1-Page Summary 1-Page Book Summary of Rework

Co-founders Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson of 37signals, a company that creates project-management software and other online management tools, believe that anyone can start and operate a business with fewer resources than they think. Based on the authors’ own startup success, their book *Rework* champions a simpler, cheaper, less labor-intensive way to manage any company.

*Rework*’s less-is-more philosophy deconstructs conventional business wisdom and rewrites it according to today’s Internet-based paradigm. It shows that you don’t need an MBA, outside investors, strategic plans, or a board of directors to launch a business. You also don’t need to work 100 hours per week or hire 100 employees. You don’t even need an office. Instead, reject old-school thinking, embrace simplicity, and run your company like a smart, frugal, well-oiled machine.

In this summary, we’ll cover various elements of Fried and Hansson’s business philosophy, including advice on:

- Ignoring old-school business advice
- Starting and maintaining your business
- Ignoring the competition
- Upgrading and promoting your product
- Hiring employees and helping them thrive
- Managing your business’s reputation

Ignore Old-School Business Myths

Much of what we’ve learned about business is no longer true, but plenty of people still buy into the myths. They’re impressed when you run a big company in a high-rise building with a lot of employees, but they’re not nearly as impressed when you work out of your garage by yourself.

But company growth is highly overrated. What really matters is “appropriate size.” Your one-person company may be far more profitable than someone else’s 100-person company.

Additionally, many people admire workers who burn the midnight oil to make a deadline or give up their weekends to finish a big project. They’re seen as truly dedicated to their company’s success. But workaholism doesn’t turn profits. Productivity occurs when you figure out the fastest, simplest, and most efficient way to get things done—not when you pull all-nighters.

Start Your Business

The best companies are ones that produce a meaningful product—one that has a positive impact on the world. Your product doesn’t have to influence millions of people, but it should make at least a few lives better or easier.

Ideally, your product should also make your own life easier. If you set out to invent something that you personally want or need, you’ll make the best product possible. Many businesses have started this way; James Dyson was vacuuming his house one day and got frustrated by how often the vacuum lost suction, so he invented the Dyson cyclonic vacuum.

Don’t Seek Outside Funding

Don’t fall into the trap of seeking outside funding or borrowing a pile of cash to start your business. Sure, it sounds great to have a big influx of cash to spend. But it comes with strings attached—like a board of directors who will tell you how to run your company. You’ll find yourself working to please your investors rather than your customers.

Do More With Less

You may think you need tons of money to go into business, but you don’t. In fact, you’re better off if you start up your business with as little as possible because it will force you to economize. Don’t hire employees. Don’t rent office space. Don’t pay for advertising. Do everything you can to operate your business on a shoestring.

Don’t view budget constraints or time constraints as negative limits—working with what you have leads to creativity and innovation as you look for inventive ways to cheaply produce an excellent product, and it will help you keep your product simple.

Keep Moving Forward

Once you’ve made a product, it’s time to move forward with releasing it. Most business owners put so much time and energy into creating their product, they’re afraid to release it into the world. They keep tinkering endlessly because they fear it’s not good enough yet.

Don’t put off your launch because you’re trying to attain perfection. Go ahead and unleash the earliest, not-yet-perfect
Make Decisions—Don’t Sit on Them

Don’t let the fear of making a bad decision slow you down or stop you from deciding at all. It’s far more productive to make the wrong decision now than to put off deciding until later. You can build on a less-than-perfect decision by making corrections and alterations, but you can’t build on an empty void in which no decision was made.

Keep Focused on the Core of Your Business

Consider what makes up the foundation of your business and make that your top priority. For example, if you’ve opened a burger joint, focus on the burgers, not the condiments. If you’ve opened a flower shop, focus on the flowers, not the vases. Sure, there’s always other stuff you could work on, but focus on the core.

Maintain Your Momentum

Running a business requires expending energy in many different directions. You need to know when your time and energy would be better spent doing something else. Evaluate whether that energy is well spent by analyzing the value of your projects at frequent intervals:

* Do you understand why you’re doing this project? What are the benefits of completing it? Who will benefit from it?
* Is the problem you’re trying to solve real or imaginary? On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is this problem?
* Is the project you’re working on truly beneficial, or is it just fun to work on?
* If you’re adding a feature or component to a product that already exists, are you adding quantifiable value to the product? Will the new feature have a big impact on how customers use your product, or are you just adding features that don’t really matter?
* Is there a much simpler solution to this problem or project you’re working on? Are you making this project too complicated?
* How would you be spending your time right now if you weren’t doing this project? What is this project keeping you from?

