

Explosion Green: One Man's Journey to Green the World's Largest Industry

David Gottfried

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This insider's look at the green building movement is an inspiration to a new generation of activists.

Explosion Green describes how the author got into the green-building business at its inception and helped to carry the movement into full swing. A good backroom look into corporate activism, this interesting memoir presents an alternative to engineering change in environmental policies. Instead of focusing on noisy extremes and protests, it demonstrates that one person's years of quiet hard work and unrelenting determination can make a difference in even the most immobile systems.

It's fairly easy to vote green, install energy-efficient lighting, and turn down the heat at home, but relatively few people take further steps against climate change. Gottfried, however, basically devoted his career to his cause, taking true professional risks to bring green-building certifications into reality. More than a memoir, this book functions well as an inspirational tale for anyone working in the green sector or simply striving to manage a cleaner business or lifestyle.

Part of the charm of this book is Gottfried's marriage of traditional business tactics and earnest idealism. His personal and business connections and experiences in the boardroom represent a world that many modern professionals may find familiar. The book shows how the author incorporated his personal feelings about climate change into decisions he made in his career. As he navigates the difficult border between idealism and pragmatism, Gottfried explores a conundrum experienced by too many Americans and addressed by too few. Vivid detail and a strong descriptive voice help to round out the author and make him a likable, sympathetic personality.

Though the many boardroom discussions the book recounts can get a little repetitive, the author's voice is engaging and personal enough to keep it interesting. The book's strong linear structure fits nicely with the more well-known time line of the environmental movement, from the relative ignorance of the seventies to the increasing awareness today. It is easy to imagine a new generation of environmental pioneers taking over the business world in the pattern that Gottfried lays down in this book.

Gottfried's point of view will fascinate any entrepreneur. Innovators struggling with ways to reconcile the demands of their work with the needs of the environment will find this accounting valuable, and it could be considered required reading for activists.

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