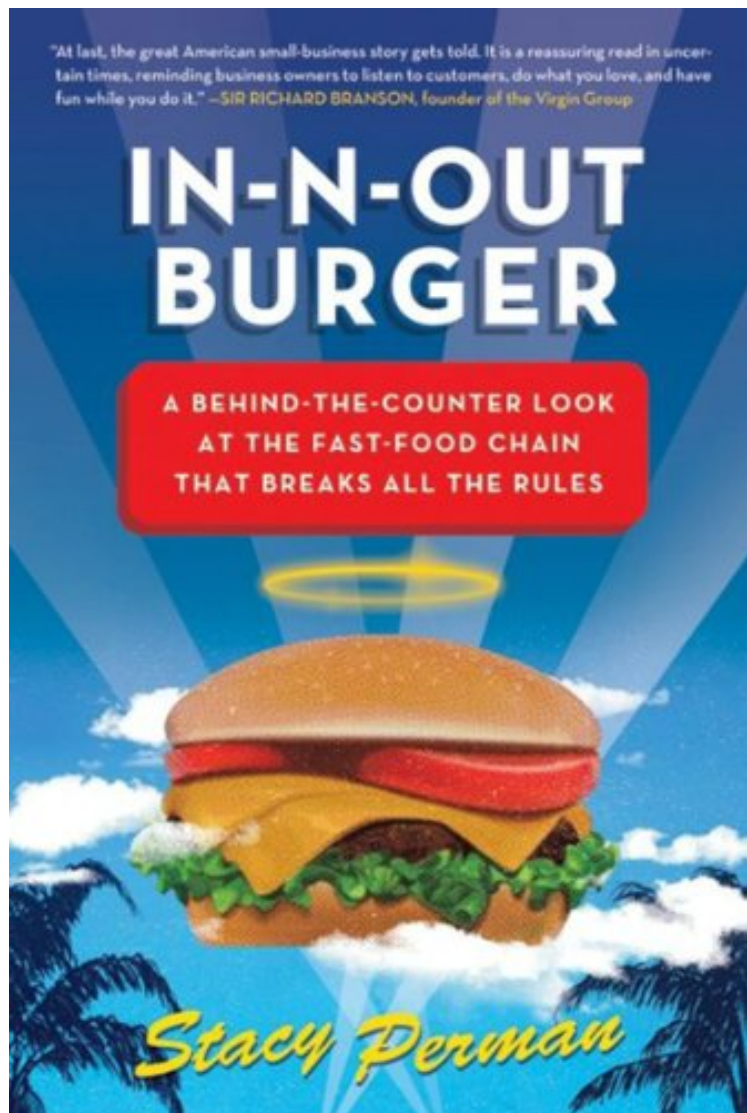


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## In-N-Out Burger: A Behind-the-Counter Look at the Fast-Food Chain That Breaks All the Rules

Stacy Perman

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**Stacy Perman : In-N-Out Burger: A Behind-the-Counter Look at the Fast-Food Chain That Breaks All the Rules** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In-N-Out Burger: A Behind-the-Counter Look at the Fast-Food Chain That Breaks All the Rules:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good Book but I Want More Information By David B This book satisfied my need for information about In-N-Out for now. I was hoping for more insider information but it is

