

# **Book Review**

*The Macintosh Way*  
by Guy Kawasaki;  
foreword by Jean-Louis Gassée.  
Scott, Foresman and Company,  
Professional Books Group,  
Glenview, IL;  
209 pages; illustrations; index;  
hardcover, 19.95.

## **The Macintosh Way**

Reviewed by Philip Tobias

*The Macintosh Way* is also Guy Kawasaki's way. In this entertaining new Macintosh and management book, he invites the rest of us to tag along.

Kawasaki, the renown former president of 4th Dimension database publisher, ACIUS, Inc., aptly subtitles this first book: "The Art of Guerilla Management." A clear clue to the book's business direction, as well as the author's hip style and witty manner. An irreverent style that describes the Pentagon Macintosh User Group as having "more brass in the audience than at Pier I imports."

But this is a book about passion, and the quest for business excellence. It's also inspirational, celebrating the "basic premise that David can defeat Goliath, that a teenager can fly into Red Square, and that an ex-jewelry schlepper from Hawaii can eat paté with a French philosopher at Jacques Cagna in Paris."

This engaging tale begins with a behind-the-scenes look at Apple Computer during Kawasaki's stint as a Macintosh "software evangelist." This section of Macintosh history recounts Apple's desperate attempts to enlist major software developers in the flagging Mac cause, and Kawasaki's evangelistic market-seeding efforts.

The backstage corporate maneuvering that eventually resulted in the formation of ACIUS, Inc., and Apple's software spin-off into Claris Corporation is intriguing. Even Macintosh cognoscente with long memories will find this opening section about the Ashton-Tate database shootout interesting, as Kawasaki writes with insider insight and humor. Nothing is sacred, or safe from a Kawasaki potshot, especially Apple itself.

The birth of the Macintosh phenomenon was an exciting time at Apple, a time that also delivered new attitudes and ideas. Ideas, creativity and independence — a spirit of thumbing one's nose at the status quo.

But also "Doing the Right Thing," which is the title of the second part. It's here that Kawasaki brings his original Macintosh fervor and ideals into play as an overall business philosophy. And it's an all too overlooked philosophy in today's business world: the concept of doing things right. This philosophy extends from creating a nurturing business and employee environment, through developing the right products and support. Making satisfying products that are indulgent, elegant and "deep" like the Macintosh. According to Kawasaki's philosophy,

“Great products are deep — they appeal to both passengers and sailors, and the passenger and sailor in all of us.”

Doing the right thing is still not enough; so the book’s last section brings us to “Doing Things Right.” The right product now goes to market. While these specific marketing insights may hold most charm for Kawasaki’s own high-tech contemporaries, there is ample wisdom here for any marketer, especially those with similar niche or specialty products. Individual chapters in this final half include the ins-and-outs of dealing fairly with the press, doing trade shows, demos and presentations, plus a favorite subject, “driving your competitors crazy.”

One way to do this is to apply Kawasaki’s “cult theory” of marketing: Make sure to get your product into the hands of the respected power users. Then let their market influence go to work, “pulling” your product from pipeline to dealer shelf by popular demand.

Macintosh user groups are a prime ingredient in this strategy, and an entire chapter is devoted to dealing with them — in the right way, of course. “When user groups help you, they are assuming some responsibility for your success.” Kawasaki believes in returning the favor.

Having expounded his business philosophy, Kawasaki concludes with “The Macintosh Guide to Dating and Marriage,” a cute look at modern relationships. As an example, consider Kawasaki’s definition of dating: “Dating is when two people go someplace

where there are no computers, talk about anything except computers, and do analog stuff afterward.”

This clever sense of humor throughout the book makes for quick reading. Congratulations to Kawasaki for also applying his “bullet speak” approach in print: presenting important points simply, for rapid digestion. The frequent exercises interspersed throughout are both thought-provoking and entertaining. And don’t neglect all the wonderful footnotes.

So who’s this book for? Most true Mac aficionados will treasure it, but it deserves a wider audience. *The Macintosh Way* is also a good source of business ideas and inspiration. A primer on the path of doing the right thing, and doing things right. Kawasaki’s way, the Macintosh way.

But didn’t we already know *The Macintosh Way* is the best way? 🍏

Philip Tobias is a photographer, writer and small businessman. He has owned and operated Denver’s Philip Tobias Photo/Graphics since 1973. An original Mac owner since February of 1984, he jumped on the Macintosh bandwagon before there was one.