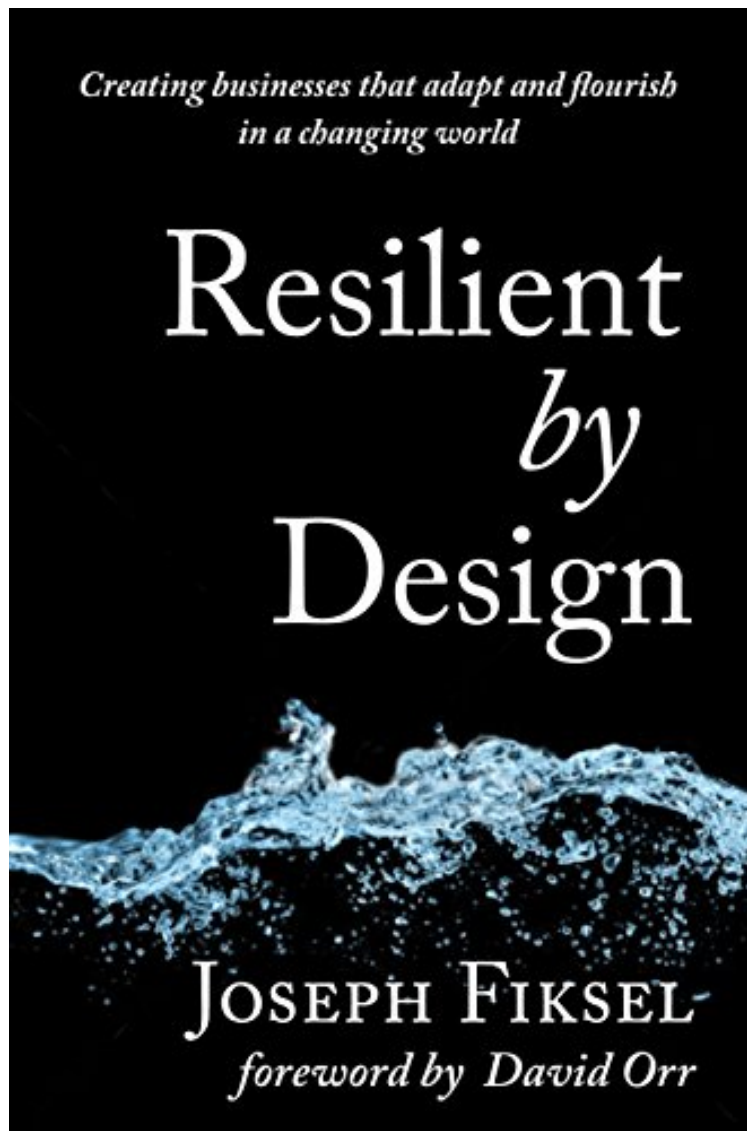


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## Resilient by Design: Creating Businesses That Adapt and Flourish in a Changing World

*Joseph Fiksel*

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**Joseph Fiksel : Resilient by Design: Creating Businesses That Adapt and Flourish in a Changing World** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Resilient by Design: Creating Businesses That Adapt and Flourish in a Changing World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Phil Renaud Very good book for the practitioner having an interest in business resilience 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well written! Makes an innovative

