

(Continued from front flap)

“It grew into something much more than we had planned, though much less than we had hoped. Several hundred families now derive their sustenance from Neoforma. That, on its own, should be enough.”

For McVicker, the company had “found its own destiny.” But as the book ends, it becomes clear that the drive to create usually resurfaces. Even as he was separating himself mind and body from his now independent creation, he was spinning off a new company, happy to be getting on with the joys and challenges of *Starting Something*.



WAYNE McVICKER is an architect and entrepreneur. Having co-founded Attania, he has served as an executive there since its inception in 2001. He has 25 years of experience in the design, healthcare and IT industries. McVicker’s five-year-long wild ride as co-founder, board member, and president of Neoforma (NASDAQ: NEOF) is the basis for this book. He lives with his wife and two sons in Silicon Valley, California.

Dust jacket design by Dum+Associates Design
Author photo: Weston McVicker

 Ravel Media, LLC
www.ravel.tv

BUSINESS | ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“I MADE A FEW HUNDRED MILLION...I LOST A FEW HUNDRED MILLION.”

How does it feel to be able to speak those words? This captivating tale of Neoforma not only reveals the answer, but immerses you in it. The year is 2000. The place is Silicon Valley. Wayne McVicker’s young company was one of the darlings of the dotcom boom. In four short years it had grown from the seed of a good idea into a publicly-traded company worth \$3 billion.

This is a story about people caught up in the spell of “starting something” that takes on a life of its own. You’re there for the start-up, the growth, the rounds of investors, the IPO, the struggles against huge competitors, and yes, the infighting, backbiting, and greed. All the characters are here—the good, the bad, and the downright nasty. In this piercingly honest and highly personal narrative, you’ll get an insider’s view of the evolution and devolution of a good idea gone public. You also get an unflinching look at both the dark and the bright sides of corporate culture.

Maybe you’re an entrepreneur looking to grow your own idea. Maybe you’re a business professional interested in a real-world study of corporate culture. Or maybe you just enjoy a wild tale well told. Whatever your motivation for reading this book, *Starting Something* engages you with a great story, and delivers a wealth of insight and information told on a very human level.

“*Starting Something* is an engrossing portrait of every entrepreneur’s dream from the inside, executed with skill and brimming with insight.”

—Jerry Kaplan, author of *Startup*

“Buck’s Restaurant has been the birthplace for a number of the most monumentally successful and weirdly untenable Silicon Valley companies, but nothing quite conveyed the essence of these ventures until I read *Starting Something*. McVicker is a gifted storyteller and he takes you inside the whirlwind.”

—Jamis MacNiven, author of *Breakfast at Buck’s*

ISBN 1-932881-01-8



9 781932 881011

STARTING SOMETHING

WAYNE McVICKER

“A must-read for aspiring entrepreneurs. It took me years in the trenches building Symantec to learn the people-side lessons so freely elucidated by McVicker—and unfortunately not yet taught in business schools.”

—Denis Coleman, Founder, Symantec Corp.

STARTING SOMETHING

An ENTREPRENEUR’S Tale
of CONTROL, CONFRONTATION
& CORPORATE CULTURE



WAYNE McVICKER

US \$27.95

A LIFE OF ITS OWN

Neoforma was founded in 1996 in Silicon Valley, several months before the unofficial birth of the dotcom boom. *Starting Something* chronicles a five-year personal and corporate roller-coaster ride that ended in 2001 with the author stepping aside from the company he had co-founded.

The title, *Starting Something*, has a double meaning. The first meaning hints at the noble naiveté of taking on industry giants armed only with personal ideals and a great product. The second meaning reflects the universal experience of giving oneself over to the creative process, of starting something that eventually takes on a life of its own.

And what a life! Neoforma’s IPO was the sixteenth most successful IPO in history. As the first healthcare-dotcom-B2B-ecommerce company, it had no competitors, only giant investors like GE and Dell. Its customers were happy, its employees were happy. It ended up confronting over one hundred competitors and two industry coalitions founded by companies valued at nearly \$1 trillion. Neoforma grew from one employee in 1996 to over 230 by its IPO in January, 2000. But there was trouble ahead, and some warning signs that serve as valuable lessons for anyone caught up in corporate change.

McVicker deftly describes the impact of growth: fighting off huge competitors, hiring the “wrong people for the wrong reasons” (but also the right people for the right reasons), bridging rifts between old hands and new blood, and dealing with corporate partners trying to swallow them whole. Four months after the IPO, the company was in deep trouble, laying off good people and watching its stock value plummet.

But this isn’t a dot-bust book. At no time was the company in its death throes. Today Neoforma is alive and well. “Jeff and I started Neoforma in a fit of idealistic frenzy,” writes the author.

(Continued on back flap)