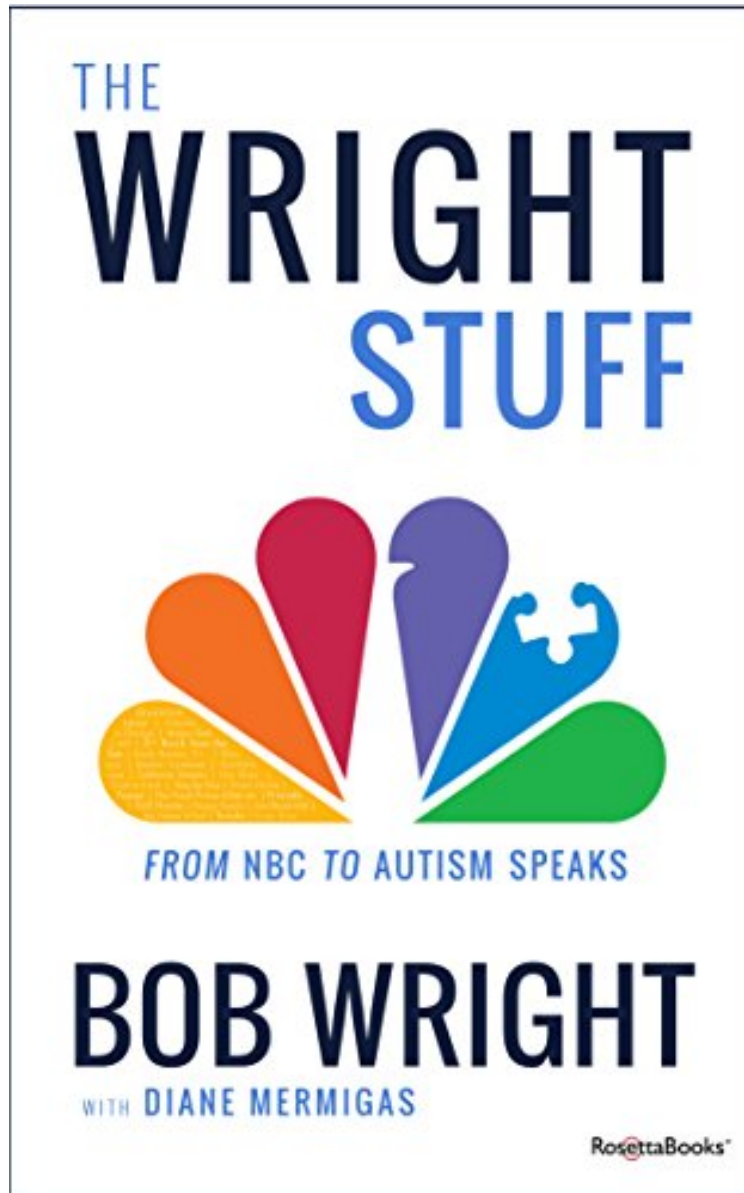


[Read now] The Wright Stuff: from NBC to Autism Speaks

## The Wright Stuff: from NBC to Autism Speaks

Bob Wright

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**Bob Wright : The Wright Stuff: from NBC to Autism Speaks** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wright Stuff: from NBC to Autism Speaks:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Cover art and title tell you all you need to know about innovation at NBCBy NamelessBob Wright is clearly worried about his legacy. That he would spend 400+ pages propping himself up, tearing down GE and others (who he once defended to the detriment of many), congratulating himself on his own ideas and actions while getting his old cronies to deliver painfully effusive eulogies on his behalf, is,

in the end, rather telling. Instead of being the definitive story of how one man presided over a television entity's revolutionary change, this book smacks of someone intent on gilding the story of his own professional reputation that has, to date, largely been ignored by media and business historians. It's all so unnecessary. As someone who was actually THERE...on the front lines of Bob's early transformation of NBC for more than a decade, I knew Wright to be a smart and decent guy, but hardly the leadership icon he attempts to portray himself as in this memoir. I got a real laugh at the revisionist history he and his "trusted colleagues" have put forth in this book about the media initiatives and deals they claim to have simply made happen at NBC during this period. As one would expect from a man in his position, Bob was largely a helicopter CEO and not as intimately involved in all these venture dealings and negotiations as he would lead you to believe, and most of his associates who are now singing his praises were among the most obstructionist of these efforts to change NBC. Read carefully and you will see there is little actual meat on the bones of these recollections, which were no doubt cobbled together from interviews and clips gathered by ghost writer Mermigas, and I could point to more than a handful of facts and recollections proffered here that are just plain WRONG or lacking in factual detail, as my own files would indicate. Wright would prefer you to believe NBC's evolution was all due to his personal magic and insight, but as anyone who was there knows, that's hardly the real story of NBC's metamorphosis. It all comes down to the question of where transformative change really occurs. Does it happen in the million dollar apartments of one's tight circle of friends and privileged acquaintances, as Wright offers as the sexy answer, or is such change realized by those who fought the daily battles to make these deals happen and work? Who exhausted their political capital on the difficult sales calls? Who created the planning models and conducted the research that confirmed the validity of these ideas in the face of company skepticism, ridicule and resistance? Who conducted the tedious negotiations or created the sophisticated analyses that actually defined and sold the deals? The powers behind the throne? This is where Wright's leadership lessons ring hollow, as he does not seem to even be aware of where much of the innovation and risk taking he claims to celebrate took place in his own organization. He strangely ignores those nameless few, outside of his henchmen who did not work alone, where the real creative hard work and skill made these abstract ideas become realized. That's where the transformative nature of NBC's story lies. No, Bob and his boys club were decidedly not the sole architects of NBC's repositioning, but failing to acknowledge that only serves to showcase Wright's insularity from his own organization. And no women?? Umm, not the case Bob...A true leadership guru, one whose management secrets might actually ring true, might have acknowledged the real team that supported him, who risked career and reputation to fight the good fight on his behalf. But why remember facts as they actually happened when this book, all the way around, is about nothing more than selling others on the tributes to your own professional importance? Lesson: today's fight against autism won't be won from this kind of lofty perch.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book on Media Transformation in the Late 20th early 21st Centuries. By Consumer Champ Bob Wright was at the center of the action as OTA (on-the-air) television morphed into the mix of media conglomerates that now dominate. He was ahead of his time (mostly) in helping to define and guide that change. His story (on the multi-media side) provides a lot of insight into how that transformation took place and he's not afraid to add some dimension into some of the characters that have played pivotal roles in that process. Some of that story is also told by colleagues and competitors who provide additional insight. The appendix also explains what's become of the people who played a role in that transition, a valuable footnote. That said, be aware that a substantial part of the book is about the battle Bob and his late wife fought to raise awareness of and treatment for autism, a project inspired by their grandson's autism. This part was of less interest to me so I'm sorry to say that it got the skim treatment. My rating does not reflect the autism section of the book, perhaps the latter third.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Candid and heartfelt -- great read By Teddy Roosevelt What a great inside look at the transition of NBC through the GE buy...wow! Candid! The format of including the words and reactions of the insiders really gave a well-rounded view. Wright's passion for Autism Speaks is inspiring and, again, very candid. As honest a book as you'll read about either topic.

