

**Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business by John Mackey and Raj Sisodia**



Review by: Steve Wanta

Disclaimer: I have worked for Whole Planet Foundation since our inception. Seeing the inner workings of a Conscious Company, Whole Foods Market makes it impossible for me to be unbiased in reviewing *Conscious Capitalism*. I love my job with the Foundation, the company that started it, and the Team Members, Customers, and Suppliers that support us. I feel about the book the way a Whole Foods Market outsider recently said, “I am a believer.”

For those of us that are “believers”, there is an almost religious like dogma that has the potential to arise out of passion and conviction for the movement. The danger is that our beliefs insulate us from innovating and evolving. Years ago, Mackey presented these big, bold concepts in a talk to 600 of Whole Foods Market’s leadership. He explained how critical it was (and continues to be) that Whole Foods Market maintains an open heart and mind. He warned that we could get stuck in the Green Meme and bound by a blind faith in an idea, any idea.

*Conscious Capitalism* gives us a blueprint to build and maintain a dynamic, learning organization that continues to grow and evolve. Principally, it requires a supportive culture that is defined by its decentralized, empowered, and collaborative nature. This has the potential to result in an innovative, agile, caring, and powerfully competitive business.

There have been naysayers that have believed that Whole Foods Market and our approach is an anomaly, a niche market. Long I have believed that the lessons detailed in *Conscious Capitalism* are much needed in the nonprofit sector and in particular in the industry of microfinance. The stakeholder principals create a simple model for building and leading organizations.

Relying upon our noble mission is not good enough. We need to build organizations that are able to solve the world’s most pressing problems. Social entrepreneurs know clearly why they do what they do, but they often lack the business model for creating truly great organizations. I believe *Conscious Capitalism* has the potential to be that guide.

My one criticism or hope for the next book is that there is an accompanying manual that guides people through a new way of thinking. Making these sorts of substantive changes require support and mentoring.

The question now facing the movement is how to promote and engage others. Time will be the great judge of the book and its message.