

WEBSITES

No-frills investing

If you thought there was a magic formula to successful investing, think again. But surely, there are tools to make life a bit easier

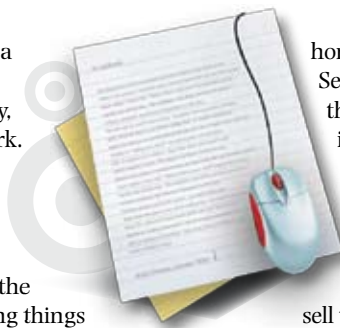
Website name: **MoneyWorks4me**

Access through: <http://www.moneyworks4me.com/>

Investing in stocks is a tricky business. To those making money, it is a walk in the park. To those making losses, it means treading the tightrope between a sell decision and a hold call. And for those staying on the sidelines and just watching things go by, it's a treacherous terrain of arbitrary rules. To make matters worse, there are tall claims by hundreds of websites that intelligent stock-picking requires just a modicum of common sense and a couple of magic formulae. Really? Not quite.

This site is a welcome deviation from the lot that oversimplifies investing to the point of distortion. It readily admits that successful stock investing entails a fair bit of research and hard work. Neither does it engage in empty rhetoric.

One of the site's flagship tools involved in the stock selection process is the '10-year X-ray' that tells you how a particular company has fared in favourable and tough times. It gives you data for four vital financial numbers—net sales, earnings per share (EPS), book value per share (BVPS) and return on invested capital (ROIC)—along with their year-on-year growth rates. The book value and EPS graph help you to see if the company's EPS growth is in line with the growth in its book value. The 'Price Calculator' feature helps you arrive at the price you should pay for a stock using two principles: knowing a stock's intrinsic worth and buying it at a discount. On the



home page, you'll find 'Stock Sense', a game that simulates the movement of your stock investments over five years.

You are presented with two companies to invest in and given a fixed sum of money, and you have 15 opportunities to buy or

sell the shares over a 5-year period. The more you make at the end of the five years, the better your stock sense.

The sample investment research reports that the site features are identical to the ones prepared by investment banks—they deal with the company's fundamentals, growth opportunities, potential challenges and its long-term and short-term outlook—albeit simpler. The associated blog Stock Shastra is an interesting compilation of write-ups on sensible investing. Investing advisors such as Parag Parikh, Ranjan Varma and Ninad Kunder, among others, are regular contributors to it.

The name of the website could have been a little more imaginative, but given it's a pick-up from the doctrines of names such as Robert Kiyosaki (*Rich Dad, Poor Dad* fame) and the best-ever Warren Buffett, we'll let it slide.

All in all, the website does deliver on its biggest promise: helping you cut through the clutter of data overload. If you are looking for some meaningful guidance on stock investing, you've got to bookmark this page. Of course, access to the 'real' content is going to cost you, but then, there is no free lunch, right? ||

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The site helps you cut through the clutter of data overload



BOOKS

WORTH THE TIME

BUSINESS LEADERS WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

By Kateri Drexler

Publisher: Jaico Publishing House

Pages: 248 Price: Rs 295

Business Leaders Who Changed the World' is nothing new or path-breaking. The people profiled in the book, starting from Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com, to Lee Iacocca, the man behind the remarkable turnaround of Chrysler Corporation in the 1980s—are all household names and there are reams of existing literature on them. What Kateri Drexler, the author, has done here is to sieve through diverse information sources and present them in compact nuggets that make a pleasant read. There is also enough to add to your GK quotient.

The biggest test that such a book faces is what we may call the 'Wikipedia test'—as a reader, one is likely to compare it with Wikipedia articles on the same and be disappointed if it does not provide him with something more comprehensive. Drexler passes this test and in fact does quite well, with a well-researched section on 'leadership lessons' that the successful life-stories of these people have to offer. What this does is essentially illustrate the fact that there are no hard and fast rules to success, that each of the visionaries has written their own rules on their way to the top. Small tid-bits, like Richard Branson being a dyslexic, who always failed in his math exams in school, or the fact that Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com had dismantled his crib when he was three years old, telling his parents that he was too old to sleep in it, keeps you hooked.

Overall a nice buy if you want to bring the likes of Gates and Branson to your living room. ||

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