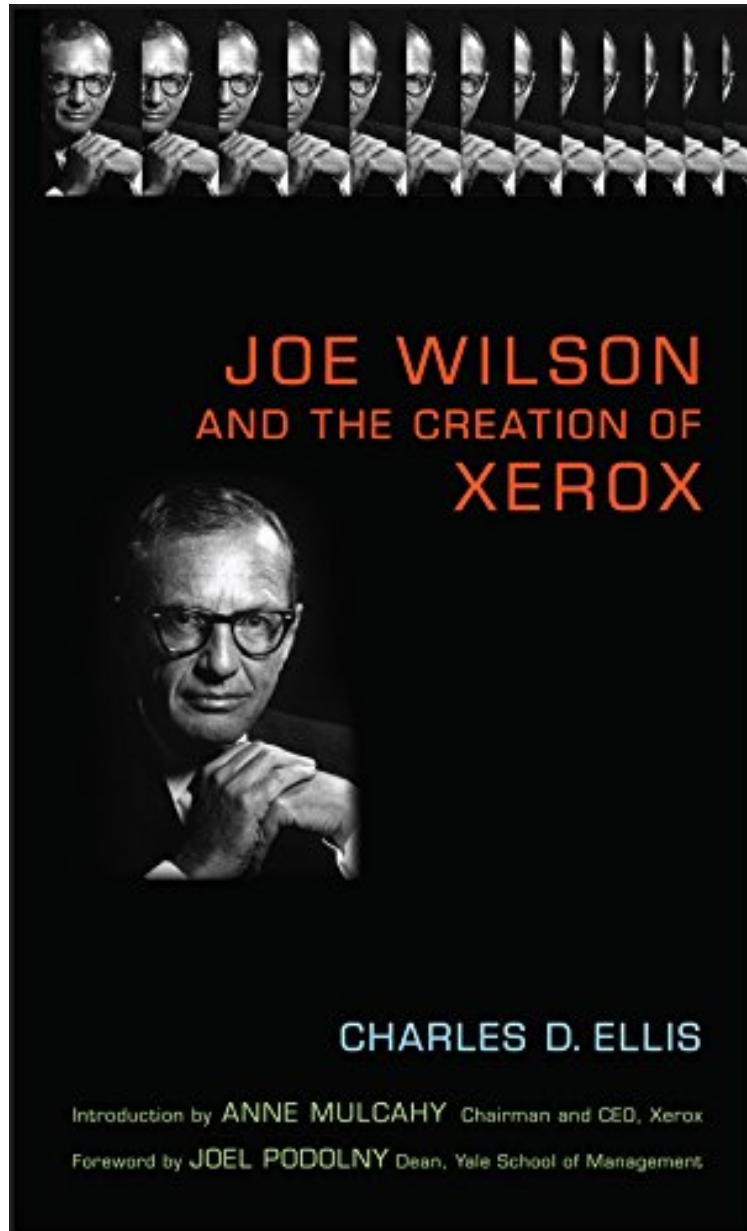


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Joe Wilson and the Creation of Xerox

Charles D. Ellis

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Charles D. Ellis : Joe Wilson and the Creation of Xerox before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Joe Wilson and the Creation of Xerox:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The detail about the transition of Haloid to Xerox is both inspiring and informative. By Bill Murphy I passed this book onto a former Xerox manager who new nearly everyone in the

