



## Book Review:

### **Reading Time:**

3 minutes

### **Reader Benefit:**

- ◆ Learn the smart and proactive way to buy IT that meets your needs;
- ◆ Insights about how you can decide wisely on your IT spending;
- ◆ Buy the book to discover the realities that you must consider before you take the plunge in IT acquisition for your company; and realize the payback you expect from your IT investment.

Title: **The Smart Way to Buy Information Technology**

Author: Brad L. Peterson and Diane M. Carco

Publisher: AMACOM, 1998

Pages: 258 pp, includes Chapter Summaries, and Index

Reviewer's Rating: ☺☺☺☺☺

### Rating Legend:

*Inspiring* ☺☺☺☺☺ *Excellent* ☺☺☺☺ *Good* ☺☺☺ *Average* ☺☺ *OK* ☺

### *Website Summary:*

## **Choosing IT Correctly**

The benefits IT brings needs no elaboration. However, getting the right IT solutions into your organisation can make the difference between acquiring a white elephant and a wise investment. This book has a simple goal: To help you maximise value and thus avoid costly pitfalls in procuring IT for your organisation.

### *Synopsis:*

## **Choosing IT Correctly**

The authors start off by examining the problems and questions that a typical organisation faces when it goes through the process of putting together an IT infrastructure that can hopefully serve its business needs.

The benefits IT brings needs no elaboration. However, getting the right IT solutions into your organisation can make the difference between acquiring a white elephant and a wise investment.

This book has a simple goal: To help you maximise value and thus avoid costly pitfalls in procuring IT for your organisation.

Throughout, the straightforward text is direct and consistently helps the reader grasp the essential elements of the IT procurement process. If IT buying know-how expertise is what you're looking for, this book is a reference guide that will help you gain an understanding of this vast subject without making costly mistakes.



## Choosing IT Correctly

*Book Review by Leon A. Enriquez*

The benefits IT brings needs no elaboration. However, getting the right IT solutions into your organisation can make the difference between acquiring a white elephant and a wise investment. This book has a simple goal: To help you maximise value and thus avoid costly pitfalls in procuring IT for your organisation. Obviously, there is a real need to clarify what the whole buying process is, besides cost considerations.

Authors Brad L. Peterson and Diane M. Carco, start off by examining the problems and questions that a typical organisation faces when it goes through the process of putting together an IT infrastructure that can hopefully serve its business needs. Unfortunately, people who have been entrusted to do so often do not have a sound background and understanding that can help them to pick the right choices.

“Companies are making buying mistakes every day. Vendors manipulate the sales process and entice decision makers with features and solutions that may or may not mesh with fundamental business practices,” state Peterson and Carco. “Vendors seduce internal technology enthusiasts with technotoys and costly interim solutions that keep them wanting more. As a result, companies squander precious capital to get the wrong business solution on the wrong terms.” This observation by the IT-savvy authors is a scenario many can identify with but not avoid.

The book is structured in three segments with a total of 16 chapters that focus as follows:

*Part One: Why IT Buying Mistakes Happen*

- ◆ Technophilia
- ◆ Vendor Selling Ploys

*Part Two: The Smart Way to Buy IT*

- ◆ Putting a Business Spin on IT Acquisitions
- ◆ The User
- ◆ Technical
- ◆ Financial
- ◆ Negotiating
- ◆ Administrative
- ◆ Putting the Five Roles Together

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### *Part Three: Contracting*

- ◆ Contracting Themes
- ◆ Request for Proposal (RFP)
- ◆ Software Licences
- ◆ Consulting
- ◆ Equipment
- ◆ Outsourcing
- ◆ Strategic Alliances

Peterson and Carco offer insightful advice and make it easy for the reader to follow their experience-based approach.

“Buying IT is an inherently complex endeavour. It has implications throughout a company,” state the authors. “It raises user issues, technical issues, financial issues, negotiating issues, and administrative issues. It involves a complex and continuing process. Doing it well is a valuable skill.”

The following insights become clear as you read the text:

- ◆ Part One shows the reader where the pitfalls are so that he can avoid them.
- ◆ Part Two describes the smart way to buy IT, and as part of this learning process, this book gets you and your colleagues involved in playing out certain roles to acquire the right IT solution at the right price and at the right terms.
- ◆ Part Three reveals the roles played by the different groups in the company (e.g., user, technical, financial, negotiating, and administrative) and knowing the substance of the various types of deals will make you effective at identifying and negotiating key terms.

Throughout, the straightforward text is direct and consistently helps the reader grasp the essential elements of the IT procurement process.

If IT buying know-how expertise is what you’re looking for, this book is a reference guide that will help you gain an understanding of this vast subject without making costly mistakes.

“Our desire is to simplify and clarify. A simpler, more manageable process will give companies better value for what they spend on IT,” state Peterson and Carco.



“It will also lower the frustration level of the people involved and allow them to look on technology acquisitions as money well spent,” concur the authors.

All-in-all, this book achieves the authors’ goals brilliantly because it sticks to the fundamentals and its approach appeals to common sense. This book is a welcome change from the “*geek-speak*” that seems to proliferate and confuse rather than inform the normal folks.

If you are directly involved with buying IT solutions for your company, this is a timely resource that will serve you well today and beyond. It is in essence, a no-nonsense guide for the non-IT-savvy person – the layman.

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