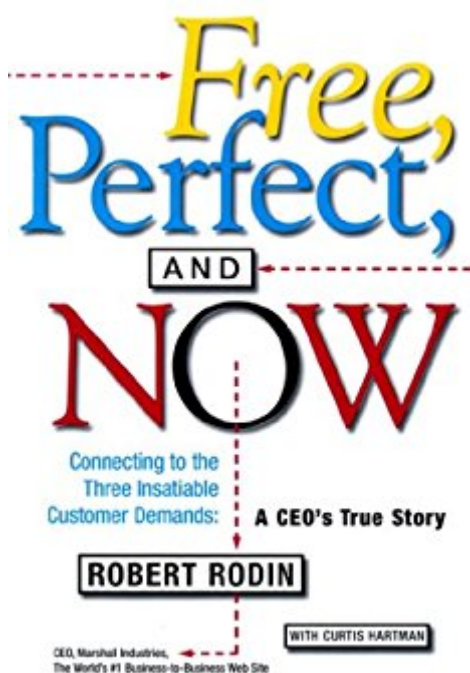


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# Free, Perfect, And Now: Connecting To The Three Insatiable Customer Demands: A CEO's True Story



## Synopsis

In a world where knowledge is king, the Web never sleeps, and competitive challenge increases exponentially, Robert Rodin shows you how to prepare for the three insatiable demands of today's customers: they want their product or service FREE, they want it PERFECT, and they want it NOW. No matter what business you're in, you have to find a way to respond -- or risk losing your customers to competitors who are discovering new ways to sell your product or service cheaper, better, and faster than you've ever imagined. As the dynamic CEO of electronics distributor Marshall Industries who trained with the worldfamous W. Edwards Deming, Rob Rodin engineered the astounding reinvention of his company, turning a conventionally successful \$500 million business into a \$2 billion competitive powerhouse, a high-speed, high-profit junction box wired to today's imperatives. Rodin isn't a consultant, pretending change is a matter of five steps and a pep talk. He's lived inside its gut-wrenching turmoil. Six years ago Rodin and his colleagues bet their company on a radical experiment, tearing a healthy business down to bedrock. They threw out all the old tools, taking 1,100 managers off MBOs and incentives and abolishing commissions for 600 salespeople. They threw out all the old technology, too, changing every operating system in a single tense night. Then they set out to reinvent themselves, finding new ways to help people and technology work together -- creating a dynamic pioneer for our new electronic era, a company twice named as the #1 business-to-business Web site in the world by Advertising Age magazine. Free, Perfect, and Now tells the dramatic story of that transformation from the inside. Detailing the hard lessons learned in competitive battle, it offers a compelling new perspective on the most pressing issue facing businesspeople today: how to prepare a customer-focused corporation for a future you can't predict. But Free, Perfect, and Now is a book of solutions, too, a guide to help every manager turn ideas into concrete results. Each chapter explains, step by step, how to design a different element of a company, from how to anticipate customers' shifting demands to how to make a Web site profitable. And each chapter ends with a Manager's Workbook, containing detailed advice managers can use to make their business more competitive today.

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## Customer Reviews

Anyone struggling with how to adapt to too much cumulative change within their industry will benefit from reading this book for several good reasons. If for starters you believe, as I do, that the internet will have revolutionary effects on all traditional industry and education models, then this book offers an unusually open and thorough explanation of how Marshall Industries created and has continuously improved a great B2B web site capability. Marshall is easily the best within all distribution channels, and Advertising Age has rated Marshall's web site as the #1 B2B capability for all industries. But, the internet case study is actually a downstream result of a tough and on-going transformational change process that Marshall has been going through since 1992. Back then, Marshall's business environment was changing faster than their top-down by the numbers and incentive plan culture could handle. So, instead of trying harder in out-dated ways the company decided to try to become a learning organization that would transform itself - an enormously tough and risky under-taking. Because so many other companies are currently in the same learn, die or sell-out situation, they need prescriptive help, and this book has an effective delivery style for the medicine. The book is written in a first person, narrative style, which makes it an enjoyable, read, but more importantly Rodin has distilled good management theories down to a basic, comprehensible level grounded in a real story. Readers will, as a result, find particular problems described in ways that will strongly connect to their own similar problems. They will go on to borrow many of Rodin's analogies for getting the same messages across to their employees.

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