



High Noon: The Inside Story of Scott McNealy and the Rise of Sun Microsystems

Karen Southwick

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In 1982, a little upstart named Sun was making waves in the high-tech industry with its groundbreaking workstation technology, even as early competitors dismissed the company as not worth losing sleep over. Since then, Sun Microsystems has become a formidable presence in the industry, making its own rules and taking no prisoners, and is currently poised to reach the highest point of its ascendancy--the challenge of Microsoft's dominance over the future of computing. The driving force behind this once fledgling company is a man who has been described as brash, unconventional, ambitious, forward-looking, and sometimes even his own worst enemy. Scott McNealy turned Sun into the multibillion-dollar success it is today--a developer of innovative software like Java that is revolutionizing the computing landscape. High Noon is the inside story of Sun's rise to power, from its shaky start in Silicon Valley through its transformation under the aggressive and inspirational leadership of McNealy. Karen Southwick reveals the behind-the-scenes maneuverings of McNealy and Sun, with candid interviews from the key players and insights into the inner workings of the high-tech industry. This book examines how scrappy underdog Sun overcame its larger and supposedly tougher competitors, combining hard work, tenacity, and talented people to build a more innovative and flexible company. You'll learn how McNealy moved Sun up the industry food chain, challenging more established companies like Hewlett-Packard and Digital Equipment by expanding Sun's product line and refocusing the business. High Noon expertly chronicles McNealy's triumphant history with Sun, from his early days as vice president of manufacturing to a CEO known for shooting straight from the hip without regard for the consequences. You'll discover how "Javaman"--as Fortune magazine dubbed McNealy--prompted Sun to take risks that ultimately allowed it to survive, thrive, and dominate--making Microsoft stand up and take notice. And you'll see how Sun's looming showdown with this industry giant promises wide-reaching implications for businesses and consumers alike. Among High Noon's revelations: A new perspective on how the complex, contradictory McNealy shaped his company and fashioned its strategy Insight into central issues facing the high-tech industry, such as network computers and the future of the Internet An insider view of the maneuverings of industry powerhouses, including Microsoft, Oracle, Netscape, IBM, and Intel Both entertaining and instructive, High Noon offers valuable lessons for taking charge of your destiny and succeeding in a fast-paced, unpredictable, and even hostile environment. Advance Praise for Karen Southwick's High Noon "High Noon captures the electricity and drama of one of the most important high-tech sagas of our time. Rich with insight as well as previously undisclosed stories."--Jim Moore, Founder, GeoPartners Research, Inc. Author of The Death of Competition "High Noon reveals the inside story of one of the companies Microsoft fears most, Sun Microsystems. Southwick uses her keen insight to tell the story of how four twenty-somethings created a company that has grown from a small seller of scientific computers to one of the most dominant high-tech firms in the world." --Eric Nee, Editor, Fortune "Scott McNealy is one of the most complex, fascinating individuals in high tech. Karen Southwick captures the contrarian spirit of Sun Microsystems and the intriguing personalities that run it."--Howard Anderson, President, The Yankee Group "High Noon takes us on a straight path to the future."--Dr. Eric Schmidt, Chairman and CEO, Novell, Inc. "High Noon illustrates how a company can succeed in the technology industry through a delicate balance between drive, talent, and timing."--Carol Bartz, Chairman and CEO, Autodesk

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