Named president and CEO of NBC at the age of 43, he faced a two-headed dragon: on one hand, distrust from the network people deeply skeptical of the "suit" from GE, their new corporate parent; and on the other, fiscal oversight demands from a cautious, conservative institution reluctant to invest heavily in a media business they didn't understand. For the next 20 years, he managed to navigate the fine line between the two and in the process completely reinvented and saved the network. His name is Bob Wright. Under his leadership, a traditional network, struggling to survive a changing landscape, was transformed into a \$45 billion cable and internet giant. Frequently flying under the GE corporate radar, Wright and his hand-picked team spearheaded what amounts to a revolution in broadcast television: Embracing, rather than resisting, cable-Launching alternative news channels CNBC and MSNBC, along with MSNBC.com, NBC's powerful springboard to the internet-Creating strategic partnerships with other media companies formerly considered competitors-A string of acquisitions that solidified NBC's leadership in multiple US and international markets, culminating in the lucrative merger into NBC Universal What does someone like that do when he retires? If he's Bob Wright, he starts all over again. At almost the exact same time as Bob's NBC reign was winding down, his grandson Christian was diagnosed with autism,

a condition then poorly understood. Baffled by a lack of medical knowledge and community support, Bob and his wife Suzanne founded Autism Speaks, which in short order became the leading advocacy and research funding organization for this mysterious condition that so devastates families. They make a powerful team—the compassionate, charismatic, indefatigable Suzanne who won't take no for an answer, and the analytic, efficient executive who poured all his business acumen into building an organization from scratch. As the two story lines unfold in *The Wright Stuff*, readers will gradually see that both endeavors—revitalizing NBC and building Autism Speaks—reflect the same key management tenets that apply to any organization facing disruptive change. A portion of the proceeds from this book will be donated to advance autism research.

“In Bob Wright, the media industry and Autism Speaks have both a terrific leader and a catalyst for change. To have Bob on your side is to have a transformative force in your corner.” (David Zaslav President and CEO, Discovery Communications) Bob Wright and I both managed broadcast companies during an era of disruptive change, not unlike the one currently reshaping the media landscape. I watched him repeatedly adapt and reinvent a creative business in the face of new challenges to keep NBC competitive more than two decades. His tremendous contributions to the media industry are only surpassed by his passion and great work for Autism Speaks. (Bob Iger Chairman and CEO of Disney) “Bob built the NBC I work at today, and there is no one for whom I have more respect or admiration. Without his vision, guidance and support, SNL would not still be on the air.” (Lorne Michaels creator and producer of Saturday Night Live) Bob Wright makes us realize what great leadership can do—transforming NBC into an extraordinarily international enterprise; [and] bringing to the attention of all, the serious problem of worldwide autism and its calamitous impact on the patients and the families who suffer equally with them. (Herbert Pardes, M.D. Former Director of NIMH and Pres CEO of NY Presbyterian Hospital) About the Author Bob Wright served as Vice Chairman of General Electric until 2008 and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NBC Universal until 2007. From his appointment as president and CEO of NBC in September 1986 he had one of the longest and most successful tenures of the world's leading media and entertainment company chief executives. Throughout his 40-year career at GE, Bob had a strong involvement in community service and philanthropy for which he received numerous awards and accolades. Today, he is Senior Advisor of Lee Equity Partners and Chairman and CEO of the Palm Beach Civic Association. Autism Speaks, founded by Bob and his wife, Suzanne, has led the way for more than a decade in global autism research, advocacy, and support services. He serves on the boards of Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation and AMC Networks Inc., and is a Trustee of the New York Presbyterian Hospital. He was formerly on the Board of Trustees of the Rand Corporation and a Director of the EMI Group Global Ltd. board. He is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and of the Law School of University of Virginia. The Wrights have three children and six grandchildren.