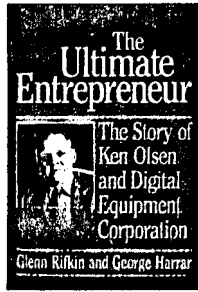**The Ultimate Entrepreneur: The Story of Ken Olsen and Digital Equipment Corporation.** *Rifkin, Glenn, and Harrar, George,* Contemporary Books, Chicago, 1988, 320 pp., $19.95.

Kenneth H. Olsen has to go down as one of the few great business leaders of all time. It is he who sets much of the tempo, tone, and behavior of Digital Equipment Corp., Maynard, Mass. This book gives many of his important views, but it is flawed by the fact that no one within DEC—Olsen included—was allowed to communicate with the authors.

That no one could speak out indicates that the company has changed from a stated culture of openness to one of control. The authors had to rely on former employees (including myself), customers, public reports, and news chronicles. This did not make the book's flaws fatal, and it is accurate as far as I know. But that no one from DEC cooperated is regrettable and less than ideal.

The book has several possible audiences: business scholars; DECophiles and DEC employees who want to understand some of the people and issues surrounding the company's history and upper echelons; customers and suppliers who may want a better understanding of the company and where it came from; and business leaders looking for ideas to build a better and successful culture.

For business scholars, the issues of culture, organization, and leadership are relevant. But for the companies and individuals who have to interface with DEC and who want to understand it better, it is unclear how relevant the history is.

Perhaps the best audience would be corporate leaders in the United States, who could read the advice, learn about the behavior, combine it with DEC's philosophy (even though it is missing from the book), and merely learn by example. That would probably not cure all the misbehavior and mediocrity that characterizes corporations.

But it would be a start.

—*C. Gordon Bell*

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