Build Uninterrupted Work Time Into Every Day

Set up your workday so that you—and your employees, if you have any—have plenty of uninterrupted time during normal business hours for deep, focused work. For example, you might institute a company rule that no one may talk between 10 am and 2 pm each day. “Talking” includes any form of communication—no email, no instant messages. Just turn the volume down to zero and dive deeply into work.

Don’t Waste Time in Meetings

As a corollary, avoid meetings if at all possible. They’re notorious time-wasters. If you must have a meeting, follow these protocols:

1. Set an alarm to go off after an allotted period of time. When the alarm rings, the meeting ends.
2. Limit the number of people in the meeting—fewer is always better.
3. Set an agenda that includes a clear, specific problem to be solved.
4. If possible, meet at the place where the problem is occurring, like at the assembly line or customer service desk.
5. Find a solution before the meeting is over and assign someone to put that solution into action.

Ignore the Competition

Don’t create products that mimic your competition’s products. If you let your competition define the rules of the game, you’ll lose. Instead, inject some of your individual passions or obsessions into your product. Suddenly, you’re fresh and original and the competition won’t be able to copy you.

You might even want to position your company as the antithesis of your competition. For example, the car company Audi positions itself as the young, fresh alternative to old-school luxury cars like Mercedes and Rolls Royce. Customers love taking sides in a product war, and if they dislike your competitor, they’ll automatically side with you.

Be Prudent About Upgrades

Don’t feel like you have to constantly upgrade your product so that you’ll be able to keep your first customers forever. If your customers outgrow your product(s), that’s fine. Go find new customers who need your product exactly as it is. Aim to appeal to a certain type of customer rather than any one individual whose needs may change over time.

When a customer requests a change to your product, your default response should be a polite “no.” Liberal use of the word
"no" keeps you focused on your priorities rather than distracted by continual product tweaks. If customers are asking for a change that is truly worth making, you’ll hear that request repeatedly and from a lot of customers. Only then is it worth considering.

**Promote Your Product on the Cheap**

Previously, you had to buy expensive ads to reach potential customers. Now, you can reach them via the Internet for free (or nearly free). Tweet about your product. Write a blog about it. Shoot promotional videos and post them on Instagram or YouTube. You could get a lot of attention, and if people are interested in what you’re tweeting, blogging, and posting, they’ll probably be interested in your products, too.

While your competitors are out selling their products, you can make your brand stand out by teaching your customers what they want to know about your industry. Giving out useful, free information builds brand loyalty. For example, a wine shop owner teaches people about wine on the YouTube channel "Wine Library TV."

**Shun the Press Release**

To attract the attention of the mainstream media and get them talking about your company, don’t go the traditional route and send out hundreds of press releases. Journalists typically ignore press releases because they don’t know who is sending them and the releases rarely contain anything newsworthy. Instead, try a more targeted, personal approach. If a journalist has written a story about your industry or competitors, contact them by phone or write them a personal note that explains why your company might make a good news story.

**Choose Small Media Over Large**

For the best results, concentrate your efforts on smaller media outlets. Sure, you’d love to get your product featured on the cover of Time magazine, but that’s unlikely to happen when you’re first starting out. Instead, target the niche media—blogs, newsletters, or magazines that focus only on your industry. The smaller media outlets are actively looking for stories, and their audiences are specifically interested in your industry (and thus more likely to be interested in your company than the general public). You might get a surprise bonus: Stories that are covered by trade publications are sometimes picked up by much bigger media outlets.

**Add to Your Team (or Don’t)**

When you think it’s time to hire someone, ask yourself if there is any way to avoid it. What would happen if you didn’t add another employee? Does that job you’re hiring for really need to be done, or can you get by without it? Is there a machine or a piece of software that can do the job instead of a person?

If you believe you must hire someone, don’t put your trust in resumes, fancy degrees, or even 30 years of experience. Instead, hire your best candidates to do a 20-hour “tryout” project for you, and then you’ll get to see the quality of their work.

