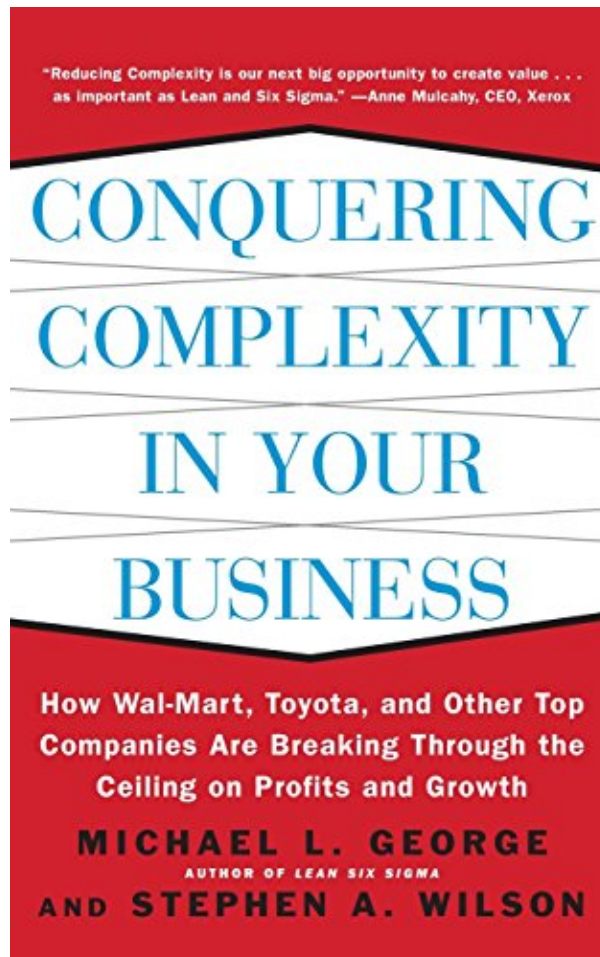


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"Reducing Complexity is our next big opportunity to create value . . .
as important as Lean and Six Sigma." —Anne Mulcahy, CEO, Xerox

CONQUERING COMPLEXITY IN YOUR BUSINESS

**How Wal-Mart, Toyota, and Other Top
Companies Are Breaking Through the
Ceiling on Profits and Growth**

MICHAEL L. GEORGE

AUTHOR OF LEAN SIX SIGMA

AND STEPHEN A. WILSON

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From Publishers Weekly

When Thoreau's injunction to simplify, simplify, is translated into the context of business management, the result is this labyrinthine treatise. George, author of Lean Six Sigma, and "complexity expert" Wilson contend that overcomplication is an insidious drain on businesses. A proliferation of product and service offerings intended to boost business actually imposes hidden costs and masks the unprofitability of stagnating lines, while consumers are often baffled and irritated by the plethora of superficially distinct options. The authors' cure for complexity, however, seems almost as complicated as the disease. They offer a maze of arcane diagnostic tools for assessing the complexity and profitability of products, services and customers, along with advice on how to simplify, standardize or eliminate them altogether, and pile on mathematical equations, byzantine flowcharts and highly technical case studies ("at 50KW the DC voltage doubled, cutting the current in half—which meant the design for the lower power ratings could be used all the way to 80KW"). They provide a number of useful insights, actually, although lumping them under the trendy rubric of "complexity" doesn't add much conceptual rigor. Unfortunately, the method of quantitatively analyzing the profit impact of minute components of larger processes seems itself an onerous layer of complexity to add to the project of simplifying business practices. The accountants and process design engineers who might read the book will find much food for thought, but are also likely to put it aside when it comes time to roll up their sleeves and get to work.

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Review

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Conquering the complexity in products and services can generate larger contributions to profits and growth than nearly any other business strategy

Here's a guarantee: Somewhere in your business, there is too much complexity. You may also be losing out by having too little complexity where it counts - in the products, services and options you offer to customers. Either way, the impact of complexity is enormous in terms of lost profit and missed growth opportunities.

Conquering Complexity in Your Business shows how to break through the ceiling on profits and growth by implementing the three rules for conquering complexity:

- Eliminating complexity that customers will not pay for
- Exploiting the complexity that customers will pay for
- Minimizing the costs of the complexity you offer

From Publishers Weekly

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"The cost of complexity isn't offset by what you can charge. Complexity creates opportunities for you to fail your customer." (American Airlines President Gerard Arpey, Wall Street Journal, 9-17-2002)" Most helpful customer reviews5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Compelling Business Case for Conquering Complexity

By Rodney Allen Smith

I found Conquering Complexity provides an excellent framework and lays out a compelling business case for why and how you should focus on complexity.

This is the best guide out there in terms of a comprehensive approach to identify, quantify and attack complexity. The book is a very practical and pragmatic read with a wealth of real world examples and illustrations that reinforce concepts layed out in a logical sequence.

In researching a number of books though there are many that contain bits and pieces of concepts that relate to complexity, I have found that none of them tackle the concept of complexity as a discipline that must be mastered as Conquering Complexity does. I found it to be a refreshing, compelling book that you can follow step by step to create a complexity focus and agenda in your organization. There is tremendous power in purchasing the book for co-workers or Managers to help raise their complexity IQ and see what is possible. I continue to learn from the book as I refer back to it frequently. I would highly recommend it to anyone or any organization that is looking to continuously improve or to create greater value. I really found the sections on Product/Service proliferation to be right on, and a wealth of information. - Rodney1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Quantifying the costs of achievement and complexity

By Midwest Book Review

How are Wal-Mart, Toyota and other big businesses creating even more value in their already-large companies? In Conquering Complexity in Your Business: How Wal-Mart, Toyota, and Other Top Companies Are Breaking Through the Ceiling on Profits and Growth, co-authors Michael L. George and Steven A. Wilson maintain that in every business, there's too much complexity, which erodes profitability, confuses the customer, and adds costs. The solution: identify and eliminate this complexity where it doesn't count - and add it in, where it does. Chapters discuss adding value with complexity which attracts with `customization' and `variety', of identifying places where complexity doesn't belong, and for quantifying the costs of achievement and complexity in both products and services.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

When Less Is More

By Samuel J. Okoro

This is an amazingly revealing book about the dangers of complexity that is not consciously managed. And just what does managing complexity entail? I the authors' words, it means

- Eliminating complexity that customers will not pay for
- Exploiting the complexity customers will pay for, and
- Minimizing the cost of the complexity you offer

In part 1 the case is made for conquering complexity in your business' portfolio (number of offerings) and processes (number of ways of doing the same thing). Part 2 develops the conceptual framework for measuring and managing complexity. In part 3, you are shown how to apply these concepts to the elimination, exploitation and reducing the costs of complexity.

Lastly, part 4 shows how to create an organisational culture that supports complexity management, conquer the complexity in your value chain and even apply the principles in mergers and acquisitions. See all 11 customer reviews...

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