business concept easy to understand! By Tim Lohner Resilient by Design, written by Dr. Joseph Fiksel of The Ohio State University, provides a unique perspective on how businesses should be managed, drawing on comparisons to ecosystems, that naturally evolve and change in response to numerous stresses. He notes that businesses today must respond to numerous pressures, including natural disasters, disease, accidents, power failures, political upheavals, terrorist attacks, economic crises, etc. They are subject to an increasingly volatile world and must respond appropriately in order to survive and prosper. Fiksel argues that the best companies will embrace change and anticipate such challenges, recognizing that we live in an ever-changing world that presents business owners with not just obstacles, but with opportunities as well. He stresses that by "learning from natural systems that have evolved [and survived] for millions of years, enterprises can develop resilience strategies that provide competitive advantage." He describes and compares ecological systems to those that are engineered and draws on those "natural" characteristics to recommend how business owners can adapt and change, not only in response to difficulties, but to anticipated challenges as well. While many companies strive to become more successful by cutting costs and becoming "lean," they often do so at their own peril. Fiksel points out that such an emphasis does not provide adequate buffers and alternatives to allow a sufficient response to fluctuations in the market or the environment. There is an overwhelming desire for many companies to "cling to stability," particularly if the business is doing well. Instead, Fiksel endorses mimicking nature and becoming more diverse, which is a beneficial characteristic in nature, as well as in business. Access to resources is also a growing challenge and one that must be addressed by companies dependent on extensive supply chains. "Systems thinking" or developing a better understanding of the complex relationships that affect a business is strongly encouraged to address the "inevitability of change." This would allow companies to better grasp their dependency on suppliers that lie well beyond their control. While most progressive companies today have sustainability officers or Directors, most do not have a "Chief Resilience Officer," a clever and convincing concept introduced by the author. Fiksel also draws attention to the growing energy-water-food nexus and notes that we will need the equivalent of two Earths to support the world's population by the year 2030. He provides many examples of how companies can "design for resilience" by using new technologies, such as smart grid, distributed electricity, etc. All risks cannot be accounted for, but it is possible to become more "resilient" and capable of dealing with unexpected events that inevitably occur. He cites the work of companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, Dow Chemical, DuPont, American Electric Power, Swiss Re, Nestle, Entergy, and others who have embraced the concept of resiliency in different parts of their organizations. Despite many convincing examples of successful implementation of resilient principals, Fiksel notes that it is often difficult to convince company shareholders or managers to address risks which some still believe to be controversial, such as climate change. While appearing to address future changes, some companies, have misplaced their priorities and experienced terrible consequences, such as catastrophic oil spills or the collapse of waste impoundments. Others have responded successfully to disasters such as Hurricane Katrina or the 2011 Japanese Tsunami. Fiksel offers guidance and recommendations on how to incorporate the principals that are described in the book. This is particularly helpful to those that may be new to the concepts of resiliency, environmental sustainability, systems thinking, etc. One topic that would have benefited from additional coverage was how companies can make the business case to incorporate many of the recommended strategies. For example, many companies will go "beyond regulation" when instituting programs to protect the environment, however, those that do often experience a "reputational benefit" or other intangible benefits. For example REI, the supplier of outdoor equipment, can easily justify such costs, while the local electric company is hard pressed to do so as no one wants to pay more for their electricity. The author is well aware of this conflict and the need to be profitable, but the reader would have benefited from additional insight on this issue. The concept of ecosystem services and the dependence of businesses on them is well covered, but again, it is very difficult for a company to make the business case for their protection unless they are directly impacted by their loss. For example, it is well known that bees, butterflies and other insects pollinate plants, which supports the production of food. But until a farmer loses a crop due to the overuse of pesticides and the lack of pollinating bees, little or nothing will be done. It is a very important challenge that does not yet have a clear solution, particularly if the consumer is only bothered with a slight increase in the cost of an apple. The book is well written and, while dealing with a complex topic, is easy to read. It would benefit from more broad and updated referencing, but overall, it is a very comprehensive book. When making comparisons to ecological systems, the inclusion of a diagram or two to illustrate the complexity of ecosystems would help the reader to grasp the depth of the author's analysis, but ample descriptions are provided to guide the reader through the subject matter. The summaries at the end of each chapter are very helpful and will certainly allow the reviewers of the book to obtain a quick lesson on the principals of successful resiliency. Dr. Fiksel has "covered all of the bases" thus making the content of value to beginners as well as experienced professionals. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How to Survive and Thrive in a World that can be Stranger than Fiction By J Thomas Joseph has been a leading advocate and expert on Resiliency for many years - attempting to move us towards the next evolution of sustainability and business continuity. This is especially important as we face challenges that we can not anticipate, such as the 9-11 terrorist attacks and the Fukushima disaster. I think this will especially be critical in the future because of our

increased dependence on information technology and as the Internet of Things surrounds us and we depend on it more and more. Joseph's book provides business leaders with a great road map as to how to prepare their organizations to meet these challenges and strengthen their companies not only to survive, but also thrive in the face of them.

As managers grapple with the challenges of climate change and volatility in a hyper-connected, global economy, they are paying increasing attention to their organization's resilience—its capacity to survive, adapt, and flourish in the face of turbulent change. Sudden natural disasters and unforeseen supply chain disruptions are increasingly common in the new normal. Pursuing business as usual is no longer viable, and many companies are unaware of how fragile they really are. To cope with these challenges, management needs a new paradigm that takes an integrated view of the built environment, the ecosystems, and the social fabric in which their businesses operate. *Resilient by Design* provides business executives with a comprehensive approach to achieving consistent success in a changing world. Rich with examples and case studies of organizations that are designing resilience into their business processes, it explains how to connect with important external systems—stakeholders, communities, infrastructure, supply chains, and natural resources—and create innovative, dynamic organizations that survive and prosper under any circumstances. Resilient enterprises continue to grow and evolve in order to meet the needs and expectations of their shareholders and stakeholders. They adapt successfully to turbulence by anticipating disruptive changes, recognizing new business opportunities, building strong relationships, and designing resilient assets, products, and processes. Written by one of the leading experts in enterprise resilience and sustainability, *Resilient by Design* offers a confident path forward in a world that is increasingly less certain.

"*Resilient by Design* helps organizations to think about how to succeed, survive and adapt in our increasingly complex world. In order to survive, companies must account for social and environmental values in their systems, structures and processes. This book provides relevant lessons learned and frameworks for dealing with change."