

Foreword: The Benchmark of Success

By Meg Whitman

There are people you encounter in life who stand out above all others—who teach you, challenge you, and inspire you. In my life, one of those people has been Maynard Webb.

I first met Maynard in 1999, shortly after I became the CEO of eBay. The company was growing very quickly, and it was an incredibly exciting time. But one of the challenges we had to contend with was the stability of the site. Our technology, built when we were a fledgling start-up, just couldn't keep up with the growing transaction volumes. The site was frequently breaking down and disappointing sellers and buyers in the process. One particularly severe outage lasted for twenty-two hours. It attracted enormous national news media attention and nearly cost us all of our customer data.

The outages required me to look for someone strong and smart enough to tackle the problems. We simply didn't have

the in-house talent to fix the site. We needed someone to come in and rapidly overhaul the technology while we continued to grow and do business. I described it as changing an airplane's engines in flight without losing altitude or crashing.

As I started my search for a great technologist, I began to hear about Maynard Webb. Maynard was the widely respected chief information officer (CIO) at PC maker Gateway and had previously been at Bay Networks, where he completed a notoriously challenging SAP implementation in a remarkable nine months. This sounded like the guy we needed, but unfortunately for eBay, Maynard wasn't looking for a new job.

After some prodding from our recruiter, Maynard agreed to meet with me in California. True to his nature, Maynard thought the challenges eBay faced were "awesome." eBay was just the kind of job Maynard loved—a big, hairy problem no one else wanted, but that if solved, would make a huge impact.

About a week after our meeting, Maynard agreed to join eBay. For the next seven years, Maynard solved every problem we threw at him. Maynard rebuilt our technology infrastructure and took what was once a big liability and turned it into an area of strategic strength. Over time, he built a world-class technology team that has, as he likes to say, been "breaking new snow" ever since.

And what Maynard's team created was awe inspiring. The new ultrareliable infrastructure they engineered and the quality measures they put in place helped sustain the company's explosive growth. It enabled the site to scale to handle more than a billion transactions per day and store over two petabytes of data—two hundred times more data than contained in the Library of Congress.

Maynard architected much more than eBay's technology, though. Later, as eBay's COO, Maynard helped introduce the processes and day-to-day operating structures that moved us from

a business of 250 employees to a global company of more than 10,000 employees. In his seven-year tenure, Maynard enabled eBay to effectively grow revenue from \$140 million to more than \$5 billion by the time he left in mid-2006.

In working so closely with Maynard for so long, I noticed how much he enjoyed being a mentor. He always made time for anyone who wanted his advice—and there are many who sought him out. He hosted regular “fireside chats” in eBay’s offices, in which he shared his career experiences and insights with intimate groups of twenty people; they became very popular and allowed him to reach more employees.

At one of our annual Leaders’ Meetings, Maynard told a story I will never forget. He spoke about sitting on a park bench long after he retired. He was no longer the boss, had no budget, and could no longer hand out a job or a promotion. There was no ulterior motive to be nice to him. Maynard wondered if the people he encountered throughout his life would walk over to say hello or turn and walk away. He then stressed the value of conducting oneself in ways that draw people toward you.

When Maynard left eBay, we dedicated the park benches in our new courtyard to him. We inscribed a quote from Maynard on each one, a piece of wisdom from him that continues to guide us. And when Maynard comes back to visit and sits on one of his benches, I know no one will ever walk by without stopping to say hello.

Though I was sad when Maynard left eBay, I also understood. He had finished what he had come to do. It was time for new challenges.

As CEO of LiveOps, Maynard helped a new generation of workers prosper on their own terms. He also started investing in innovative companies that are leveraging technology to help workers find greater levels of achievement and personal

fulfillment. Maynard serves on the boards of salesforce.com and Yahoo!, companies he believes embody his focus on people, success, and a better future.

Rebooting Work takes on a big problem—the broken state of work—and reveals a solution, one that is better for employees and employers. As with every problem Maynard solves, he has ferreted out the answers and made certain that his solutions are easy to understand and possible to implement.

This book is the result of Maynard’s journey through an exciting and varied career. It makes Maynard’s knowledge and mentorship accessible to everyone. It will help people become the “CEOs of their own destiny” and live happier and more fulfilling lives. And it will help companies operate better as they move forward into the evolving landscape of work in the twenty-first century.