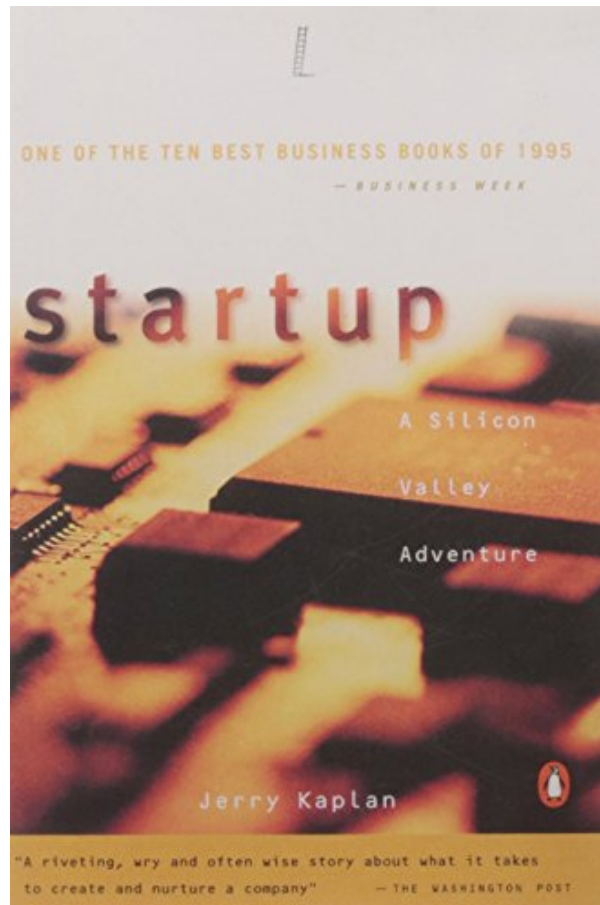
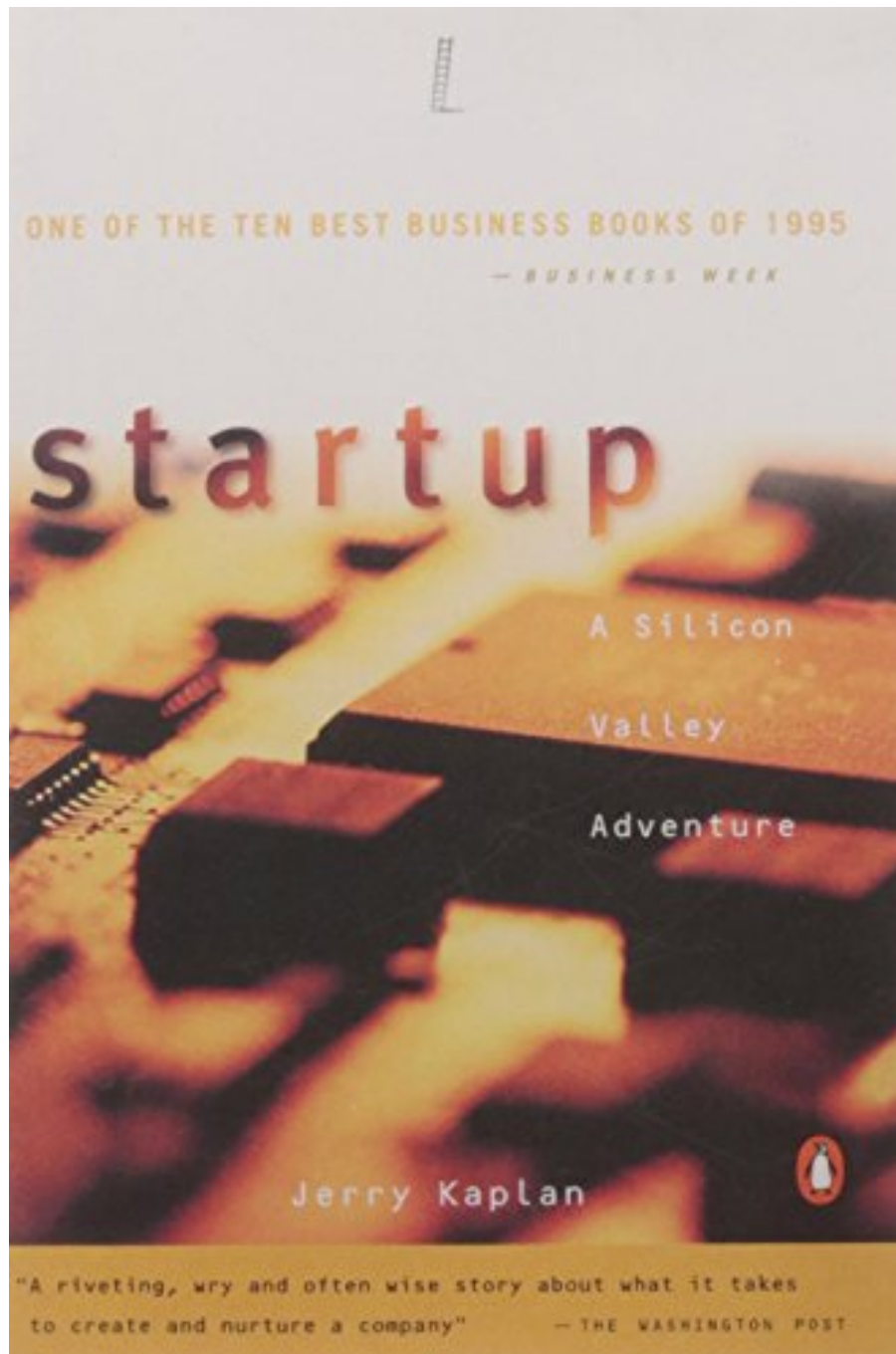


