

# Built To Last Summary

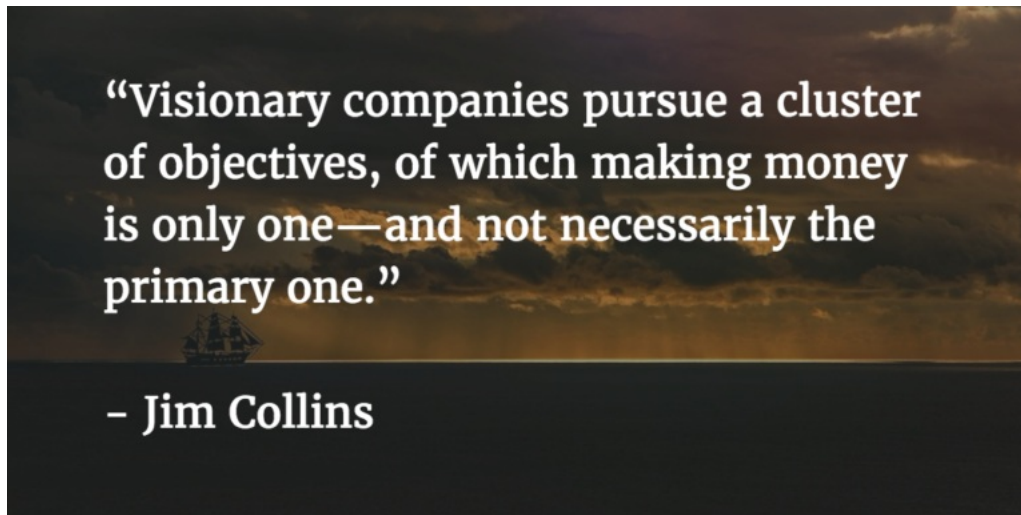
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 [fourminutebooks.com/built-to-last-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/built-to-last-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Built To Last* examines what lies behind the extraordinary success of 18 visionary companies and which principles and ideas they've used to thrive for a century.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Collins and Porras conducted a survey among hundreds of CEOs of the world's top corporations at the time and then compiled a list of **18 visionary companies**, which they then thoroughly analyzed, investigated and compared with their non-visionary peers.

They wanted to find out what has helped them stay successful over decades, and, in some cases, even a century. Here are the 3 tidbits that most struck me:

1. You don't need a great idea to start a great company.
2. Without a core ideology, a company will never be visionary.
3. Visionary companies are like a cult.

Let's dig in!

**Lesson 1:** You don't need a great idea to start a great company. Or any idea, for that matter.

**You don't need a great idea to start a great company.** In fact, you don't need any idea at all.

Why?

Because truly great and visionary companies **constantly turn out great ideas**, just because **they generate so many** in the first place.

The reason these companies succeeded is that instead of focusing on one idea or one great leader, they focused on **the process of coming up with ideas**, and producing leaders, either good, or bad.

Being restless and persistent matters much more than having that one in a million idea.

## Lesson 2: Without a core ideology, your company can't be visionary.

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A core ideology consists of two things: **a higher purpose and a set of core values**.

For example, Walmart's core ideology is to bring people retail products at the **lowest prices, with the greatest customer service**.

Apple's purpose: **Think different**. They are here to disrupt, to change, to improve. The industry doesn't matter. They did it with computers, then music, then phones.

One of their values is **user-friendly and beautiful design**. Notice how these don't stand in the way of progress. Apple never stopped experimenting. Otherwise they would never have moved from computers to music players.

However, doing something different and making all their products look beautiful are universal principles, which can always be applied.

**Your core ideology has to live through all products, employees and times**. It doesn't matter what it contains, but rather that it exists.

If you have no purpose and no principles to hold up high, you'll never create a vision great enough to attract fellow great minds to help you build it.

So much more than an idea you need a purpose and a set of values.

## Lesson 3: Visionary companies are like a cult – you're in or you're out!

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This was interesting to me, I had never considered it.

Since their core ideology doesn't leave much room for compromises, visionary companies will settle only for the best employees, with the same mindset.

The core ideology is something that you either share, or you don't. There's nothing in between, which is why **new employees either thrive or leave very quickly**.

For example you couldn't say the f-word, damn, or shit around Walt Disney. If he heard you use a four-letter word other than love, you were fired. No exceptions.

Same with Apple. You either got why the serifs on a font were so important, or you didn't. The reason that this is important is that **the company feels like a big family, almost like a cult.**

Only once you're sure employees follow your core ideology can you trust them enough to give them room to experiment and generate those ideas your company relies on.

## Built To Last Review

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I had no idea that *Built To Last* was so popular and such a classic. An incredible effort went into this book and you can see it in the countless examples, many of which made it into the summary on Blinkist, which I think is great.

Lesson 1 was a game-changer for me, I didn't think you'd need to have a great idea, but I sure thought you had to have one. Imagining just sitting together with 2 good friends, starting a company, and then coming up with something surely puts entrepreneurship into a new light for me. I always knew it was a jump into a cold pool, but this actually makes it sound fun.

I've also never seen the idea of a core ideology formulated so clearly. The summary made it really easy to understand, I feel as if I could come up with my own right now. Jim's follow-up books *Good To Great* and *Great By Choice* are equally as interesting, by the way!

## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- How much money you'd made on a \$1 investment over 64 years in these companies
- Why progress and staying true to your core ideology aren't mutually exclusive
- What a big, hairy, audacious goal is and how Boeing always went bankrupt over theirs
- How visionary companies manage to produce one great leader after the next
- Where Google stole the idea of giving employees time to dabble in their own projects, and why it's a crucial part of success
- A few examples of practical rules to make sure your core ideology is lived in daily operations

## Who would I recommend the Built To Last summary to?

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The 27 year old who sits on his one business idea, not telling anyone about it, but not acting on it because he's afraid it might fail, the 47 year old with an itch to start something new, and anyone who repeatedly questions the values of his employer.

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