**Don’t Hire Until You’ve Done the Job**

As the business owner, you need to know how to do every job in your company. Before you advertise an open position, spend some time doing the job yourself—even if it’s a task you aren’t trained to do. This is the only way to know if the...

**Want to learn the rest of Rework in 21 minutes?**

Unlock the full book summary of Rework by signing up for Shortform.

Shortform summaries help you learn 10x faster by:

- Being 100% comprehensive: you learn the most important points in the book
- Cutting out the fluff: you don’t spend your time wondering what the author’s point is.
- Interactive exercises: apply the book’s ideas to your own life with our educators’ guidance.

**READ FULL SUMMARY OF REWORK**

Here’s a preview of the rest of Shortform’s Rework summary:

**Rework Summary Chapters 1-2: Ignore Old-School Business Myths**

Co-founders Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson of 37signals, a company that creates project-management software and other online management tools, believe that anyone can start and operate a business, and they can do it with fewer resources than they think. Based on their own startup success, Fried and Hansson champion a simpler, cheaper, less labor-intensive way to manage any company. Rework details the insights the pair gained while keeping 37signals intentionally small, lean, and low-
Chapters 1 and 2 contain a list of principles that deconstruct conventional business thinking. In brief, you don’t need an MBA, outside investors, strategic plans, or a board of directors to launch a business. You don’t need to work 100 hours per week or hire 100 employees. You don’t even need an office. Instead, you need to reject old-school myths, embrace simplicity, and run your company like a smart, frugal, well-oiled machine.

**Principle 1: Don’t Listen to Naysayers**

The world is filled with pessimists who will tell you that your innovative business ideas and product concepts won’t work because people aren’t ready for something new. They’ll also say that the only way to do business successfully is to emulate the way it’s always been done. **Don’t believe these naysayers.** Other people’s failures are their failures, not yours. You’re traveling a different path.

**Model for success:** 37signals has broken dozens of traditional business rules and still succeeds. The authors have taken an untraditional path by employing fewer than 20 people who work from home from countries all over the world. They don’t spend money on advertising or salespeople. They’ve even revealed their success secrets to the world, and it hasn’t hurt them.

**Principle 2: Failure Isn’t Your Teacher**

We’ve all heard that nine out of 10 new businesses fail. Some people say that such failure serves a purpose—it teaches us to learn from our mistakes. In reality, mistakes don’t teach us anything useful. They show what our next step shouldn’t be—repeating the mistake...

---

**Try Shortform for free**

Read full summary of Rework

**Sign up for free**

**Shortform Exercise: Examine Your Beliefs About Entrepreneurship**

Take a few minutes to examine your beliefs about what it’s like to start a business.

Briefly describe your mental image of what an entrepreneur looks like. (For example, do you picture an entrepreneur (or a “starter”) as an MBA in a button-down shirt who works 100 hours per week? Or do you picture someone who tinkers in their garage, rides their mountain bike every day, and frequently borrows money?)

**What Our Readers Say**

This is the best summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People I’ve ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

Learn more about our summaries ➔

**Rework Summary Chapter 3: Start Your Business**

Now that we’ve deconstructed the old entrepreneurial paradigm, let’s explore how to create a product or launch a new business using the innovative principles that worked for the authors’ company, 37signals. These principles include:

- Creating a product that improves people’s lives
- Building your product with scant resources
- Avoiding the trap of seeking outside funding
- Paying close attention to your bottom line

**Principle 1: Create Something Meaningful**

The business you’re starting should make a positive impact on the world. Any business that doesn’t will quickly feel meaningless. If your product or invention makes even a few people’s lives better or easier, you’ll gain deep satisfaction from your work. Plus, your business will have a much greater chance of success.

**Model for success:** Craigslist was started by one man, Craig Newmark, and it’s one of the Internet’s most influential websites. It makes people’s lives better by helping them connect with each other within their local communities, whether to find a job, rent an apartment, sell an old refrigerator, or find a new tennis partner. Craigslist has survived on the Internet for a quarter of a century, and Newmark is now a billionaire.
Principle 2: Invent a Product You Need or Want
If you've ever wished you had a tool that did X or an app that made Y easier, you should invent that tool or app. Create something that you personally want or need, and you'll make the best product possible.