reasonable to understand why such a private and unusual family would make that difficult. The story is told somewhere between a business analyst view of the fast food industry history and growth and a tabloid expose on a family with skeletons in the closet. It comes up a bit short from both points of view. The business analysis feels like the elements one would find in a college term paper or maybe a masters's thesis with In-N-Out as the anchor. The family history has too much feel of gossip versus a candid picture. The way the two are woven together feels a little choppy. Having described the book in more negative terms than it probably deserves, I found it valuable to satisfy my curiosity about In-N-Out and would recommend it as a resource for anyone with similar interests. I am looking forward to the person that is able to write that definitive book on Lynsi as I believe her life sums up what In-N-Out is really all about.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. IN-N-OUT-BURGER serves up an interesting tale...By P. Gregory Stacy Perman's informative book IN-N-OUT-BURGER is an inside look at the rise and RISE of my beloved In-N-Out Burger. Through Perman's no-nonsense prose, we are taken back to the late 40's...Post World War II America is prospering, and a young man named Harry Snyder meets a restaurant manager named Esther Johnson, falls in love, and soon opens a modest hamburger stand in Baldwin Park, California in 1948. Through hard work, and a fierce determination to serve quality food at low prices...Harry Esther's small business quickly caught on, and soon the business was drawing large crowds, and large traffic jams. Harry Snyder called his business "In-N-Out-Burger" in reference to his business accomodating the booming car culture that emerged after World War II...In order to speed up the orderning process ( to save money on the cost of waiters and waitresses) Snyder invented a two-way speaker box so that customers can give their orders while waiting in their cars...essentially creating the modern drive-thru experience we have today. Unlike virtually every other fast food business in the U.S....Harry and Esther Snyder operated their business as a way to make a living...NOT as a way to get rich. Expansion was only out of necessity...after long lines and traffic jams called out the need for other stores to ease the congestion...Harry was a practical man...and only opening up another In-N-Out Burger if he had the money to build the store, and purchase the land under it. He never borrowed on credit...it was always paid in cash. By the time Harry Snyder died in 1976...In-N-Out Burger had about 18 stores in the Southern California area. Despite many offers to expand further, and franchise...Harry and Esther Snyder insisted on keeping it a small, family-run business. Instead of cutting corners and costs in order to make more of a profit...the Snyders did the opposite... paying extra money to not only have high quality food (with everything fresh and made to order)...but also to pay their employees a higher wage than anybody else. To the Snyders...the workers at their In-N-Out Burger stores were the stars...and should be treated accordingly. There were no employees at In-N-Out Burger...everyone was an "associate"...never an employee. Customers were always VIPs...and were always right Farmers, and food merchants were treated like gold...In this simple yet radical mode of operation...everyone was happy...and with everyone happy...business always stayed strong. While every fast food restaurant in the country added and changed their menus in order to increase and expand business...In-N-Out-Burger stayed exactly the same...sticking with Harry Snyder's motto "Keep it simple; do one thing, and do it the best you can." After Harry Snyder died, his youngest son Richard took over the business. Under Richard Snyder...In-N-Out Burger expanded to all parts of California, and extended into Nevada, Arizona, and eventually Utah. He also took In-N-Out Burger out of just being a simple, walk-up, drive-thru experience and turned into walk-up, drive-thru AND indoor restaurant experience. A deeply religious man, it was Richard Snyder who implemented a policy of having religious references to the Bible located on the bottom of various In-N-Out Burger cups and paper...a practice they continue to use to this day. Yet even in their broad expansion...Richard insisted on keeping In-N-Out Burger exactly the way his father left it...family-owned, with all of the food fresh and maade to order. Sadly, by the time In-N-Out Burger hit 200 stores...Richard Snyder (and other In-N-Out Burger executives) were killed in a plane crash in 1993. Harry Esther's oldest son, Guy, choose a different path than his younger brother Richard. For Guy Snyder...life was about fast cars, racing, and lots of drugs. Throughout his life, he fought constantly with his younger brother Richard. After Richard's death...Guy took over the company, slowed down expansion, yet kept the same core business values of his father and brother. Unfortunately, Guy Snyder's life of struggle and excess got the better of him, and he died of a drug overdose in 1999...leaving behind two ex-wives, his mother, and a daughter. Esther Snyder did her best to run In-N-Out Burger for a number of years...though her health soon began to fail, and she passed away in 2006, at age 86. A power-struggle within the company was brewing during Esther's final years...and in a controversial move...Guy Snyder's ambitiuos ex-(step)son-in-law was named President of In-N-Out Burger upon Esther's death...with Guy's estranged daughter, Lynsi Martinez waiting in the wings to come of age...and take over full ownership of the company...All in all, I enjoyed reading IN-N-OUT-BURGER. Considering how private the company is, Stacy Perman did an excellent job in getting as much information as she could about the inner-workings and history of In-N-Out Burger. Though I am not sure how much I liked Perman's writing in general..there was something lacking in it...an absence of style, or zest perhaps? Another thing that annoyed me was Perman's tendency to pad her book a bit with repetition, and (what felt like) non-pertinent information...That said, I am thankful that ANYONE took the time to write a book like this...and got a huge kick out of learning more about the place(s) I love...my home away from home...In-N-Out Burger.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Standard rags-to-riches tale, California and In-N-Out Burger style By Jeffrey Morris Stacy Perman's In-N-Out Burger - A Behind-the-Counter Look at the Fast-

