportunities that massively accelerate career growth Take proactive risks to become more resilient to industry tsunamis Tap your network for information and intelligence that help you make smarter decisions

A revolutionary new guide to thriving in today's fractured world of work, the strategies in this book will help you survive and thrive and achieve your boldest professional ambitions. The Start-Up of You empowers you to become the CEO of your career and take control of your future.

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## **The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career Details**

Date : Published February 14th 2012 by Crown Business (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Reid Hoffman , Ben Casnocha

Format : Kindle Edition 274 pages

Genre : Business, Nonfiction, Entrepreneurship, Self Help, Personal Development

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## From Reader Review The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career for online ebook

### Juanmi says

Unfortunately cannot remember much after some months of reading it. Should write down my notes earlier :S

\* Re-readability: yes

\* Note: 4/5

The motivation for the book is one idea: the steady career paths of the past are gone. Today's environment is extremely dynamic and we should be adaptable and ready to change jobs multiple times.

The solution for the authors is to think one's life and career a start-up, or more simply put, be pro-active, create an identity that goes beyond your current employer, and seek to fit the malleable markets. The authors stress: we are always in a beta version of ourselves. Flexibility to change (pivot!) and learn is crucial.

Key to create an identity is to build a strong network, for new career opportunities and knowledge tapping. Within this, I found 3 ideas to be the most compelling ones:

\* My value in the market is I^We (myself to the power of my network). That is, sharpen your skills as an individual, and then expand your reach exponentially with your network.

\* Strong ties vs weak ties: strong ones are typically people with very similar backgrounds like you. You can heavily rely on them. However, their number of nodes is small and because of the similar backgrounds, they don't offer you much information/opportunities. On the other side, weak ties, though weaker in reliability, are the ones that can offer you many more opportunities, for example when you are thinking to change jobs. Weak ties are many and can bring you to different environments.

\* Our network size expands up to our 2nd-degree and 3rd-degree connections.

Finally, the book ends each chapter with proposed practical exercises to improving your network. I haven't done these; will do soon and that's why I want to skim-read again the book. It's a book that is read very fast.

The ideas are simple yet to the point and with practical advice.

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### Brenda B says

My take-aways:

1 "The faster way to change yourself is to hang out with people who are already the way you want to be."

2 The "Interesting People Fund" concept. Set aside a bit of money for going out for coffee, lunch, or flying to Boston for a meeting with interesting people. It's an investment in yourself.

3. "The best way to make sure that lucky things happen is to make sure a lot of things happen."

4. (Talking about negativity bias) "To keep our ancestors alive, Mother Nature evolved a brain that routinely tricked them into making three mistakes: overestimating threats, underestimating opportunities, and underestimating resources (for dealing with threats and fulfilling opportunities). The result is that we are programmed to overestimate the risk in any given situation." (Even when there is not much risk) (side note: I highly recommend the book Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman. Excellent book to think about thinking.)
5. In any given situation, just ask yourself "is the worst-case scenario of this decision tolerable or intolerable? " (Change is good, and usually tolerable!)
6. "You'll never be fully certain. Don't conflate uncertainty with risk." They suggest this task: reflect for a few minutes on risk in your life. Rank the projects you're involved in by risk, from most to least risky. Then think about the downside and upside possibilities. Where there is uncertainty are you mistakenly ascribing risk?
7. "Permanent beta." Best phrase of the book. My goal is forever to be a work in progress, and to always be starting.

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### **Ichinkhorloo Khosbayar says**

Read the book in Mongolian language. Worth reading for those who start their career or in an ambiguous situation. One of the messages clearly delivered was 'get to network'.

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### **Vikrama Dhiman says**

Possibly made a lot of sense and was way more useful when it was written. It looks dated and some of the advice is table stakes these days.

