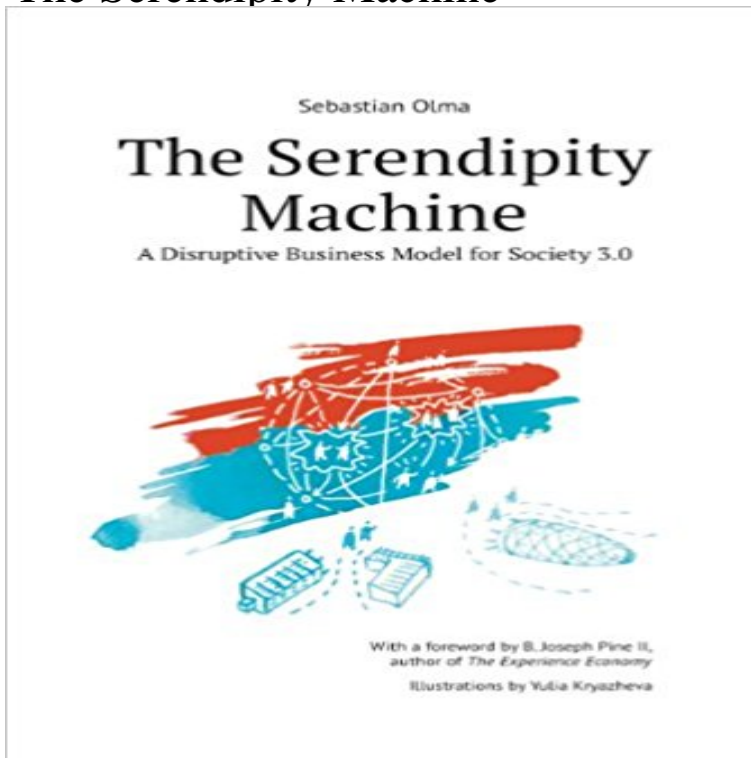


The Serendipity Machine



The notion of serendipity is not new to business thinking. The importance of unexpected conversations and knowledge exchange in innovation has been noted in the management literature for many years. What is new is actually building a business a machine that systematically facilitates serendipity. This book presents a disruptive business model that allows you to do exactly that. It is based on a study of Seats2meet.com, the Dutch network of physical coworking, office and meeting spaces. By reinventing social capital as the currency of network culture and fusing it with the phenomenon of serendipity, Seats2meet.com has created a serendipity machine that increasingly looks like an appropriate platform for value creation in a network economy, fusing traditional monetary capital with social capital. It has effectively put into practice something academics have been feverishly looking for for the last two decades. And the key to it all is serendipity. Seats2meet.com has created a business model that provides a platform for the digital bohemians, knowmads, free agents, or independent professionals as well as corporate nomads to unleash their creative powers. By co-creating the infrastructure today's creative revolution needs in order to crystallize, Seats2meet.com has projected itself into the future of capitalism. Creative revolution has become the company's business. It can become yours as well! Sebastian Olma, PhD, is an international scholar and expert working at the interface between creativity and economy. Trained as a philosopher as well as an organizational economist, he helps companies and organizations to effectively and sustainably make the most of their innovative potential. He lives in Amsterdam, where he divides his professional time between running his consulting company, The Think Tank (thethinktank.nl), and co-directing the

Creative Industries Research Centre Amsterdam at the University of Amsterdam. Yulia Kryazheva is an architect and researcher, has worked on a diverse range of projects in the areas of architecture and urban renewal, service design and illustration, creative consulting. This practice gave shape to her current professional domain: design thinking & visual communication. From her studio, Yulia Ink (yulia-ink.com) in Rotterdam, she works for clients all over Europe. B. Joseph Pine II is an internationally acclaimed author, speaker, and management advisor to Fortune 500 companies and entrepreneurial start-ups alike. Mr. Pine co-founded Strategic Horizons LLP, a thinking studio dedicated to helping businesses conceive and design new ways of adding value to their economic offerings. A prolific writer, in 2011 he updated his best-selling *The Experience Economy* (with Jim Gilmore) and co-wrote *Infinite Possibility: Creating Customer Value on the Digital Frontier* (with Kim Korn). Acknowledgments To collect data for our research, we traveled to many of the more than 70 Seats2meet.com locations in the Netherlands in May and June 2012. We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who was kind enough to participate in our interviews and share their experience of Seats2meet.com with us. Above all, the users of the workspaces, the bookers of the meeting spaces, the Seats2meet.com entrepreneurs and the staff. Thanks to Seats2meet.com community manager Vincent Ariens for being a great connector! Special thanks go to Ronald van den Hoff and Marielle Sijgers for accommodating all our research requests and welcoming us into the Seats2meet.com ecosystem. This was an amazing experience. Yulia Kryazheva and Sebastian Olma, July/August 2012

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