

How did one of the largest and oldest organizations in the world, owned by the Government of India, with diverse stakeholders committed to social goals survive and prosper in a commercial endeavor? The authors examine the remarkable story of the Indian Railways as it transformed itself from near bankruptcy into a profitable venture capable of thriving and surviving in the twenty first century.

The authors are management professors with a background of research in change management. They have been diligent in gathering the facts and then describing the process in a lucid manner. As such this book is a must read in management schools as there is much to be learned in how to bring about change when the normal business approaches of cost cutting, layoffs and price increases are not possible.

However, this book is not a dry management tome - it is full of colorful people, leaders and managers who refuse to take 'No' for an answer and work within the system to encourage and manage change. The authors have also done a remarkable job explaining the nuts and bolts of how the railways work - from axle weights to wagon tonnage to length of trains. The new railways credo of "Heavier, Faster, Longer" is fully explored.

To a rail enthusiast there is plenty of information about the internal workings of the Indian Railways. Finally, it is a page turner, something one does not quite expect from a management book. It is a tribute to the engineers and other technical people who build the locomotives, coaches and wagons, the front line staff who walk the tracks ensuring proper conditions and safety, the managers who pull it all together and get the passenger and freight trains into operations in record times after terrible terrorist attacks.

The book has individuals such as these sprinkled throughout - people who took upon the challenge posed by the times and with proper encouragement and support from the political class conducted a remarkable turnaround. For me the son of an Indian Railways employee, and one who travelled extensively in India's passenger trains, it brought back the sights and sounds of the

railway experience and the remarkable people who make the trains run and run well.

I enthusiastically recommend the book to all who love the rails whether in India or elsewhere. If you want to understand change and leadership, this is a great book. You will thoroughly enjoy it.

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