

Press Release



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Rocky Mountain Institute



Announcing a provocative new book that promises to transform our fundamental notions about business...

Most businesses still operate according to a set of underlying **assumptions** that are little changed since the start of the first Industrial Revolution.

Then, natural resources were abundant and labor was the limiting factor of production. But now, there's a surplus of people, while natural capital—not only resources, but also the ecological systems that provide vital life-support services—is in decline and relatively expensive.

The next Industrial Revolution, like the first one, will be a response to changing patterns of scarcity. It will create upheaval, but more importantly, it will create **opportunities**. Business must adjust to these new realities.

Innovative companies are already doing just that. They're profiting and gaining decisive competitive advantage—and their leaders and employees are feeling better about what they do, too. They're in the vanguard of a new business model: natural capitalism.

That's the message of ***Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution***, by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and Hunter Lovins. It has just been published by Little, Brown (\$26.95; ISBN 0-316-35316-7).

In this groundbreaking blueprint for a new economy, three leading business visionaries explain how the world is on the verge of another industrial revolution—one that promises to transform our fundamental notions about commerce. *Natural Capitalism* describes a future in which business and environmental interests increasingly overlap, and in which businesses can better satisfy their customers' needs, increase profits, and help solve environmental problems all at the same time.

Because this integration of ecological and economic goals is profitable, the authors claim, it will replace traditional industrialism within a new economy and a **new paradigm** of production, just as industrialism previously replaced agrarianism.

Natural capital refers to the natural resources and ecosystem services that make possible all economic activity, indeed all life. These services are of immense economic value; some are literally priceless, since they have no known substitutes. Yet current business practices typically fail to take into account the value of these assets. As a result, natural capital is being degraded and liquidated by the wasteful use of such resources as energy, materials, water, fiber, and topsoil.

The first of natural capitalism's **four principles**, therefore, is radically increased resource productivity. Implementing just this first principle can significantly improve a firm's bottom line, and can also help finance the other three. They are: redesigning industry on biological models with closed loops and zero waste; shifting from the sale of goods (for example, light bulbs) to the provision of services (illumination); and reinvesting in the natural capital that is the basis of future prosperity.

Despite their environmental backgrounds, the authors aren't calling for more regulations or belt-tightening. In fact, the business model they're promoting would eventually make environmental regulations irrelevant.

(more)

Natural Capitalism reads like a bolt from the blue because it isn't repackaging the same old management mantras. It presents a comprehensive vision of the future based on information that, up till now, most members of the business community simply haven't heard. Citing hundreds of compelling stories from a wide array of sectors, *Natural Capitalism* has the ring of inevitability and **common sense**.

Natural-capitalist companies are realizing benefits both for today's shareholders and for future generations. And, say the authors, firing the "unproductive tons, gallons, and kilowatt-hours" often makes it possible to keep the people, who will foster the innovation that drives future improvement.

Natural Capitalism discovers a **new world**—the huge, growing and largely unexplored common ground between business and environmental interests. As such, it's got a lot of people excited.

- Says Peter Senge (*The Fifth Discipline*): "If Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* was the bible for the first Industrial Revolution, then *Natural Capitalism* may well prove to be it for the next."
- "You had better have a copy of this on your shelf or you will not be able to identify tomorrow's companies and industries as they appear before your eyes," advises Professor Stuart Hart of the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School.
- Ray Anderson, chairman and CEO of Interface, Inc., says: "As the industrial arm of modern society's larger body struggles to come to terms with the mounting evidence of the damage it is inflicting on the body itself and the body's home, Earth, *Natural Capitalism* provides some crucially important guidance. Looking for a viable philosophical starting point? Here it is. Looking for hard evidence to validate that philosophy? Here it is. Looking for peace of mind? Start here."
- David Orr (*Earth in Mind*) raves: "By illuminating the common ground between economics, environment, and society with crystal clarity and eloquence, *Natural Capitalism* is the design manual for the 21st century. Read it! Read it again!"
- And this from Tachi Kiuchi, Managing Director of Mitsubishi Electric Corporation: "*Natural Capitalism* reads like a manifesto, a touching and powerful credo, for the second industrial revolution. Three of the world's best brains have put together all their wisdom and created a work that future historians may look back upon as a milestone on our way to a new, sustainable economy."
- And *Publishers Weekly* calls *Natural Capitalism* "an ambitious, visionary, monster book. . . the book's reach is phenomenal. It belongs to the galvanizing tradition of Frances Moore Lappé's *Diet for a Small Planet* and Stewart Brand's *The Whole Earth Catalog*."