



# The Surprising Solution: Creating Possibility in a Swift and Severe World

*Bruce Piasecki*

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"Bruce Piasecki's underlying theme in *The Surprising Solution*—that business can and will lead our society into this new and better world—is right on target. In this new frontier, sustainability and innovation are inextricably linked and are the only two guarantors of long-term corporate success and profitability."

**Vance D. Bell** | *Chairman and CEO, Shaw Industries Group, Inc.*

**The world today is more swift, more severe... and has never been more full of opportunity.**

The rapid wave of change is sweeping outdated strategies away quicker than ever before, but those who can get in front of this wave will achieve untold success and customer loyalty. And the solution for how to get in front of this wave is as inspiring as it is surprising.

**The Surprising Solution** describes the revolution in business in which the corporations that can best address environmental and social issues by creating superior products will thrive and profit in this new world. Discover how to take hold of this vital new force in business and improve both the world and your bottom line at the same time.

Going green is no longer something businesses just do for good PR...it's the most important and revolutionary factor driving the incredible success of businesses that are a part of the movement, and hurting those that are falling behind.

## PRAISE FOR THE SURPRISING SOLUTION

"The *Surprising Solution* is a must-read during this time of economic turmoil."

**Steve Percy** | *Former CEO of BP America and Coordinating Lead Author of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*

"This book should be read by all consumers and social and business leaders concerned about this new century. Bruce Piasecki writes in an engaging and readable style about items of consequence to your life and firm."

**Frank Boren** | *Former CEO of the Nature Conservancy, Former ARCO Board Member, and Founder of Sustainable Conservation*

"Read this book and learn how today's business leaders are innovating, growing, and enhancing the economic performance of their companies while building long-term social, environmental, and moral capital for their shareholders."

**Tyler J. Elm** | *Operating Partner, 2Degrees Capital Partners*

"Read Bruce Piasecki's *The Surprising Solution* for your future, your family, and financial health."

**Jay Whitehead** | *Editor and Publisher, CRO magazine*

"An eye-opener."

**Charles Osgood**

## **SURVIVING THE "S-FRONTIER"**

New Book By Expert Bruce Piasecki Reveals Why Social Responsiveness Is Key To Long Term Profitability And Sustained Success

For nearly thirty years, Bruce Piasecki and his firm, AHC Group, have been helping companies become more socially responsive without sacrificing bottom-line success. Today, as we stand at what Piasecki calls the "S-Frontier," social responsiveness is no longer a choice — it is imperative for survival. In his new book, **THE SURPRISING SOLUTION: Creating Possibility in a Swift and Severe World** (SourceBooks, Inc.; November 2009), Piasecki offers practical, hands-on advice, supported by in-depth case studies of such corporations as Toyota, Suncor Energy, and Hewlett-Packard to explain precisely what companies can do to thrive in this new frontier.

### **How the S-Frontier Affects Product Development**

According to Piasecki, the S-Frontier is comprised of three key elements: the swiftness of information; the severity of such global problems as climate change and the rising price of oil; and the need for business leaders to become "social response capitalists." To flourish in the coming decades, companies must be on the upswing of the S-Frontier, and create innovative products that help solve the problems confronting customers in the 21st century. In addition to long-term viability, this "social response product development," will create other business benefits as well, including margin improvement, rapid cycle time, global market access, and product differentiation.

A master of social response product development is Toyota, a firm with which Piasecki worked as a consultant for many years. "The core of Toyota's product strategy," he explains, "lies in its reading of public needs, in advance, to anticipate and build long-term markets for its products," he writes. Not only has Toyota, with its energy-efficient Prius, been on the forefront of automobile technology, it has, from the beginning, intended to install hybrid engines into ten core car models — demonstrating a powerful commitment to responding to social needs over the long-term.

### **How Leaders Can Meet the Challenges of the S-Frontier**

For Piasecki, leadership demands in the S-Frontier are more complex than ever. "The best leaders are both in this world and in the world of the near future at the same time," he writes. In **THE SURPRISING SOLUTION**, he outlines his key insights into the leadership skills needed to meet these new challenges, including the ability to tolerate discomfiting information and thrive on constant learning; the willingness to listen to input from a variety of sources and then choose the right path to follow; and the ability to articulately spread the word about new business models and social goals. Piasecki also points to the need for leaders to look outside their "trade group box" in the search for superior products and processes, explaining how Seattle's Virginia Mason hospital was able to drastically cut costs and raise patient satisfaction by applying lessons learned from "just in time" manufacturing and Toyota's assembly line techniques.

### **Show Me the Money: How Companies are Valued in the S-Frontier**

The S-Frontier also impacts the money side of business. With greater transparency and access to information, the ways that individuals and institutions choose to invest is changing. At the same time, traditional valuation models don't take into account many of the factors — such as the launch of initiatives designed to reduce future liabilities and create new, unique business opportunities — that influence a company's success or failure. In his book, Piasecki describes how such organizations as the Calvert Group, Innovest, and even Standard and Poor's are discovering ways to measure these intangibles — further incentive for companies to find their way to the upswing of the S-Frontier if they hope to attract investment capital in the future.

### **The Need for a Smart, Readjusted Form of Global Capitalism**

"To profit in a sustained way, you must leverage your money, corporate resources, energy, and people in a

fashion that answers mounting social needs," writes Piasecki. This is what will separate companies that thrive from those that wither in the new S-Frontier. THE SURPRISING SOLUTION is a critical handbook for creating success for your firm and your future.

*Visit these sites for more information about Bruce Piasecki:*

[www.ahcgroup.com](http://www.ahcgroup.com)

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