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The founder of the visionary, yet doomed, GO Corporation kept notes throughout his years at the helm, thinking that one day he would produce a book. It shows. This is a vivid and lively rise-and-fall account of a company born to create a pen-based computer. It begins on a corporate jet with the author and fellow industry visionary Mitchell Kapor, founder of Lotus, sharing a vision of pen computing. From there, *Startup* quickly leaps to the day-to-day challenges of hiring staff, constantly reassessing and readjusting goals, and coping with the stress of endless rounds of venture capital funding. That Kaplan, in his first attempt at running a company, battles with the top forces at Microsoft, IBM, and other industry giants to bring the idea to market, only makes the story more compelling. His company's ultimate failure says more about a cutthroat industry than about the quality of Kaplan's product. This is a real David and Goliath tale. If you've ever wondered why things go right or wrong, how competition can kill you, or how financing really works within a small startup, read this book!

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Entrepreneur Kaplan describes the tribulations he faced while forming his own company in the computer industry.

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Kaplan, a well-known figure in the computer industry, founded GO Corporation in 1987, and for several years it was one of the hottest new ventures in the Valley. Startup tells the story of Kaplan's wild ride: how he assembled a brilliant but fractious team of engineers, software designers, and investors; pioneered the emerging market for hand-held computers operated with a pen instead of a keyboard; and careened from crisis to crisis without ever losing his passion for a revolutionary idea. Along the way, Kaplan vividly recreates his encounters with eccentric employees, risk-addicted venture capitalists, and industry giants such as Bill Gates, John Sculley, and Mitchell Kapor. And no one - including Kaplan himself - is spared his sharp wit and observant eye.

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- 336 pages

## Features

- Startup A Silicon Valley Adventure

## Amazon.com Review

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By Neurasthenic

We know a lot more now than Jerry Kaplan could possibly have known when he wrote this book. We know, for example, that pen-based computing never took off the way he expected, that personal digital assistants had a moment in the sun, but were then replaced by cellphones that do not use pen interfaces.

In this book, Kaplan describes the rapid rise of Go Computing, its amazing success in fundraising, but ultimate failure in the face of withering competition from Microsoft, and lack of sales. The book is worthwhile for anybody considering launching a technology company, or investing in, or working for a startup. It is not, however, perfect. Kaplan takes shortcuts -- one page they're sketching the parameters of the operating system, and the next page they're introducing two dozen independent software companies that plan to develop for the platform. Where did they come from? How were they signed up? How many ever shipped product? We know that Go shipped both its hardware and software very late, but there is basically no discussion of why. Kaplan saves most of his text for fundraising and the frustrations of working with large corporate partners, with occasional personal asides about his fiance or employees.

Kaplan seems to blame the failure of the company on competition from Microsoft and slow delivery of product, but I think other lessons can also be learned from the experience of Go. For example, though Kaplan & co. elected to build the hardware, operating system, and hardware themselves (also signing up third party developers and ultimately spinning off the hardware arm), they could probably have developed the most compelling parts of their system as applications that ran on existing operating systems, greatly simplifying their task. Their lack of compatibility with existing applications was a real problem, not just "FUD" from Microsoft.

Demos of PenPoint can be found online (check YouTube and Google Video in particular). It is clear that PenPoint was worthless for text entry, which would have made it largely worthless for e-mail as well as writing notes and memos. This would seem to render the device largely useless for their target "on the go" business customers, except for very narrow vertical applications that would generally not justify the high price that their machines carried.

Anyway, a worthwhile book, even if lacking in credible analysis.

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