book. He loved reading about the experiences of everyone he had known there and found to insightful to understand how the company made a transition for a secondary photo supply firm to the developer of electrostatic copying and indirectly of laser printing. Joe Wilson is too little appreciated in the history of American tech industry. Growing up in Rochester I was practically unaware of his contributions and assumed Sol Linowitz was the key person. The book also makes it clear how close the company came to failing during electrostatic copy development. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Glad I listened...By jimenezLet me start off by saying I am not much of a reader but I was told from a high executive from Xerox that this was a must read book. The executive was giving a speak at my University and recommended this book. So I decided to give it a try and I'm glad I did. Very interesting book about Joe Wilson and the start of Xerox. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn about a man who changed the industry. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Leadership must Have SoulBy Richard C. FerrisJoe Wilson led Xerox through more years of uninterrupted growth at a more rapid pace then achieved by any other company. This fact is sufficient motivation to read Charles Ellis' comprehensive and compelling story of Joe Wilson and the creation of Xerox. Most business aficionados think they know the story but this book will truly open your eyes and mind. Mr Ellis' thorough research and deft prose reveals the true leadership genius of Joe Wilson. The Xerox journey, from it's humble Haloid beginnings, through the twists and turns resulting in the introduction of the 914, reads like an adventure novel worthy of Eric Larson. The introduction of Joe Wilson to Chester Carlson, the inventor of Xerography, was just the beginning. The author provides countless examples of situations that could have derailed the success of Xerox. Examples include Homer Piper's invention of Haloid Record during the thirties. Without this milestone, Haloid would not have survived the depression and therefore Xerox would not have evolved. The author also explores how Xerox managed to avoid being acquired by the mega Corps., once the potential of Xerox was understood. Tom Watson, IBM CEO, stated that failing to pursue the acquisition of Xerox was the biggest regret of his career. It's almost a foregone conclusion that GE would have purchased Xerox if, at the time, it wasn't distracted by developing the technology for color TV. The true genius of Mr. Ellis' is his ability to bring Joe Wilson alive through the pages of this monumental work. Joe Wilson's leadership, vision, passion and creativity are a wonder to behold. His true commitment to customers, shareholders and employees are truly inspiring. Even with the technology, Xerox would never have been successful without Joe Wilson's commitment to RD, his insight in developing his management team, his dedication to employee relations. The list could go on and on. Two other areas that are worthy of highlighting. First, the author explores Joe Wilson's dedication and unselfish service to improving the social welfare both in his community, country and globally. His undying commitment to diversity and the bold actions he initiated to bring the dream to a reality are inspiring and should serve as prime examples for present and future business leaders. Finally, the in depth profiles of all those VPs, managers, engineers, employees, suppliers, that actively and unselfishly shared Joe Wilson's vision and who turned it into a resounding success are truly a joy to read. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has even a passing interest on what it takes to be a successful and compassionate leader in business.

"Charley Ellis has written a magnificent portrait, capturing the indomitable spirit of Joe Wilson and his instinctive understanding of the need for and commercial usefulness of a transforming imaging technology. Joe Wilson and his extraordinary team, which I had the good fortune to first meet in 1960, epitomized the wonderful observation of George Bernard Shaw who said, 'Some look at things that are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were and ask why not?' Xerox and xerography are not only a part of our vocabulary, but part of our everyday life. Charley Ellis gives the reader a poignant understanding of just how this happened through the life, adventures, critical business decisions, and dreams of Joseph Wilson and a cadre of remarkable individuals. This book will surely join the library of memorable biographies that capture the building of America into a risk-tolerant, technologically sophisticated, idea-oriented society that thrives by understanding what Charles Darwin really said: 'Survival will be neither to the strongest of the species, nor to the most intelligent, but to those most adaptable to change.'" —Frederick Frank, Vice Chairman, Lehman Brothers Inc.

From Publishers WeeklyTransforming family-owned Haloid Corp., which struggled in the shadow of hometown behemoth Eastman Kodak, into the globally recognized Xerox is an amazing accomplishment. But as Ellis's biography of Joe Wilson attests, Wilson's achievements ranged more widely and went much deeper than many gave him credit for. Ellis, author of 11 books and former financial industry consultant offers a heartfelt, if not artful, telling of the CEO's life story. He contends that Wilson embodied all of the qualities that leadership management books celebrate: integrity, foresight and the ability to inspire people to perform. He credits these attributes to helping Wilson so spectacularly realize his vision for his company; its employees; his alma mater, the University of Rochester; and the city and people of Rochester, N.Y. Ellis's telling starts off slow and is initially quite repetitive. But once Xerox is finally born, after years of setbacks, the story picks up. The real purpose for the detailed buildup appears toward the end, when credit for the last 20-odd years of corporate strife and ultimate success is given to the wrong person, Wilson's best friend and the company's corporate counsel. At that point, it becomes clear why Ellis was compelled to write this book so long after the company's rise and its true founder's demise. (Sept.) Copyright copy; Reed Business

Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In Copies in Seconds (2005) David Owen told the story of Chester Carlson, the lone inventor of the Xerox machine. Here, Ellis creates a portrait of Joe Wilson (1909-71), the CEO of Xerox, who took the invention to fruition. An even-tempered man with impeccable values and enormous patience, Wilson took on an incredible risk backing a completely untested technology, which paid off only after decades of tireless work. When office workers embraced the technology, copying everything in sight, the Xerox copy machine became one of the most lucrative inventions of the twentieth century. But Wilson wasn't just about making money; he was one of the first business leaders to become personally involved in civil rights, hiring African American workers when most other companies effectively locked them out of jobs. Wilson remained humble even as others around him took credit for Xerox's success, and he passed on quietly just as the company began to lose its way. Ellis' account is a shining example of how honest and compassionate leadership can create profits and benefit the community at the same time. David Siegfried Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved "An inspiring biography" (The Economist, November 2006) If you run a business and aspire to make it great, you owe it to yourself to read Joe Wilson and the Creation of Xerox by Charles D. Ellis. Despite occasionally pedestrian writing, the book rewards the reader with dramatic accounts of how one great leader managed to influence change rather than just react to it. Wilson knew little about technology, yet he--not the brilliant techies with whom he surrounded himself--created the modern copier industry. Xerox was an old Rochester, N.Y., company that was small, obscure and unambitious until Wilson took over from his dad in the late 1940s. In a sense, his takeover kicked off the technology revolution that shook American industry out of its somnolence. Early investors with small stakes in Xerox became multimillionaires. Later investors lost billions looking for the "next Xerox." They would have done better searching for the next Joe Wilson. His tact and lack of ego held together a necessarily diverse bunch of people. Sol Linowitz, the company lawyer, upstaged him by letting it be said on national television that he, not Wilson, was the father of Xerox. Wilson ignored it: Linowitz was important to the company, and Wilson wanted success, not an ego massage. He grasped the importance of image. He pioneered new and novel ways to get public attention for Xerox, including backing public-service TV shows at a time when the company could barely afford the expense in order to convey an image of quality for a little-known brand. When a leading consulting firm told Xerox there was no real market for its proposed 412 xerography machine, Wilson and his aides took the report apart and discovered that the questions asked and the methodology were faulty. He plowed on. The 412, Xerox's first truly competitive product, would have to sell for \$47,000 and was far too big for salespeople to lug around. Who would, or could, write a check of this size for a mere copying machine? But hey, someone suggested, who wouldn't pay a nickel to get rid of the messy carbon copy that was the curse of every office at the time? Wilson didn't hesitate: a nickel a copy it would be. Customers loved the seemingly cheap price, and orders mounted and remounted for the 412. To the customer's surprise and Xerox's delight, users were making far more copies of things than they did before the 412. The machine was so clean, fast and precise, it was an easy way to expand internal communication in the days before e-mail. In a year, some customers were spending more for copies than the machine would have cost. Xerox became a cash jackpot machine. Ellis's generally upbeat book has a sad ending. On his retirement in the mid-1960s, an ailing and tired Wilson made two horrible mistakes: He picked an incompetent successor and then failed to bequeath a strong board that could have reined in his successor's blunders. His successor threw away the chance to own the coming personal computer revolution and made disastrous billion-dollar investments in old industries. He lacked his predecessor's knack for embracing change. By then, Wilson was too ill to retake the reins. Xerox shriveled, and its bonds sank to junk status. Rescued by the present CEO, Ann Mulcahy, Xerox is doing well again, but it is no longer the shining symbol Wilson created. The author, Charley Ellis, is retired head of the consulting firm Greenwich Associates and serves as a Yale trustee and a director of the Vanguard funds. He knows a lot about business leadership, having consulted for and worked with many of the best practitioners. Among all of the business leaders he's known, and he's known hundreds, he puts Joe Wilson--whom he never met--over them all. The lessons here are clear and shining--both the good and the bad. (Forbes.com, October 25, 2006) Transforming family-owned Haloid Corp., which struggled in the shadow of hometown behemoth Eastman Kodak, into the globally recognized Xerox is an amazing accomplishment. But as Ellis's biography of Joe Wilson attests, Wilson's achievements ranged more widely and went much deeper than many gave him credit for. 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