Model for success: James Dyson was vacuuming his house one day and got frustrated by how often the vacuum lost suction, so he invented the Dyson cyclonic vacuum.

Principle 3: Stop Dreaming and Build It
Everyone thinks they have a million-dollar idea, but very few people act on their ideas. Why? Many people fall back on the lame excuse that they “just can't find the time.” But if you want something badly enough, you always find time, no matter what else is on your schedule. You can start a new business at 6 p.m. after your day job ends. You can do it...

Try Shortform for free
Read full summary of Rework
Sign up for free

Rework Summary Chapter 4: Move Ahead With Less
Now that we've discussed how to start your new company, we'll cover how to run it with minimal resources for maximum efficiency. We'll also discuss the importance of making decisions and moving forward—not waiting for the perfect time or the perfect scenario. That includes releasing your product even if it doesn't seem 100 percent ready and ignoring small details as you focus on your product's functionality.

Principle 1: Recognize Constraints Are Good for You
Don't view budget constraints or time constraints as negative limits—they actually help your business run more efficiently and economically. Also, having to work with what you have leads to creativity and innovation as you look for inventive ways to cheaply produce an excellent product.

Do This, Not That
Create constraints even if they don't exist. When developing a new product, don't throw tons of staff hours and money at it. Instead, allocate only bare minimum resources. That will force you to keep your product simple, which will help your company run efficiently.

Model for success: Southwest Airlines flies only Boeing 737s, so all of its excess parts fit all of its planes. Its flight crews can work any flight. The airline is simpler to manage and less expensive to maintain than airlines that use multiple types of planes.

Principle 2: Do One Project at a Time
Because resources and time are always limited, focus your energies on one idea at a time. Not every idea that comes into your head is worthy of your time, energy, or money. Limit your ideas and the best ones will float to the surface.

Principle 3: Stick to the Core of Your Business
Analyze what's at the core of your business and make that your priority. For example, if you've opened a flower shop, focus on the flowers, not the vases. Sure, there's always other stuff you could work on, but the core of your business should always take priority.

Principle 4: Ignore the Details at the Start
In the early stages of product creation, ignore tiny details, like what color it will be or where the logo will be...

Why people love using Shortform
"I LOVE Shortform as these are the BEST summaries I've ever seen...and I've looked at lots of similar sites. The 1-page summary and then the longer, complete version are so useful. I read Shortform nearly every day."
Shortform Exercise: Find the Core of Your Business

To make the best use of your time and energy at work, focus on the essential core of your business and don’t get sidetracked by less essential parts.

What’s the most essential part of your business? (To find this out, ask yourself: If I took away XX from my business, would I still have a business? Fill in XX with whatever is appropriate. For example, if you run a hamburger stand, you can take away the ketchup and the diet soda and still run a hamburger stand, but you can’t take away the hamburgers.)

Try Shortform for free
Read full summary of Rework

Shortform Exercise: Make Your Product Timeless

Successful businesses are built around features that customers want today and will still want in the future. Your product should include elements that have a timeless, permanent appeal.

Consider a product you’re developing (or think about your existing product). Will it still be relevant—and in demand—in 10 or 20 years? Why or why not?

What Our Readers Say

This is the best summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People I’ve ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

Learn more about our summaries →

Rework Summary Chapter 5: Maintain Your Momentum

In this chapter, we’ll discuss how to keep your business moving forward after your product is launched. Specifically, we’ll discuss:

✈️ How to ensure that people quickly understand your product plans and new concepts
✈️ How to evaluate whether you’re putting your efforts into worthwhile projects
✈️ How to make every day more productive by building in silent, uninterrupted work sessions,
✈️ Why meetings are time-wasters
✈️ Why you shouldn’t trust your estimations.

Principle 1: Don’t Write a Report, Make a Model

If you want people to understand a new concept or product plan, make a model of it. Draw it. Sculpt it. Make your vision “real” in any way that doesn’t require the unhelpful abstraction of language or the dullness of a document.

Model for success: When Alaska Airlines wanted to imagine what future airports would look like and how their employees could function most efficiently in them, they built a miniature airport inside a warehouse. Then they tested their prototype by putting real people to work in their mocked-up airport.