However, it still has interesting insights. Primary ones:

- 1 "Interesting People Fund": Set aside money for coffee, lunch, or travel to meet interesting people.
2. "The best way to make sure that lucky things happen is to make sure a lot of things happen."
3. "To keep our ancestors alive, Mother Nature evolved a brain that routinely tricked them into making three mistakes: overestimating threats, underestimating opportunities, and underestimating resources (for dealing with threats and fulfilling opportunities). The result is that we are programmed to overestimate the risk in any given situation."
4. "is the worst-case scenario of this decision tolerable or intolerable? "
5. "You'll never be fully certain. Don't conflate uncertainty with risk."

More importantly, one key insight for me was to be ok making mistakes - wrong jobs, wrong relationships, wrong investments. Do more things, new things. And inspect and adapt.

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### **Amanda Spacaj-Gorham says**

When the former Executive VP of PayPal and co-founder of LinkedIn writes a book on networking and

entrepreneurship, it's a good bet he knows what he's talking about and your time would be well spent reading it.

His analogies and concrete examples of networking done well bring the strategic advice to life for the reader. The personal perspective on how networking between the former founders of PayPal influenced further career moves between the one time co-workers vividly painted a picture of mutual benefit and how to maintain connections. As a Ben Franklin enthusiast, I also enjoyed the reflection back to Benjamin Franklin's Junto, and how this early American networking group created benefits that reached far beyond personal gain to individual members.

Somewhere about 2/3 of the way through, I hit a bit of a snag, where the networking techniques seemed to repeat earlier passages in the book. Fortunately the repetitive section was not long and it soon resumed forward momentum.

The online executive summary is a great way to review the main points and refresh one's memory after reading the book, while in now way does the summary convey the spirit of the full book. It is not a difficult read and it is well worth reading in its entirety. The book finishes with an invitation for readers to visit The Start-Up of You website a mylink text < The Start Up of You Website /a>

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### **???? ????? says**

I stopped writing reviews but this one is a life changer, either you're an employee, young entrepreneur or a business man, you should definitely read it, it's a lifetime experience in a capsule. By one of the most successful people in our generation.

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### **Suzanne says**

Other reviews provide a good summary of what's in the book so I'm just sharing some disparate things that stood out for me:

\* Upfront, Reid Hoffman states that this is not a job hunting manual. It's about giving you a mindset that you need to adapt to the future. In his true fashion of always thinking about how he can make an impact on the world, he says "More broadly, society flourishes when people think entrepreneurially. More world problems would be solved - and solved faster - if people practice the values laid out in the pages ahead. This is a book about you, and it's also about improving the society around you. That starts with each individual."

\* In talking about professional allies, he mentions his friendship with Mark Pincus. They invested in Friendster together back in 2002. In 2003, they bought the Six Degrees patent. When Peter Thiel and Hoffman were set to put the first money into Facebook in 2004, Hoffman suggested that Mark take half of his investment allocation! "As a matter of course, I wanted to involve Mark in any opportunity that seemed intriguing, especially one that played to his social networking background - it's what you do in an alliance."

\* One of my favorite words is serendipity. So, I loved it when the book revealed how it was created. "An English novelist named Horace Walpole coined the word to describe the phenomenon (accidental good fortune) he first observed in an old Persian fairy tale called "The Three Princes of Serendip." In the story, the king sends his three sons on a journey to distant lands. The princes come upon some problems; at one point they are accused of thievery. Yet they exercise such impeccable judgment and insight ... that their father and other rulers decide to grant them the opportunity to become rulers and kings themselves. In a letter to a friend, Walpole says "serendipitous" is how he refers to the accidental good fortune of the Serendip princes; they got lucky, to be sure, but they also acted sagely and wisely in turning unexpected setbacks into opportunities. Winning the lottery is blind luck. Serendipity involves being alert to potential opportunity and acting on it."

Overall, this is a great book for a high school student or college student. It's also helpful for people who need help shifting their mindset for how to deal with the realities of today's job market. As you would expect, there are a lot of references to LinkedIn, but they make sense in the context. What is particularly handy is the list of To Do items at the end of each chapter, divided into what to do in the next day, the next week and the next month.

