



# The Fourth Wave: Business in the 21st Century

By Herman Bryant Maynard

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**The Fourth Wave: Business in the 21st Century** By Herman Bryant Maynard

Applying the concept of historical waves originally propounded by Alvin Toffler in *The Third Wave*, Herman Maynard and Susan Mehrtens look toward the next century and foresee a "Fourth Wave," an era of integration and responsibility far beyond Toffler's revolutionary description of Third Wave postindustrial society. Whether we attain this stage of global well-being, however, will depend on how well our business institutions are able to adapt and change. The Fourth Wave examines the ways business has changed in the Second and Third Waves and describes ways it must continue to change in the Fourth. The changes concern the basics - how an institution is organized, how it defines wealth, how it relates to surrounding communities, how it responds to environmental needs, and how it takes part in the political process. The authors also demonstrate the need for a new kind of leadership - managers and CEOs who embrace an attitude of global stewardship; who define their assets as ideas, information, creativity, and vision; and who strive for seamless boundaries between work and private lives for all employees.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This prediction of a benevolent role for corporations in 21st-century society synthesizes recent academic thinking (some 500 titles are listed in a bibliography) to suggest that a "fourth wave" integrating life and social responsibility will transcend the agricultural, industrial and cultural interdependency waves of human development. Former DuPont executive Maynard and Mehrtens ( Earthkeeping ) envision big-business leadership in such areas as environmental "health of the planet" and whole-life concerns for employees (who will become part-owners) and their families in a "community model" business structure of "shared vision, principles and values." While citing signs of such progress and mandating much more, the authors never quite identify the forces which are expected to convert a competitive, profit-seeking, hierarchical institution--the corporation--into a democratic, "intuitive" and "biopolitical" social instrument.

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From Scientific American

Maynard and Mehrtens are two of the more brilliant futurists we have on the planet today. Their ideas of what business will be in the future as described in **The Fourth Wave** are radical, exciting, and rich with creative new direction.

From [The New Yorker](#)

A thought-provoking book which will contribute constructively to the dialogue about the new role of business on the planet.

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