Principle 2: Constantly Analyze the Value of Your Efforts

Instead of just hammering away at a project, analyze the value of that project at frequent intervals. You need to know when your time would be better spent doing something else. To find out if your current work project is truly valuable, ask yourself these questions:
1. Do you understand why you're doing this project? What are the benefits of completing it? Who will benefit from it?
2. Is the problem you're trying to solve real or imaginary? On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is this problem?
3. Is the project you're working on truly beneficial, or is it just fun to work on?
4. If you're adding a feature or component to a product that already exists, are you adding quantifiable value to that product? Will the new feature have a big impact on how customers use your product, or are you just adding features that don't really matter?
5. Is there a much simpler solution to this problem or project you're working on? Are you making...

Try Shortform for free
Read full summary of Rework

Sign up for free

Shortform Exercise: Find a “Good Enough” Solution

Sometimes business owners get stuck on a problem because they're searching for an ideal solution. To get unstuck, they need to give up on finding a perfect answer and embrace the concept of “good enough,” or achieving maximum efficiency with minimal effort.

Consider the current state of your business. Describe a problem that you haven't yet solved because you haven't come up with a perfect solution.

Want to read the rest of this Book Summary?

With Shortform, you can:

Access 1000+ non-fiction book summaries.
Highlight your Favorite Passages.
Access 1000+ premium article summaries.
Take Notes on your Favorite Books.
Read on the go with our iOS and Android App.

Download PDF Summaries.

Sign up for free

Rework Summary Chapter 6: Ignore the Competition

In this chapter, we’ll explore the importance of ignoring the competition. What your competition does is out of your control, but what your company does is within your control, so that’s where you should focus your energy. You won’t achieve success by copying what somebody else is doing—in fact, you might succeed by doing exactly the opposite.

Principle 1: Don’t Copy Existing Products

Copying may seem like a great shortcut to building a business, but it’s bad policy. When you create a knockoff product or write a book that reads much like the latest bestseller, you don’t get to experience the many-layered process of invention. You won’t understand why a product looks the way it does or functions the way it does. Worst of all, you’ll put your company in the backseat instead of in the driver’s seat: You’ve made your company a follower, not a leader.
Principle 2: Make Your Product Unique to You
To stand out from the crowd, inject some of your individual passions or obsessions into your product. Suddenly you're fresh and original, and the competition won't be able to copy you.

Model for success: The shoe retailer Zappo's stands out over other shoe retailers because of its over-the-top customer service, the passion project of its founder. All Zappo's employees take a turn in the call center: New hires for any department start by spending four weeks answering customer calls. And they're trained to speak at length with callers, not just follow a canned script.

Principle 3: Position Yourself as Your Competition's Opposite
Instead of copying someone else's product, position yourself as the antithesis of their product. Consumers relish taking sides in a product war, and if they dislike your competitor, they'll automatically side with you.

Models for success: The car company Audi positions itself as the young, fresh alternative to old-school luxury cars like Mercedes and Rolls Royce. Dunkin' Donuts positions...

Try Shortform for free
Read full summary of Rework

Rework Summary Chapter 7: Be Prudent About Upgrades
Another important element of running a business is deciding when and if you should make improvements or upgrades to your product. Customers may request modifications, but that doesn't mean you should make them—even if it means your customers outgrow your product.

Principle 1: Don't Say Yes to Modifications
Your customers may ask you to add features to your product. Don't say yes just because they're customers. Make "no" your default answer. Liberal use of the word "no" keeps you focused on your priorities rather than distracted by continual product tweaks. (Of course, your "no" must be polite. Explain your reasons and most people will understand.)

As a corollary to this principle, don't bother keeping track of all the upgrade requests your customers ask for. If they're asking for something worthwhile, you'll hear that request so often and from so many people that there's no way you can forget it. If they're asking for something unimportant, you'll forget their request, and that's fine.

Model for success: ING Direct is the fastest growing bank in America because they say no. They've streamlined their business—they don't offer credit cards or online brokerage, just various types of savings accounts. A customer who wants more than that has to find a different bank.

Principle 2: It's Okay to Lose Customers
If your customers outgrow your product(s), that's fine. Don't make it your goal to keep the same customers forever by making frequent product tweaks to accommodate their needs.

