



Harnessing Complexity

By Robert Axelrod, Michael D. Cohen

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Harnessing Complexity will be indispensable to anyone who wants to better comprehend how people and organizations can adapt effectively in the information age. This book is a step-by-step guide to understanding the processes of variation, interaction, and selection that are at work in all organizations. The authors show how to use their own paradigm of "bottom up" management, the Complex Adaptive System-whether in science, public policy, or private commerce. This simple model of how people work together will change forever how we think about getting things done in a group."Harnessing Complexity distills the managerial essence of current research on complexity....A very valuable contribution to the emerging theory of competition and competitive advantage."-C.K. Prahalad, University of Michigan, coauthor of Competing for the Future"A brilliant exposition that demystifies both the theory and use of Complex Adaptive Systems."-John Seely Brown, Xerox Corporation and Palo Alto Research Center

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In a world where companies are forced to adapt to an ever more quickly changing marketplace, where people from diverse backgrounds must work together in order to solve problems rapidly and the future is hard to predict, wouldn't it be wonderful if all this complexity could work to your advantage? Axelrod (*The Evolution of the Corporation*) and Cohen (a consultant to the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center), both professors at the University of Michigan, aim to draw on the principles of evolutionary biology, computer science and social design to explain the functioning of "complex adaptive systems" (specifically businesses), and how to improve them. They explore such abstract issues as whether to encourage variation in a rapidly changing situation (whether it refers to a diversity of products or problem-solving approaches, variety is defined as "the raw material for adaptation"); the impact of manipulating interactions (with respect to time as well as both physical and conceptual space) in an organization; and how to select and support the most viable individuals, teams, systems or business strategies that emerge. Although their schematic approach and well-drawn anecdotal examples yield pragmatic insights, Axelrod and Cohen rely on somewhat idiosyncratic terminology to make their key points: "Agents of a variety of types use their strategies in patterned interaction, with each other and with artifacts" (authors' emphasis). While most managers are aware of complexity theory and are eager to learn how to adapt it to their organizations, some may be put off by the convoluted language used here. Agent, Raphael Sagalyn. (May)
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From [Booklist](#)

Management theorists are increasingly turning to complexity science in their search for answers to questions about organizational behavior. Axelrod and Cohen are professors of public policy. Their perspective on complexity is on building effective teams from complex groups of individuals. Axelrod is the author of the groundbreaking *The Evolution of Cooperation* (1984) and its follow-up, *The Complexity of Cooperation* (1997). Cohen has served on the external faculty at the Santa Fe Institute, a leading research facility in the field of complexity. Drawing on their research done for a report on national information policy by the Highlands Forum under the aegis of the Department of Defense, the authors offer numerous business, political, and cultural applications for their model of complex adaptive systems. Clarifying the differences between complexity and chaos theories, they trace the principles of complex adaptive systems to evolutionary biology, computer science, and social design; and they outline three key processes of such systems: variation, interaction, and selection. *David Rouse*
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Review

"A brilliant exposition that demystifies both the theory and use of Complex Adaptive Systems." -- *John Seely Brown, Xerox Corporation and Palo Alto Research Center*

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Sean Martinez:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book may be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the book untitled *Harnessing Complexity* can be good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

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