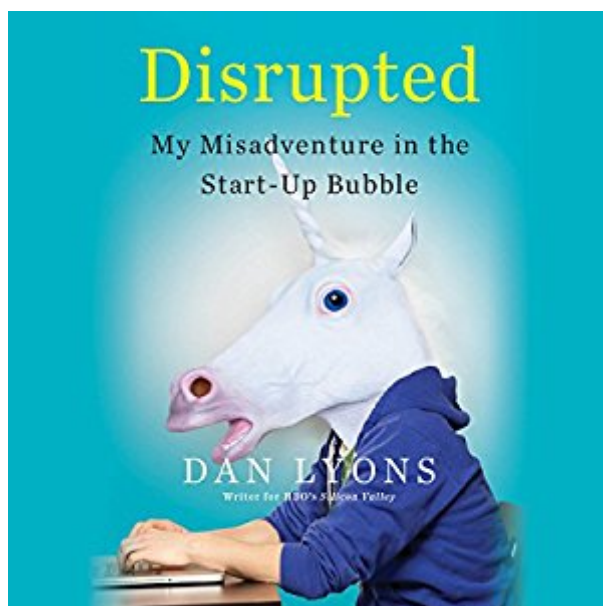


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Disrupted: My Misadventure In The Start-Up Bubble



Synopsis

For 25 years Dan Lyons was a magazine writer at the top of his profession - until one Friday morning when he received a phone call: poof. His job no longer existed. "I think they just want to hire younger people," his boss at Newsweek told him. Fifty years old and with a wife and two young kids, Dan was, in a word, screwed. Then an idea hit. Dan had long reported on Silicon Valley and the tech explosion. Why not join it? HubSpot, a Boston start-up, was flush with \$100 million in venture capital. They offered Dan a pile of stock options for the vague role of "marketing fellow". What could go wrong? HubSpotters were true believers: They were making the world a better place...by selling email spam. The office vibe was frat house meets cult compound: The party began at 4:30 on Friday and lasted well into the night; "shower pods" became hook-up dens; a push-up club met at noon in the lobby while nearby, in the "content factory", Nerf gun fights raged. Groups went on "walking meetings", and Dan's absentee boss sent cryptic emails about employees who had "graduated" (read: been fired). In the middle of all this was Dan, exactly twice the age of the average HubSpot employee and literally old enough to be the father of most of his coworkers, sitting at his desk on his bouncy-ball "chair". Mixed in with Lyons' uproarious tale of his rise and fall at HubSpot is a trenchant analysis of the start-up world, a de facto conspiracy between those who start companies and those who fund them, a world where bad ideas are rewarded with hefty investments, where companies blow money lavishing perks on their postcollegiate workforces, and where everybody is trying to hang on just long enough to reach an IPO and cash out. With a cast of characters that includes devilish angel investors, fad-chasing venture capitalists, entrepreneurs and "wantrapreneurs", bloggers and brogrammers, social climbers and sociopaths, Disrupted is a gripping and definitive account of life in the (second) tech bubble.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Disrupted not only wildly entertains; it also sheds light on some troubling issues in the startup and tech cultures. Entertainment: Disrupted caused me to laugh out loud more often than any other book has ever caused me to laugh out loud. Would you expect less from a writer for the TV show Silicon Valley? Reading Disrupted is like binge-watching SV, only this company is a REAL place, which makes it even better. Important social issues: Disrupted also raises a couple of troubling issues that surely extend far beyond the culture of this one company. The first is what appears to be a false promise of meaningful work to young people who desperately want to be doing meaningful work, but who are really just making a couple of people very, very wealthy. There's a smoke-and-mirrors quality to the ways in which employees are recruited, trained, treated, and then "graduated" (Hubspot's term for "fired"). They're told that the work they'll be doing is changing the world (when really what they're doing is online advertising), that Hubspot is more selective than Harvard (when this is actually a severe distortion of the data), and so on. The perks used to attract employees include an 'awesome!!!' candy wall, shower pods, beer, nerf gun battles, etc. You quickly get the sense that the work is empty, meaningless, even soulless -- and that what it's really about is making a couple of guys very, very rich (which I would be okay with IF the work truly were meaningful and IF the employees truly were being treated as individual humans, not as hypnotized sheep.) Second, Dan is brave enough to bring up another important issue in startup culture: ageism. Older people are seen as having nothing to contribute. The age discrimination is actually shockingly overt.

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