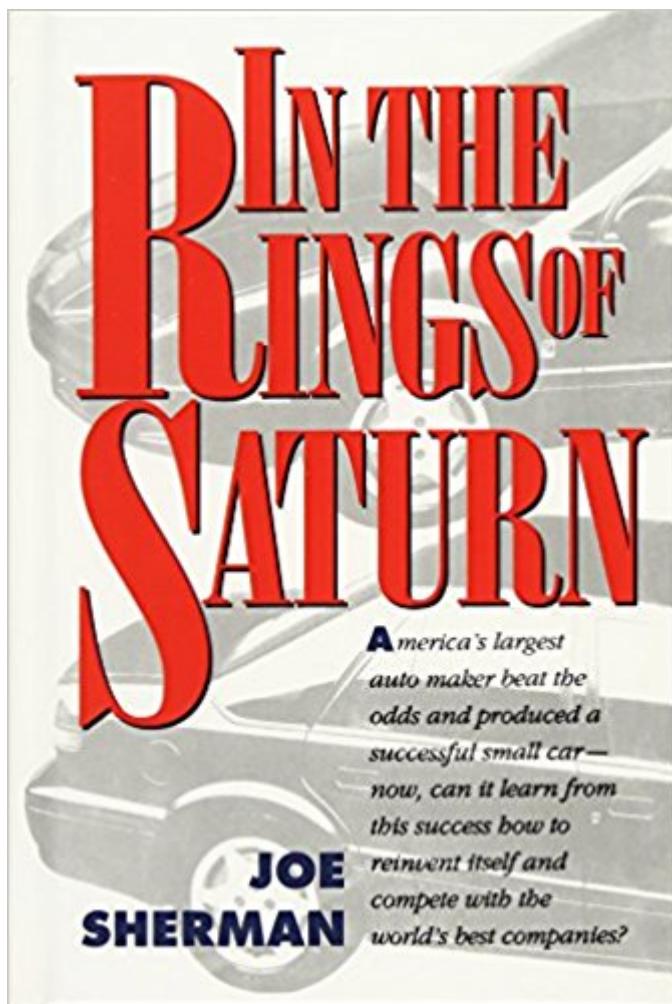


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In The Rings Of Saturn



Synopsis

In this compelling, readable narrative, Joe Sherman explores virtually every aspect of the Saturn project, America's biggest and most publicized industrial success of the last decade. Here is the whole story--Saturn's mysterious beginnings inside General Motors in 1982; the site hunt that involved 38 states and ended in Spring Hill, Tennessee; the plant's construction and the transfer of 5,000 UAW members to a historic Southern backwater; and finally the small car's triumph in the marketplace (Consumer Reports and J.D. Powers both dubbed Saturn a made-in-America breakthrough)--all woven together into a candid, panoramic tapestry. In the Rings of Saturn has a striking immediacy: the reader sees almost first-hand GM's 1991 Annual Meeting at the Grand Ole Opry led by chairman Robert Stempel, as gadfly stockholders turn the event into a parody. We spend a week on the crankshaft machining line under the care of paternal, bearlike teamleader Bob Courtemanche, experiencing Saturn's revolutionary but troubled team structure. We even drive around with Spring Hill's flamboyant, tobacco-spitting mayor George Jones, who tells Sherman that the difference between a "Yankee" and a "damned Yankee" is "a Yankee comes here and goes home; a damned Yankee stays." Dozens of characters, from local farmers, to inspired assembly line workers, to "car smarts and gut feel" engineers, move across these pages. Through these flesh-and-blood portraits, Sherman brings to life a very American story of renewal and growth, of great hope and soured expectations, of greed and lost opportunities. And he reveals as well the downside of the project--that while the car itself is a triumph, the project has failed to provide either the learning laboratory General Motors needed or a model for positive redevelopment rural America yearns for. In the Rings of Saturn is both the anatomy of a corporate triumph and an incisive commentary on industrial renewal in the United States. And it exposes the high hopes and earthshattering disappointments that occur when big business appears in rural areas. It is a volume that will enlighten business readers, inform the automotive industry, and entertain Saturn car buyers, many of whom will think: "My little car means all this?"

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (November 18, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195072448

ISBN-13: 978-0195072440

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.2 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #872,783 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Automotive > Industry #176 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Automotive #204 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Civil & Environmental > Transportation

Customer Reviews

The Saturn Corp. was formed by General Motors in 1985 to build a quality American small car that could compete with the Japanese imports. Sherman (The House at Shelborne Farms) offers a step-by-step account of the progress of Saturn Corporation from its inception through the company's first two years of production. The most compelling sections deal with the widely publicized impact the building of the Saturn factory had on rural Maury County, Tenn., and on the town of Spring Hill in particular. Sherman covers fully how the people working at Saturn feel about what was supposed to be a company that would revolutionize American car manufacturing. This readable study is not for car nuts--although there is plenty of information about how the Saturn production process works--but rather for readers interested in the history of what so far seems a qualified modern-day industrial success story. While Saturn achieved many of its goals, its future within GM is uncertain and the company suffered a setback when approximately 380,000 cars were recalled this summer (the recall is not covered in the book). Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Sherman has written a readable story of the General Motors Saturn Project, from its successful implementation in 1985 almost to the present recalls. He has been able to observe the development of the project through the eyes of several levels of management, residents of Spring Hill, Tennessee (the site of the Saturn plant), and workers on the Saturn assembly line. Sherman, a Vermont author, effectively ties together his narratives by including a timeline of relevant events in the automotive industry dating back to 1950. The building of a new car that could compete with the Japanese cars was a major undertaking, especially when GM was already in financial trouble. Then came downsizing and concern by management and the union that their autonomy would be compromised by the team approach. This is a solid, timely book that should be available in most libraries, and one that executives wishing to explore new management concepts should consider.- Littleton M. Maxwell, Business Information Ctr., Univ. of Richmond, Va. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If you love cars and car history, this is the book for you. Sadly GM messed this up, Saturn was a great idea, but greed from the GM executives ended up killing off the car. Profit is never enough, and take a little power away from the Unions and they act like a Junior High kid with hurt feelings. Really good read, great story with a sad ending. Wish another company could have taken over Saturn back when they were looking for a buyer. Waiting for Elon Musk to come out with a model that has plastic panels on it, just makes sense when you see all the dents and dings you end up with over the years on your car doors.

This was a great book. It showed how an old bureaucracy like GM could manage to set up a car company that will change how cars are made and sold into the next century. Good insight into the fighting, working, changing, struggling, and wining that has made Saturn a model for companies that want to cherish their customers and turn them into salesmen for their products. If you wonder how your Saturn got to be so unique this is the book for you.

Seems well built and good quality Excellent experience I am very happy I picked this brand So far this item is great fantastic value and quality product Very impressed.

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