Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Journeys of Entrepreneurs: Stories of Risk Takers Who Improved Themselves, Their Employees, Their Customers, and Their Communities

Lee Rice
iUniverse
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Four Stars (out of Five)

During his three decades as a banker, stockbroker, and commercial insurance agent and auditor, Lee Rice met hundreds of business entrepreneurs. In his highly readable *Journeys of Entrepreneurs*, he profiles sixteen of the most successful risk takers among them.

Rice's absorbing and inspirational accounts are intended for an audience of aspiring entrepreneurs of all ages, including students in high school and college. He hopes that his efforts will encourage readers "to embark on journeys similar to the risk takers in this book." His introduction clearly defines his view of the business entrepreneur's role and outlines the challenges and benefits of entrepreneurship as a way of life, including the far-reaching "invisible hand" of the market first identified by eighteenth-century economist Adam Smith. Rice's stories are well-tailored to his target audience, both in style and substance. In addition to the profiles of the entrepreneurs and their ventures, the stories also contain national facts and statistics about economics and employment. Appropriate quotations from recognized business leaders and authors, such as Tom Peters, are seamlessly integrated into each chapter.

As the stories illustrate, these individuals had the necessary motivation to succeed and to learn from their mistakes. Rice has included stories of men and women, of the young and the elderly, and of individuals with two or three careers. Some people created new enterprises while others saw opportunities to reinvigorate existing business entities, tapping into concepts such as Joseph Schumpeter's "creative destruction" and Arthur Laffer and Stephen Moore's "disruptive technologies." While most of Rice's stories deal with small businesses in and around Richmond, Virginia, where the author is based, a couple of them involve enterprises that have national reach. And while Rice's focus is on the success of the entrepreneurs he profiles, he also reminds readers that most entrepreneurs fail, despite their admirable efforts and personal resiliency.

Rice's entertaining and inspirational book is well worth reading, although the quality of several of the photographs does not compare with that of the uncluttered and attractive graphics of the cover art, or the high production and editing standards of the volume in general. The one-page bibliography is an excellent source for anyone contemplating a serious venture into entrepreneurship, and the two pages of endnotes are useful as well. Each of the entrepreneurs in *Journeys of Entrepreneurs* did indeed take a worthwhile journey—and, as the title claims, their endeavors benefited not only themselves and their employees, but also their customers and their communities. Reading about them is equally rewarding.

M. Wayne Cunningham