ForeWord Reviews

Clarion Review

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Big Wave Surfing: Extreme Technology Development, Management, Marketing & Investing
Kenneth J. Thurber
Beaver's Pond Press
978-1-59298-380-3
Four Stars (out of Five)

Kenneth Thurber's book, *BIG WAVE SURFING*, is a big book in more ways than one. Weighing in at a hefty 408 pages, this tome has a big purpose: to be "a street fighter's guide to technology change and how to manage risk and profit from that change," as the author puts it.

This isn't the first time surfing has been compared to the technology business, and it surely won't be the last. While the metaphor can be a bit tiresome at times, it is appropriate for the manner in which the author structures this book.

In Part One, Thurber addresses the concept of "Spotting Big Waves" —how big waves occur in technology (and more specifically, computer technology) and how the reader can identify them. Thurber makes the point throughout this part of the book that it is necessary to "embrace change caused by disruption" in order to ride the big waves of the technology revolution. He talks at length about technology disruption, indicating that the Internet "is one of the best examples of multiple disruption occurrences." He also says "The only constant in big wave surfing is change. You must make your own product obsolete."

Part Two of *Big Wave Surfing* addresses techniques to use in order to ride the technology wave. Here, Thurber devotes a chapter each to the product developer, the development manager, the "product sales guy" (who incorporates marketing), and the investor. For each of the four audiences, the author offers advice, suggestions, and somewhat unconventional tactics based on his experience.

The author believes that developing a technology product is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, because developers "take a new concept and graft it onto an existing concept or evolve an existing concept in a novel way." He observes that most management tends to be reactive, but "big wave management" must be proactive. Thurber thinks a new product launch must generate marketing buzz to succeed. As for investors, the author says "the money guys are not fools. Whenever possible, they are trying to take your money."

While the book is repetitive at times, it is packed with good information that should provide guidance to anyone who works in or has an interest in the field of information technology. *Big Wave Surfing* will also prove valuable to entrepreneurs who may be on the verge of starting a technology business.

If anything emerges loud and clear in Kenneth Thurber's book, it is the fact that information technology is in a state of constant change. Like big waves, new technologies are always crashing onto shore to replace the previous ones. If *Big Wave Surfing* helps an individual ride these waves successfully, it will prove to be one big book worth reading.

Barry Silverstein