Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Walmart's EGOnomics Always: The Greed Behind the Smiley Face
Charles H. Hood
CreateSpace
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Five Stars (out of Five)

At only 208 pages in length, with over 40 additional pages of letters and documents substantiating the author's breach of contract and corporate sabotage claims, *Walmart's EGOnomics Always* is an incredible book. It chronicles a nearly seven-year-long relationship between a small but growing retail service business from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Walmart executives. Beginning in 1991 and ending in 1998, the story unfolds as a tragedy for Charles H. Hood and his coworkers. Hood's book is devoid of the animosity one might expect, given the book's title. He uses reflective testimony and court room evidence to tell his very compelling story.

"At the outset of our relationship with Wal-Mart, our company, ADDvantage Media Group Inc., was a publicly traded company with a stock market value in excess of eighteen million dollars," writes Hood, who served as the company's CEO. "The day that our lawsuit was filed against Wal-Mart, AMG had a market value of less than three hundred thousand dollars. Wal-Mart's slogan was 'Watch Out for Falling Prices.' We had no idea they would intentionally make this statement apply to us."

AMG's platform is to install calculators on the handlebars of shopping carts, allowing consumers to keep track of their spending and providing untapped product ad exposure for manufacturers. Because the company's research data shows that the average person spends less than they intend to when they round off prices in their heads, the calculators also encourage shoppers to spend more money. Although statistics from both companies clearly show the financial benefits of the calculators, the executives from Walmart are sluggish to react on the idea, even after a few years of proven success, and appear to avoid vital communications with the ADDvantage team. Eventually, the calculator advertising company is forced into a "David vs. Goliath" scenario. It becomes evident to AMG that Walmart's actions are not only careless,

but uncharacteristically vindictive, ego-driven, and ultimately diabolical, overshadowing even the company's obvious goal of making a profit. This may seem like a difficult and brazen case to make, but the book follows through with tantalizing clarity and even holds a surprising confession.

Walmart's EGOnomics Always targets an anti-big business audience by default, but it also may appeal to Walmart shoppers and to those with business and legal interests. Author Charles H. Hood has spent forty years in advertising, marketing, and public relations. He founded the ADDvantage Media Group after purchasing the patent rights to the "calculators on shopping carts" concept. He is a graduate from the University of Missouri's School of Journalism and a forty-year veteran of the advertising industry.

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