There is a ton of excellent advice in this book. As it's a quick read, it's worth checking out as you're likely to come away with several actionable ideas (or reminders of things you've been thinking about doing) that are worth implementing immediately.

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### **Robert says**

Another great book on the power of networking. It is co-authored by the creator of LinkedIn, which has surprisingly to many, been around for a lot longer than new comers like Facebook. The book is primarily aimed at those people on the career treadmill looking to make a change, however the information provided is certainly applicable to anyone.

This book addresses 'networking' as something you give before you receive. It demonstrates how cultivating a wide and diverse network is what will not only support you through all phases of your career but also provide you that elusive opportunity that you never thought would be attainable. The book shows you how to go about building and utilizing a network in an intelligent manner rather than merely collecting 'friends'. Most importantly, it demonstrates that you need to not only nurture and build this network but you also need to contribute back to it if you plan to benefit.

Too many people and businesses scoff at the concept of 'effective' networking. They view it the old world thinking of 'schmoozing'. Nothing could be further from the truth in today's terms. Tools such as LinkedIn and Facebook make the whole networking process so much easier but to be effective you still need to create a system to gain the most advantage. That is what this book will show you.

The book is easy to read and very enjoyable. It provides practical examples of effective networking as well as action points for you to take away and implement. There is little doubt that if you take this book to heart and implement even some of the suggestions it contains your chances of networking success are far greater. Take a leaf from the book of these authors who really know their subject and start implementing one of the most powerful success opportunities you have available today - business networking.

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## Kara says

I make it a point not to take career advice from people who make money off of giving me career advice; however, I am thinking of living by example and making money off of people for giving them career advice.

But I wasn't looking for career advice from this book. Someone recommended it to me and thought it was something I'd like to read. I didn't get it at first. I care little about advancing in my career, and I only need to make enough money to live my life. You know, just enough money to do the things I really want to do, such as traveling aimlessly around the country in a beat-up convertible; broadening my mind by learning new and exciting things; and creating a great civilization for my grandchildren to inherit.

In other words, all the things I'm not doing while I'm writing technical documentation for a company that still codes in VB6.

I don't do any of these things because I am crippled by a fear of failure I developed whilst growing up in a depressed Rust Belt city, where failure surrounded all of us, squeezing us until we were suffocated of hope that things would work themselves out in the end. That fear has stuck to - perhaps even developed - my psyche, and it clings to me just like the stench of 100 years of industrialization has clung to my hometown.

I'm stuck in the Rust Belt; I am the Rust Belt. I am the old GM plant Hoffman discusses in this book, unwilling to take chances because I'm getting by well enough, and so ensconced in the idea that I'll be okay as long as I work hard and keep my head down that I've failed to notice that everything I've ever wanted out of my life is waving goodbye from the backseat of a convertible.

Was some of the advice in this book generic and too idealistic? Yes. Not everyone has the same resources that Hoffman had; not everyone has parents who'll let them take up residence in their basement while they execute Big Plan A, B, and C, and some people begin their adult lives with no networking contacts other than drug abusers and alcoholics. This is not a good book for people who are coming from nothing. They need support and aid that this book cannot offer them.

But while reading this book, I realized that *I* do have a bigger network of people than I thought I did. Not a fail-safe net, but a bunch of people whom I've met through jobs or through social networking that may toss down a rope should I take a risk and fall into a pit - or even people who, if they don't have a rope available, can find someone else who has a rope to extend to me.

At the very least, there are people who'll let me crash on their couches for a couple of days while I seek out the unknown.

I'm a social person, but it never occurred to me to ask anyone in my web of online and business contacts for advice or for a favor. I may not be as alone as I thought I was - what a comforting thought!

I currently have no plan to use this book for, but I've had the good luck (or was it foresight?) to surround myself with intellectual and talented people from all walks of life. And perhaps a midnight breakfast at Perkins with some of them for a night of banter and life talk will give me some ideas to start a plan.

