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**Description**

Review of *Renegades of the Empire* / Drummond, Michael. *Renegades of the Empire*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1999.

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# Renegades of the Empire

Posted on **June 1, 2005** by **Editor**



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Editor, Interface

Drummond, Michael. *Renegades of the Empire*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1999.

There are many reasons for being interested in the world's largest corporation, Microsoft, and in its Chairman, Bill Gates. There are, appropriately, many books that one could read. [1] These range from highly critical exposes, to tomes lauding the corporation as a business model for others and its Chairman as a far-sighted visionary.

Michael Drummond is a professional journalist with a number of works on disparate topics to his credit. [2] His book is a relatively old one given the volatility of the industry, though still in print. It is particularly useful, however, for the nature of the author's approach, and for the period when it was researched and published.

Drummond chose to focus on a team of three men who worked within Microsoft. Although each were very strong personalities—one of Drummond's sources refers to them as “obnoxious lunatics” (p. 111) they worked well together for a period and were known collectively as the “Beastie Boys.”

From *Renegades of the Empire*, we get many valuable insights into the corporation at a critical period in its existence. It had begun as a freewheeling company that encouraged cutthroat competition, both in its markets, and within its ranks. The Beastie Boys mastered this corporate style to carve out an empire within the empire. But this style caused significant problems, resulting internally in a still brutally confrontational corporate style, but one that increasingly valued procedures and hierarchy by 1999, the year of publication.

These changes were in part the consequence of the actions of the Beastie Boys themselves as they shouldered others aside in their search to push their own ideas, and particularly their own software approaches to Microsoft's product line. This struggle focused upon the software engineering of the critical Windows operating system, and upon the Internet browser Internet

Explorer. The Boys insisted that Microsoft had to develop as a stable platform for computer gaming, and their work eventually evolved to be DirectX, which did indeed become an important stage in the development of Windows as a gaming environment.

On the browser side, however, they championed “Chrome” an element of the OS that eventually failed to be significant, at least in the manner in which they themselves had intended.

The critical changes that affected both the Beastie Boys and the Microsoft Corporation at the time related directly to the management styles and competitive practices portrayed so vividly in Drummond’s work. The corporation was increasingly the target of lawsuits, and the United States’ government began examining not only specific charges of alleged anticompetitive practices, but also the very question of its nature as a potential or actual monopoly. And all this in the period before foreign governments, too, began attacking the corporation in European courts with the resultant fines and legal strictures.

The approach of *Renegades of the Empire* is also its weakness. The book can best be thought of as a massive oral history focusing upon the very interesting group of the Beastie Boys as the vehicle for understanding the corporation itself. However, the list of voices is staggering, witnesses come and go, opinions differ widely, and at the end we feel that we have achieved significant, but limited insights.

Because of its delineation of the corporate culture as seen in the careers of three men, and because of their involvement in the development of two controversial software developments which proved to be significant, one as a success, and one as a failure, we think this book well worth reading. But for a more extended understanding we would follow it up with a more recent publication, to be reviewed in our next issue....

### Footnotes:

[1] Book that focus on the corporation include: Slater, Robert. *Microsoft Rebooted: How Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer Reinvented Their Company* – Portfolio, 2004; Cusumano, Michael A. *MICROSOFT SECRETS: HOW THE WORLD’S MOST POWERFUL SOFTWARE COMPANY CREATES TECHNOLOGY, SHAPES MARKETS, AND MANAGES PEOPLE*. Free Press, 1998; Stross, Randall E. *The Microsoft Way: The Real Story of How the Company Outsmarts Its Competition*. Perseus Books Group, 1997; Wallace, James, and Jim Erickson *Hard Drive: Bill Gates and the Making of the Microsoft Empire* – HarperBusiness, 1993. Among those focusing on Gates, including those he authored, are: Gates, Bill. *Business @ the Speed of Thought: Succeeding in the Digital Economy*. Warner Business Books, 2000; Gates, Bill. *The Road Ahead*. Penguin Books, 1996; Lowe, Janet. *Bill Gates Speaks: Insight from the World’s Greatest Entrepreneur*. Wiley: 1998; Lesinski, Jeanne M. *Bill Gates*. Lerner Publications, 2000.

[2] See list at Amazon.com at

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/search-handle-url/index=stripbooks:relevance>

[-above&field-keywords=Drummond%25252C%252520Michael&search-type=ss&bq=1&store-name=books/ref=xs\\_ap\\_l\\_xgl14/104-4020143-6763900](#)

The author appears to have no personal web page.

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The Renegado is an outlaw in Age of Empires III: The WarChiefs available on the Andes , Bayou , California , Carolina , Great Lakes , Great Plains , New England , Rockies , and Texas maps. The Renegado is an outlaw unit armed with a rifle. As an outlaw it costs little coin but many population slots (six; four with the Dance Hall or equivalent card). It has fewer hitpoints than a Skirmisher but a much larger attack. Renegades of the Empire is a 1999 book by Michael Drummond. Renegades is an odd book, focusing primarily on a small political faction within Microsoft and two projects with which it was identified. Drummond's LinkedIn profile lists as an accomplishment, gManaged Shiite, Sunni employees as Baghdad bureau chief at the height of the U.S. military surge, h so presumably he knows something about in-fighting! Specifically, Renegades focuses on Alex St. John (eventually CEO of WildTangent), Eric Engstrom (eventually CEO of Wildseed), and Craig Eisler (now a Corporate Vice President at Microsoft, and f Branding. Perception is everything and your identity is the forefront of positioning your business. WordPress Websites. Strategic designed websites to achieve business goals.Â Hi, I'm Simon, founder and website consultant here at Renegade Empire. Your website is key to your business's digital strategy and I see many businesses failing with their marketing due to a website that is outdated, hard to navigate and does not generate new business effectively. That's where we come in. By creating websites that are easy to use, gorgeously designed and work hard to generate leads and sales for your business 24/7. Take a look over at our portfolio to see the results we have achieved for our clients. Renegades Empire. 628 likes. Issue # 5 will blow your mind. [www.renegadesempire.com](http://www.renegadesempire.com).Â See more of Renegades Empire on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of Renegades Empire on Facebook. Log In. Forgot account?