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Natural Prophets: From Health Foods to Whole Foods--How the Pioneers of the Industry Changed the Way We Eat and Reshaped American Business

Joe Dobrow

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From a handful of idealistic farmers and local co-ops in the 1960s to the domination of juggernauts like Whole Foods, the wild success of the natural and organic foods industry proves that principled business is not just possible, but profitable. With nearly unfettered double-digit annual growth, the development of this now-$88 billion industry is one of the most remarkable untold stories in American business history. Trailblazers like Mo Siegel of Celestial Seasonings, Gary Hirshberg of Stonyfield Farms, and John Mackey of Whole Foods openly challenged the interests of Big American Agribusiness, transformed food manufacturing and retailing, and re-wrote the playbook for small entrepreneurs.
Dobrow, a 20-year veteran of the natural foods industry who had a front row seat (and backstage pass) to much of the upheaval and expansion he describes, characterizes the radical vision of these "natural prophets" as one part anti-industrial activism, one part bold opportunism, and one part new-era marketing genius. The triple bottom line?people, planet, profit?emerged as a major new lodestone for successful, values-based business practices.
Natural Prophets is a fascinating narrative account of these upstart Davids?their failures and their unprecedented successes?that distills lessons about management, marketing, and entrepreneurial growth, and offers a lively, urgent profile of an industry that continues to change the way we eat, the way we live, and the way we think about ourselves.

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