Do This, Not That
Instead of changing your product, go find new customers who need your product exactly as it is. Aim to appeal to a certain type of customer rather than any one individual...

What Our Readers Say
This is the best summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

Learn more about our summaries ➔

Rework Summary Chapter 8: Promote Your Product on the Cheap
In this chapter, we'll discuss how and when to publicize your product, and how to do it with little or no advertising budget. Specifically, we'll cover:

- The benefits of giving away free information about your industry and your company
- How to build brand loyalty via social media
Why factory tours create loyal customers

How to get attention from industry-specific media

**Principle 1: Savor Obscurity While You Have It**

When you're just starting out, don't rush to promote your product. You might think you want everybody to know your company's name, but obscurity has its advantages: You can try out new ideas, take risks, make mistakes, and fix problems without the whole world watching.

**Principle 2: Get Free Advertising by Posting (and Teaching) Online**

Previously, you had to buy expensive ads to reach potential customers. Now, you can reach them via the Internet for free (or nearly free). Tweet about your product. Write a blog about it. Shoot promotional videos and post them on Instagram or YouTube. You'll get a lot of attention, and if people are interested in what you're tweeting, blogging, and posting, they will probably be interested in your products, too.

**Do This, Not That**

While your competitors are out selling their products, you can make your brand stand out by teaching your customers what they want to know about your industry. To build brand loyalty, give out useful, free information on your social media channels.

**Model for success:** A wine shop owner teaches people about wine on the YouTube channel "Wine Library TV." The authors' blog for their company 37signals features articles on industry issues. It has an audience of more than 100,000 daily readers. This kind of publicity is exponentially less expensive than buying ads or sending out direct mail.

**Principle 3: Share Your Business "Secrets" With the World**

As a corollary, you can also give free lessons on how your business operates. Too often, business owners tend to think all their information should be proprietary—they don't want their...

---

**Try Shortform for free**
Read full summary of Rework

**Sign up for free**

**Shortform Exercise: Teach People About Your Industry**

If you run a business, you're an expert in a lot of things—probably more than you realize—and other people would like to learn what you know. Even if you don't see yourself as social-media-savvy, you can make your brand stand out by teaching people about your particular business or the industry you work in.

What interesting or useful information do you know about the industry your business operates in? (For example, if your company makes tennis balls, you definitely know a lot about tennis balls, but you probably also know how to hit a perfect serve, what the best tennis clubs in the country are, how to teach tennis to kids, and so on.)

**What Our Readers Say**

This is the best summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

**Rework Summary Chapter 9: Add to Your Team (or Don't)**

The principles in this chapter spell out when and how to hire (and when not to). We'll explore:

- How to know when to increase your staff
- How to properly evaluate resumes and credentials
- How to choose among your top candidates for any position

**Principle 1: Don’t Hire Until You’ve Done the Job Yourself**

As a business owner, you need to know how to do every job in your company before you hire someone else to do it. That's the only way you'll know if the position should be full-time or part-time, what questions to ask potential employees, and whether the person you hire is actually doing a good job.

It may feel uncomfortable to do a job you don't know how to do, but do it anyway. The knowledge you gain will pay off: You'll
develop a deep understanding of every aspect of your business.

**Model for success:** The authors wore the hats of system administrator and customer support representative at 37signals before they hired someone for those roles. Their experience doing those jobs helped them to hire people who had the most appropriate skills: They knew what those skills were because they’d had to develop them themselves.

**Principle 2: Don’t Hire Unless You Have To**
Only hire an extra employee when you consistently have much more work to do than you can accomplish—when you are so busy for so long that you feel like the quality of your work is declining. **Don’t hire just because you feel overwhelmed for a short period of time.**

As a corollary, if someone quits or gets fired, don’t replace them right away. If you wait for a few months, you may find that you can get along just fine without someone in that position.

**Do This, Not That**

**Ask yourself if you really need to add to your staff.** What would happen if you didn’t? Does that job really need to be done, or can you get by without it? Is there a machine or a piece of software that can do the job instead of a person?

**Principle 3: Don’t Hire Just Because Someone Is Awesome**
You might meet someone who you think is brilliant, energetic, hardworking, and just...