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## **Abeer Alamri says**

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## **Bonnie says**

What a waste of time this is. There is really no information that cannot be found in 100 (1000?) other business books that are better. This is an extended commercial for LinkedIn (which I use and really like for the record, but I don't need to read the infomercial.) Also, some of the message seems to be "its who you know." True dat, but not very helpful advice unless you are teaching people how to connect.

By way of confession I will say I don't really like many business self-help books. I read them because it is my business to help people grow their businesses. To be good at my job I need to share what I know, and what other successful professionals have learned. I am always grateful for any new insights I can get from others. It is rare, no matter how little I like a book, that I feel I came away with nothing new. This is the case here though. That said, if you like these sorts of books and read to get pumped up and inspired, you might like this.

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## **Kit Pang says**

This will be the book that I will be dedicating my time to in 2015 to 'invest in myself'. I found the knowledge in this book to be extremely useful, especially about entrepreneurship, relationship building and self-improvement.

My core takeaway:

Permanent Beta:

1. To always be starting
2. To forever be a work in progress

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## **Bojan Tunguz says**

The basic premise of this book is the following: the entrepreneurial mindset and attitude are essential for anyone's career in today's economy. Thinking like an entrepreneur is not any more reserved just for the ultra-ambitious, well-funded Silicon Valley types; in order to succeed in today's job market everyone has to adopt many of the practices that successful entrepreneurs have been employing for decades. This, in and of itself, seems like a great piece of advice. Unfortunately, this book falls far short of delivering on how to implement

such an approach in most ordinary career paths.

I have for years in fact been adopting the kind of attitude that this book promotes: I've networked like crazy, created substantial online presence, tried to be in tune with the latest technological and professional trends, etc. However, in order to have a career, or even get a job, a lot more is required. It is these other much more crucial steps that I was hoping to learn more about from reading this book. Its authors, Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha, seemed to have exactly the kinds of credentials that would lend itself to revealing interesting and fact-based insights that are otherwise hard to find. My expectations were particularly high since Hoffman is one of the cofounders of LinkedIn. I was hoping that we'd find out some interesting data culled from millions of LinkedIn job searches and professional connections. Unfortunately, all my expectations have fallen way short, and "The Start-up of You" is just another indistinguishable, fluffy career "advice" book, of which there are already way too many on the market.

The book is filled with motivational-speak, with an incessant deluge of phrases that sound meaningful and profound (at least to some people), but are in fact quite vacuous ("Once you catch curiosity, it is (luckily) hard to shake." "Everyone is looking for an opportunity, even if they don't know it."). It is hard to figure out how these pieces of "advice" can in fact contribute to advancing anyone's career. Granted, the book is written with the greatest possible audience in mind, but even so it could have used a lot more concrete actionable advice.

The only examples that are used in this book are those of people who have been very successful entrepreneurs. These kinds of examples are good motivational stories, but are almost useless to the millions of job seekers out there hoping to get their own career off the ground. In the entire book there are virtually no attempts to show how the insights from the career paths of top-dog entrepreneurs translate into the concrete, actionable advice for the rest of us.

Furthermore, almost all of the examples and insights in this book are in one way or another linked with Silicon Valley. That is indeed a wonderful and exciting place, and I have been fortunate enough that I had spent many years working and studying over there. However, Silicon Valley is exceptional in many ways, and the insights gained there do not translate well to the rest of the country, and you are even worse off if you live overseas. Silicon Valley's entrepreneurial spirit has trickled down to the lower professional and social circles. This, however, has not been the case with the rest of the world, and it's unlikely that it will happen any time soon. I still think that the entrepreneurial attitude is worthwhile having; just don't expect any dramatic impact on your career any time soon.

If you are in a tight situation right now when it comes to your career, then reading this book will be a near total waste of time. As already mentioned, it contains almost no concrete, actionable information. If you are relatively secure in your job and just want to gain a better perspective on managing your career, then this book might hold some overall value. Even under such circumstances, though, the information you get will almost certainly be very abstract and not readily applicable to your career path.

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## **Peter says**

An easy read with lots of good nuggets on self-development, properly using your network, and giving back. Probably my favourite book on career advice.

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