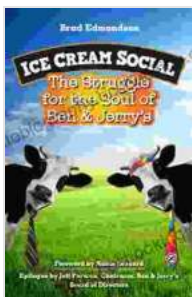


The Struggle for the Soul of Ben & Jerry's: A Tale of Ideals, Commerce, and Consumer Activism

Ben & Jerry's, the beloved ice cream company, has been a beacon of social and environmental activism since its inception. But behind the cheerful pints and whimsical packaging lies a complex story of struggle and compromise.



Ice Cream Social: The Struggle for the Soul of Ben & Jerry's by Brad Edmondson

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 7621 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 303 pages
Lending : Enabled



In "The Struggle for the Soul of Ben & Jerry's," journalists Steve Dunleavy and Patrick Cone take us on a journey through the company's 40-year history, revealing the clash between its idealistic founders and the harsh realities of the corporate world.

The Idealistic Roots



Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, the two childhood friends who founded Ben & Jerry's in 1978, were driven by a deep commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability. They believed that businesses had a responsibility to make a positive impact on the world.

The company's early years were marked by activism. Ben & Jerry's supported local farm cooperatives, promoted fair trade practices, and campaigned for social causes such as welfare reform and nuclear disarmament.

The Corporate Compromise

In the mid-1990s, Ben & Jerry's faced a crisis. The company's sales were declining, and it was struggling to keep up with its social mission.

Desperate for cash, Cohen and Greenfield sold a majority stake in the company to Unilever, a global food conglomerate.

The deal was a major blow to the company's founders, who feared that Unilever would water down Ben & Jerry's social and environmental commitments. However, Unilever promised to maintain the company's independence and a separate board of directors dedicated to social mission.

The Struggle Continues



The sale of Ben & Jerry's to Unilever triggered a long and contentious struggle between the company's idealistic founders and its corporate

parent. Cohen and Greenfield repeatedly accused Unilever of violating their social mission, while Unilever defended its record of sustainability.

The conflict came to a head in 2019, when Unilever planned to sell Ben & Jerry's ice cream in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Cohen and Greenfield opposed the move, arguing that it violated the company's commitment to human rights and international law. Unilever refused to back down, and the two founders resigned from the board of directors.

Legacy and Lessons

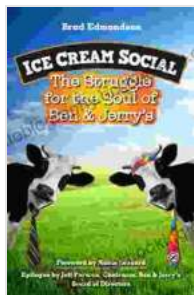
"The Struggle for the Soul of Ben & Jerry's" is a fascinating and ultimately heartbreaking account of a company torn between its idealism and the realities of commerce. It is a story that raises important questions about the role of corporations in society and the challenges of balancing profit with purpose.

Ben & Jerry's legacy is a mixed one. The company has made significant contributions to social and environmental causes, but it has also faced criticism for compromising its ideals. Nonetheless, its story is a reminder that the struggle for a more just and sustainable world is never easy and that it requires constant vigilance and activism.

Ben & Jerry's story is a cautionary tale for anyone who believes that business can be a force for good. It is a reminder that capitalism is a double-edged sword, and that even the most idealistic companies must navigate a complex and often contradictory world.

Ultimately, the struggle for the soul of Ben & Jerry's is a struggle that continues today. It is a fight for the heart and soul of a company that was

once a beacon of hope, but has since become just another corporate giant.



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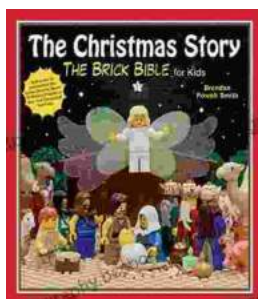
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