Try Shortform for free
Read full summary of Rework
Sign up for free

**Rework Summary Chapter 10: Manage Your Company's Reputation**

In this next chapter of the summary, we’ll **tackle how to manage your company’s reputation in good times and bad.** We’ll look at tips on:

- How to apologize when your company makes an error
- How to deal with complaints about product changes
- How to provide great customer service every day

**Principle 1: Own Up to Your Mistakes**

Thanks to the Internet, anything and everything your business does (or doesn’t do) can go viral. If you’ve made a mistake, don’t deceive yourself that you’ll be able to cover it up. Take a lesson from the 1989 Exxon environmental disaster, when the tanker Valdez spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Alaska’s Prince William Sound. Exxon turned their mistake into a public relations disaster by not responding to the crisis immediately. The media crucified them.

**Model for success:** In contrast, when Ashland Oil spilled oil into a river near Pittsburgh, the company chairman traveled to the scene immediately, held a press conference, and got crews working on cleaning up the mess. By managing the crisis openly and immediately, the company saved face.

**Do This, Not That**

If your business screws up, tell your customers immediately. The top person in your company should deliver the news (along with a sincere and detailed apology if an apology is warranted).

**Principle 2: Make Your Apologies Effective**

There’s no single right way to apologize, but one of the worst ways is being overly formal: “I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.” The word “may” implies some doubt over whether or not an inconvenience actually occurred, and “I apologize” sounds distant and standoffish. Use the more direct “I’m sorry.”

**Do This, Not That**

When you’re considering the best way to apologize, think about what you’d want to hear if you were on the receiving end. Consider whether you would believe the apology you’ve crafted.

**Principle 3: Provide Speedy Customer Service**

When it comes to your company’s reputation, great customer service is critical. Customers hate being put on hold....
What Our Readers Say

This is the best summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

Learn more about our summaries →

Rework Summary Chapter 11: Help Your Employees Thrive

In this final chapter of the summary, we'll examine the notion of “company culture.” Specifically, we'll learn how to create a workplace in which staff members do their best and enjoy their jobs.

Principle 1: Don't Force a "Company Culture" on Your Employees

A great company culture develops over time through consistent positive actions, not by installing foosball tables or espresso machines. If managers treat their employees kindly, kindness will become part of the company culture. If employees leave work daily at 5 p.m., then a healthy work/life balance becomes the cultural norm.

Principle 2: Create a Workplace Where Everyone Flourishes

It's impossible to hire only geniuses and rock stars, so stop trying to. Instead, focus your energies on creating an environment in which every employee can do his or her best work. Even a mediocre employee can do outstanding work in a nurturing workplace. Give your employees the tools, space, privacy, respect, and trust they need to achieve greatness.

Principle 3: Treat Employees Like Adults

It's a waste of time and energy to regulate your employees' work hours or police their actions during the workday. Banning employees from social media sites or telling them they need approval for a $10 lunch expense creates an atmosphere of mistrust—and doesn't make them more productive.

Principle 4: Hire People Who Have a Life Outside Work

Remember the discussion about workaholics in Chapter 1? Workaholics throw extra hours at a problem when they should be looking for a smart, efficient shortcut. They're martyrs who create more problems than they solve. You want to hire employees who know how to manage their time wisely and productively.

Do This, Not That

Instead of hiring someone who's willing to give 100 hours a week to your company, hire the person who has a full, busy life outside of work. That person will be the most efficient worker.

Principle 5: Don't Create Needless Policies

Just because an employee does something wrong once doesn't mean you need to create a policy...

Try Shortform for free

Read full summary of Rework

Sign up for free

Table of Contents

- 1-Page Summary
- Chapters 1-2: Ignore Old-School Business Myths
- Exercise: Examine Your Beliefs About Entrepreneurship
- Chapter 3: Start Your Business
- Chapter 4: Move Ahead With Less
- Exercise: Find the Core of Your Business
- Exercise: Make Your Product Timeless
- Chapter 5: Maintain Your Momentum
- Exercise: Find a “Good Enough” Solution
- Chapter 6: Ignore the Competition
- Chapter 7: Be Prudent About Upgrades
- Chapter 8: Promote Your Product on the Cheap
- Exercise: Teach People About Your Industry
- Chapter 9: Add to Your Team (or Don't)
- Chapter 10: Manage Your Company's Reputation
- Chapter 11: Help Your Employees Thrive