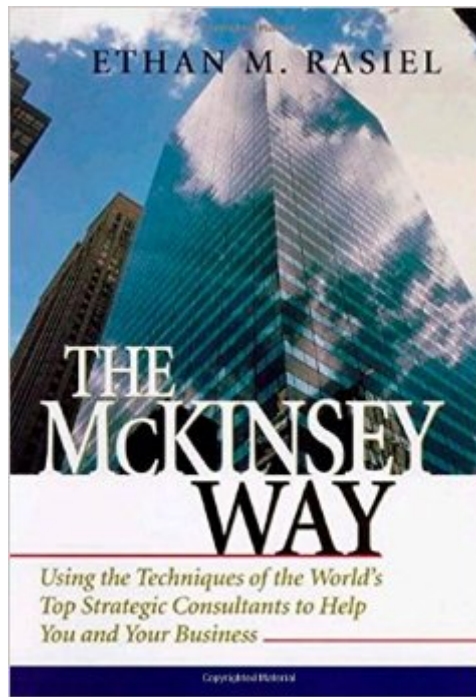


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# The McKinsey Way



## Synopsis

"If more business books were as useful, concise, and just plain fun to read as THE MCKINSEY WAY, the business world would be a better place." --Julie Bick, best-selling author of ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW IN BUSINESS I LEARNED AT MICROSOFT. "Enlivened by witty anecdotes, THE MCKINSEY WAY contains valuable lessons on widely diverse topics such as marketing, interviewing, team-building, and brainstorming." --Paul H. Zipkin, Vice-Dean, The Fuqua School of Business It's been called "a breeding ground for gurus." McKinsey & Company is the gold-standard consulting firm whose alumni include titans such as "In Search of Excellence" author Tom Peters, Harvey Golub of American Express, and Japan's Kenichi Ohmae. When Fortune 100 corporations are stymied, it's the "McKinsey-ites" whom they call for help. In THE MCKINSEY WAY, former McKinsey associate Ethan Rasiel lifts the veil to show you how the secretive McKinsey works its magic, and helps you emulate the firm's well-honed practices in problem solving, communication, and management. He shows you how McKinsey-ites think about business problems and how they work at solving them, explaining the way McKinsey approaches every aspect of a task: How McKinsey recruits and molds its elite consultants; How to "sell without selling"; How to use facts, not fear them; Techniques to jump-start research and make brainstorming more productive; How to build and keep a team at the top its game; Powerful presentation methods, including the famous waterfall chart, rarely seen outside McKinsey; How to get ultimate "buy-in" to your findings; Survival tips for working in high-pressure organizations. Both a behind-the-scenes look at one of the most admired and secretive companies in the business world and a toolkit of problem-solving techniques without peer, THE MCKINSEY WAY is fascinating reading that empowers every business decision maker to become a better strategic player in any organization.

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## Customer Reviews

This effort was a great disappointment. I picked it up hoping to find a succinct, high-value description of the Firm's proprietary approach to share with colleagues; instead I found an overwrought, verbose set of cliches, factoids, and frameworks that, at best, only superficially discuss the McKinsey way. (How important is it to know that one McKinseyite considered it vitally important to carry Coca-Cola with him on every engagement?) Rasiel packs no more than three pages of the actual "McKinsey way" into 187 pages. Light on substance and heavy on trite, generic general advice, it is difficult to believe that someone who actually worked for the Firm could deliver such a dubious effort. (Perhaps this book gives insight into why the author lasted the minimum two years at McKinsey.) To be fair, the book does offer some insight into the way the Firm works (e.g., the Rule of Threes, engagement work planning, interviewing, etc.). If you are looking for a comprehensive, informed treatment in this area, I recommend "Client-Centered Consulting."

Being a management consultant myself - I found the book to be relevant but not too detailed. For instance, there should be more examples of the first 3 principles : fact based, structure of problem solving and hypothesis driven. Albeit this, it is an easy-to-read book and it does outline the pains and gains of a consultant's life with particular spotlight on the McKinsey and Co, which is undoubtedly an impressive firm. It is a great book for the uninitiated who wants to catch a glimpse at McKinsey - but it may not be as useful to insight-searching-people who have been in the industry for some time (or managers in that sense).

I read this book this afternoon (big print, wide spacing).The author describes the 80-20 pattern often found in work & life (a phenomenon already familiar to most by which 80% of your business comes from 20% of your clients, 80% of your time is spent on 20% of your to-do list, etc.)The author demonstrates this chestnut with a book that is 20% useful and fresh and 80% no-brainer advice and shameless McKinsey advertising (we are CONSTANTLY reminded of how smart and ethical all those McKinsey consultants are; all consulting anecdotes have happy endings - unless the client screwed up; real quotes: "As any good McKinsey associate would, this young man applied himself tirelessly and diligently to his task", or "Hank knew his area of the bank inside and out and was

probably as smart as any member of the McKinsey team"... high praise indeed.) McKinsey's approving editors have all the subtlety of China's Xinhua propaganda agency. Trouble is: many of us know people at McKinsey...Still, the 'waterfall' chart is among the 20% that make this book worth perusing (but not buying).

If I could have given it a zero, I would have. I've worked for McKinsey for the past twelve years, and I was stunned at the lack of insight in this book. Even the few observations the author got right are out of date, as the Firm has changed quite a bit in the past few years and this author left McKinsey quite a while ago. I can't imagine how he ever sold this one to a publisher. Vaporware.

If you're looking for specific case studies or a "drilled down" discussion, you generally will not find it with this book. It does, however, give some good general guidelines for conducting research, problem solving, presenting, and client interaction. As with most general or somewhat abstract models, this book provides general principles that can be applied specifically to your current situation. For example, the processes involved in data collection, brainstorming, issue analysis, hypothesis construction, etc., can be applied to any topic in any area. I found the writing style easy to read and concise, with minimal amounts of obfuscation. Basically, it seems to me, the bedrock of the McKinsey way is long hours, data distillation, and thorough and exhaustive data collection. All told, I found it a worthwhile read.

McKinsey has quite a reputation as a consultancy company, and I had hoped to be impressed by perhaps a great new insight or some extensive examples. Although a lot of tips are given to improve your performance as a consultant, explanations are not always clear and little background is provided. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that - of course - no real world project of McK's clients could be used as an example. The cases that are presented are not very detailed - it must be hard to come up with good and detailed case material. Often I had the idea, that the chapter (or subject) was already over by the time I just got interested. As in the chapter on putting project teams together: the author tells you that you cannot just put any group of people together, but then fails to analyse this a bit, or provide some good example of what might go wrong otherwise. And in the rare case of a detailed example, the author is not always clear. For example: the author stresses the importance of making good charts for presentations, and actually introduces a new type of chart (this much is obvious). However, I could not follow his explanation of the chart, so now I'm left with no more than a rough idea of what is meant. So, the book contains the right issues, but there it

stops.

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