

The Incredible Secret Money Machine by Don Lancaster; Published 1978 by Howard W. Sams & Co., Inc., 4300 West 62nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46268. 159 pages, paperback, \$5.95

• Don Lancaster is well known for his clear and understandable, no-nonsense technical writing. Indeed, his published contributions to personal computing, when it was but a fledgling technology, make him a kind of founding father of that industry. His articles have appeared in many consumer electronics and personal computing magazines.

Though his work in these magazines has gained him an enviable recognition, probably Lancaster's best-known labors have been his series of technical "cookbooks."

When digital integrated circuitry became a reality in the late 60's and early 1970's a sort of void in understanding prevailed among a large segment of the "old school" electronics practitioners. The applications literature supplied by i.e. manufacturers was filled with new terms, jargon, and references to mysterious new concepts, making it very difficult to apply the old bootstrap technique to one's personal improvement. Don Lancaster did his part in filling this information void with his cookbook series. The *RTL Cookbook*, *TTL Cookbook*, and *CMOS Cookbook* are all aimed at promoting an understanding of techniques and methods employed in the application of digital i.e.'s. Other books published by Lancaster are; *The Active Filter Cookbook*; and the *TV Typewriter Cookbook*.

At first glance, Lancaster's most recent book would appear to be a departure from his earlier work. But, the same style employed in his technical books is used in **The Incredible Secret Money Machine**, to explain clearly and simply the strategies, methods and techniques of operating a small technical business. **The Incredible Secret Money Machine** is a book about making money, or more appropriately, about making a living: "doing the things you just love to do." The book is written with the technical or craft-oriented individual in mind. Anyone who would be self-employed in a technical capacity, full or part-time, or anyone with their own technical business or proprietorship should find Don's book a most useful resource for business information and advice.

A money-machine, by Lancaster's definition, is any small business operation or enterprise that produces income for the individual. Whether it involves the construction of circuit prototypes, refinishing antique furniture, photo retouching services—even a small record-

ing studio—each would classify as a potential "money-machine."

Don't consider this as just another "how to start and run your own business" book: this one is refreshingly different. The author seems to embrace the concept of small business for small's sake. The author opposes conducting business by committee, and in fact, sees employees as an evil—even when necessary.

Though the book presents a clearly-defined approach to conducting business, Lancaster doesn't insist upon a rigid set of rules. On the contrary, within the guidelines given, he suggests that each person set his own goals and modus operandi.

This reviewer found the book pretty much on target, insofar as it offers a general philosophy for running a small business. Of the ideas suggested for business success, one was concerned with being a "doing dogger." Lancaster defines this as "...someone who makes things happen. Those who act rather than are acted upon." Also, under a chapter called Tactics, the author advises: "Never advertise or accept payment or orders for an undeveloped product, no matter how good it's going to be." Elsewhere, he counsels, "Study the works of chairman Mao, know your enemy. Anticipate what they are going to do and then completely change the rules of the game to something they simply won't understand." Another particularly meaningful bit of advice—"Never assume institutions or people will change with time—they won't. Incompetence and greed are immutable physical constants of the known universe." Whether you agree with the author's philosophy or not you will surely appreciate the free-spirit behind it.

The book's ten chapters (numbered 0 to 9) are well balanced with advice, admonitions and well-placed humor. For example, in Chapter 7 titled, Some Unmatters, the author recommends: "Never confront any government official on any level at any time for any reason. There is nothing more dangerous to your money machine than a hacked-off bureaucrat.... Be nice to the people at the post office. After all, it's a real challenge damaging and slowing up all that mail."

Other chapters range in subject from establishing personal goals; to Strategy; Keeping Informed; and there's even one on Investments.

This book reads like a novel and once you start you may not want to put it down. Good reading and good luck to all you doing-doggers and your own Secret Money Machines. ■

Irwin Diehl