

Indie Groundbreaking Book: Deep Dive **Keep Your Business Afloat by Diving Deep**

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In today's sagging economy, we're all looking for ideas about how to improve our businesses, right?

This book caught my attention, with its drawing of a free diving swimmer in mask and fins. A great summer beach read? Sure, but it's serious stuff – in fact, there's a sketch in chapter one that depicts a beach bum, a snorkeler, a scuba diver, and a free diver. The beach bum is low man on the scale when it comes to strategic thinking. It was time to get serious about this book, get up off the beach blanket and “dive in.”

Author Rich Horwath has built his career on helping businesses stay “afloat.” Lately, with so many businesses in trouble, Rich is busy explaining how to keep from “sinking” and he's telling owners and managers to “go overboard” into a new way of thinking.

The title of Horwath's new book is *Deep Dive* (Greenleaf Book Group, August 2009), and he uses the nautical metaphor to urge readers to “dive deep” and go beyond the tactical and into strategic thinking about their businesses.

“The inability to set good strategy can sink a company -- and a leader's career,” says Horwath, citing a recent *Wall Street Journal* study that revealed the most sought after executive skill by organizations is strategic thinking.

“Few leaders have that skill set that allows them to see the bigger picture, to move back a few steps so they can do vitally important things like discovering their customers' needs -- and finding solutions for fulfilling those needs.”

Deep Dive is based on research with senior executives from more than 150 companies and Horwath's own experience as a professional strategist. Armed with the knowledge from *Deep Dive*, every reader can become an expert strategist and an invaluable member of his or her organization.

By explaining the three most important elements of strategic thinking, Horwath breaks them down into simple and attainable skills, and shows readers how to apply them every day. He provides managers with a clear path to mastering the three disciplines of strategic thinking:

- 1) Acumen—generate critical insights through a step-by-step evaluation of the business and its environment
- 2) Allocation—focus limited resources of time, talent, and money
- 3) Action—implement a system to guarantee effective execution and communication of strategy throughout the organization.

“Everybody is a strategist, but some of us aren't necessarily good ones,” he points out, citing the statistic that 50% of all bankruptcies are caused by bad strategies. “My book is intended to provide some practical tools for helping people manage their resources better.”

“Especially in hard economic times, it's important to figure out how we can do more with less. A good example is Steve Jobs and Apple. When everyone thought Apple should release a PDA, Jobs foresaw how “smart phones” would replace PDAs, so he decided to *focus his resources* instead on the iPod.”

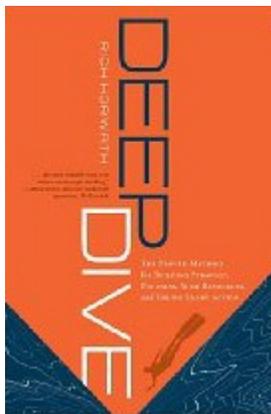
“With the iPod, Jobs achieved another important aspect of strategic thinking, *being able to see the system*. He perceived that it wasn't just about the player, but about the music – and negotiated for digital rights from the musicians and the studios, and then organized it with the iTunes store.”

“Finally, Jobs *focused on true customer value*. A lot of competing music players and websites had lots of bells and whistles but, realizing that it’s usually just one or two parts of a product that really turn customers on, Jobs focused on the key value-drivers for downloading and listening to music -- simplicity and convenience – and made sure the iPod and iTunes store epitomized those qualities.”

“It’s all about allocating your resources. All business have the same three things: time, talent & skills, and a budget. You have to stop wasting all of them.”

“Typically, 80% of a senior manager’s time goes into dealing with issues that account for just 20% of the business’ long-term value. Sometimes what you choose *not* to do is the key to your success.”

So, take some time to relax on the beach this summer, but remember that the single greatest reason why most businesses don’t grow is because new growth comes from new thinking. New thinking requires leaving the comfort of the shore and “diving deep!”



Deep Dive: The Proven Method for Building Strategy, Focusing your Resources, and Taking Smart Action

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About Rich Horwath

Rich is the president of Strategic Thinking Institute, a former chief strategy officer, and professor of strategy at the Lake Forest Graduate School of Management. As a strategic consultant, he has worked with such giants as Adidas, Pfizer, Abbott Laboratories, and Amgen. He is the author of four books and more than fifty articles on strategic thinking and has been profiled in business publications around the world, including *Investor’s Business Daily*.

Rich works with *Fortune* 500 companies located in the U.S., Europe and Asia-Pacific. He guides executive management teams through the strategy development process and created the *Deep Dive Learning System* to help managers become truly strategic leaders through assessments, books, workbooks, software, group workshops, practical application exercises and one-to-one strategic counsel.