Food Chain That Breaks All the Rules is a fun spin through the lives of the family and formation of the culture behind the rise and continued success of the regionally famous In-N-Out Burger chain. While little differentiates the In-N-Out story in the annals of American retail successes, the book capitalizes on the habitual secrecy of the Snyder family in revealing much of what occurred behind the scenes to make In-N-Out Burger one of the country's most loved fast-food restaurants. Perman's meticulous research and the details of a number of interviews fill in many of the blanks about the founders, their descendents, and the influence on business and regular Americans of the fast-food revolution in general. If you do not know what an In-N-Out Burger restaurant is, you probably are not reading this review or seriously mulling over a purchase of Perman's book. To this point you may want to consider a more nationally relevant retail story. Robert Spector's book about Nordstrom's, the high-end department store chain, is an excellent read (*The Nordstrom Way*, 1999). Equally interesting is Sam Walton's autobiography (written with John Huey, 1992), essentially a timeline of the events behind the founding and rise of the Walmart department store chain. Another good book is Lee Iacocca's autobiography (written with William Novak, 1984), which is the auto executive's telling of his time at Ford and Chrysler and his family's connections to the small, but beloved, Pennsylvania restaurant chain Yocco's. The first half of Perman's book is largely dedicated to the chain's founding and its progress through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. It is rich in details from the Snyders' humble midwestern beginnings, the advent of World War II, and the start of the Baby Boom era. Perman gamely mixes in juicy tidbits from Ray Kroc's early escapades surrounding McDonald's and often mentions Carl Karcher's influence (of the Carl Jr. and Hardee's fame) on the California fast-food market. But the book takes on a more tabloid feel in the later pages with the revelation of drug abuse by one of the Snyder sons and embarrassing litigation over the family succession. This seediness is hardly Perman's fault. The truth, as is often the case, is stranger than fiction. Unfortunately the historical tapestry at the beginning and the later lurid details and embarrassing behavior are still just a thin coating over an even thinner capitalist premise. At its central core, *In-N-Out Burger: A Behind-the-Counter Look* is merely a tale of two basic business aphorisms. One. If you bust your ass, sell a quality product, and are not just in it to score a fortune from exiting the business, you can build one heck of a company with few real rivals. Two. If your company culture and business process is solid, the company will survive in spite of the inevitable degeneration of work ethic by founding family descendents or the employment of professional managers with few entrepreneurial skills. Some may also be disappointed by the revelation that several Snyder family members (including the current sole heir) have arrogantly attributed much of their success to the supposed manifest destiny due religious fundamentalists everywhere (as opposed to hard work, fortuitous economic timing, and good business sense). This tortuous reasoning stands in sharp contrast to, for example, the earnest reasoning behind the creation of the wildly successful Chik-fil-A (founded by S. Truett Cathy) from the start as an enterprise with strong ingrained religious values. Do not misunderstand. If you are an In-N-Out Burger enthusiast (as the reviewer is, despite being an East Coast resident), you will be thoroughly entertained by many of the book's interesting revelations. Perman's tome is a mandatory read for the loyal In-N-Out customer or long-time California resident. This is the key to figuring out why this book was published in the first place, instead of a history (for example) of Five Guys, Ledo Pizza, or Nathan's Hot Dogs. Perman's efforts had a sizable guaranteed contemporary audience. As a result, *In-N-Out Burger: A Behind-The-Counter Look* is tasty and filling, but not really satisfying. Considered as just an American rags-to-riches business story, the book falls flat. But similar to the Pavlovian obsession we have for high-calorie and questionably-nutritional fast-food, we crave the sordid details of the institutions and people that enthrall us. And next time this reviewer is in California, you can be sure he will get his In-N-Out food fix.