

BOOK REVIEW

SPEED & SCALE: AN ACTION PLAN FOR SOLVING OUR CLIMATE CRISIS NOW

Authors: John Doerr
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OVERVIEW

With the climate crisis deepening at an alarming rate, urgency underscores every facet of our collective response. “Speed & Scale: An Action Plan for Solving Our Climate Crisis Now” by John Doerr is an inspiration of hope in this critical moment. Endorsed by prominent climate leaders including Jeff Bezos, Al Gore, Bill Gates, and Mary Barra, among others, “Speed & Scale” is a significant work, drawing on the insights of those who recognize the need for swift measures. Through Doerr’s thorough research, deep analysis, and rigorous action plan, readers are confronted with the harsh reality of environmental challenges but equipped with practical strategies for change.

Beyond mere discussion, this book offers a roadmap for policymakers, activists, and citizens to confront climate issues decisively. As temperatures rise and ecosystems suffer, the need for proactive engagement becomes ever more crucial. Doerr’s work highlights the capacity for innovation and collaboration, urging readers to partake in collective endeavors to safeguard our planet for future generations. The deliberate use of “we” throughout the book fosters a sense of mutual ownership and responsibility towards the stewardship of our vulnerable earth. With Doerr’s passionate advocacy, the book delivers more than a compelling narrative of urgency and hope; it serves as a clarion call for unified, immediate action. The time to forge a path towards a sustainable future is now.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Doerr is a renowned engineer and venture capitalist, who currently leads as chairman of Kleiner Perkins, a leading American venture capital firm known for its early-stage investment successes. Remarkable successes under his leadership include backing disruptive companies such as Google, Amazon, and Uber (Kleiner Perkins, 2024). It is notable that Doerr is the initiator of the “Objectives and Key Results” (OKRs) approach, a strategic framework

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aimed at setting and achieving ambitious organizational goals. His insights into OKRs were detailed in his bestselling book, “Measure What Matters,” which soared to the top of the New York Times Bestseller list. Doerr leverages his expertise in OKRs to outline a plan to tackle the pressing issue of climate change, conveying his message via this book.

REVIEW

The title “Speed and Scale” captures the book’s core message. “Speed” signifies the urgency of taking concrete action on the climate crisis, while “Scale” implies the need for a global approach, encompassing both developed and underdeveloped countries. Even though many solutions are available, their deployment falls far short of what is needed. The author intertwines personal anecdotes with actionable strategies rooted in the “Objectives and Key Results” (OKRs) framework.

Through a measured approach, Doerr highlights the reality of escalating carbon dioxide equivalence (CO₂e) levels in the atmosphere, surpassing critical thresholds set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He stresses the necessity of quantifiable objectives, arguing that meaningful change requires a concrete, attainable plan. The primary OKRs of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 is presented as an urgent goal.

“Speed & Scale” comprises two main parts. Part 1, “Zero out emission,” outlines six key areas for emission reduction. The six areas include electrifying transportation, decarbonizing the energy grid, mitigating agricultural emissions, conserving nature (forests, oceans, and lands), reforming industrial practices, and enhancing carbon removal efforts. Each area is defined by specific objectives and key results to foster measurable progress. Part 2, “Accelerate the transition,” discusses four strategic approaches: enhancing political and policy frameworks, transforming movements into action, encouraging innovation, and stimulating investment. Doerr highlights the importance of political will and policy reform in facilitating systemic change, while also recognizing the essential role of grassroots movements in driving collective action. Furthermore, he acclaims innovation and investment as essential drivers of transformative change, advocating for strong initiatives to accelerate the transition to a sustainable future.

The book’s outstanding strengths are threefold. Firstly, it effectively embodies its title, “Speed & Scale,” by compellingly conveying the urgency and magnitude of the climate crisis. This book provides comprehensive data on the severity of the problem and offers clear, actionable solutions detailing when, what, and to what extent actions must be taken.

Secondly, the inclusion of concise experience sharing and reflections from diverse individuals, alongside direct quotes related to each chapter’s issues, enhances the book’s impact and relevance. For instance, the book presents an interview from Ethan Brawn, the founder of Beyond Meat, a cultured meat company using innovative biotechnology to produce lab-grown meat products. Compared to livestock farming, cultured meat production is significantly more sustainable, ethical, and environmentally friendly. Beyond Meat offers a scalable solution to meet the growing global demand for protein while addressing concerns about animal welfare and climate change. The company currently exports its products to more than eighty countries.

Thirdly, despite containing dense and in-depth content, as well as insightful statistics aligned with OKRs, the book maintains an engaging and accessible tone. It avoids the dryness of formal reports through the use of vibrant phrases, graphs, and contemporary design elements, making the text not only informative but also visually appealing. These features attract readers and encourage them to continue exploring the book’s insights.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, “Speed & Scale” by John Doerr is a transformative resource that holds immense benefits for both organizations and individuals. Through its comprehensive insights and actionable strategies, this book equips readers with the tools needed to address the urgent climate crisis and drive meaningful change.

For organizations, this book provides a strategic framework for setting and achieving ambitious environmental goals. By leveraging the principles of the “Objectives and Key Results” (OKRs) framework, companies can streamline their efforts towards sustainability, reducing emissions, and promoting responsible practices. This approach not only amplifies their environmental contributions but also bolsters innovation, resilience, and a competitive edge in a market that increasingly values sustainability.

Likewise, for individuals, the book serves as a call to action, empowering readers to become agents of change in their communities and beyond. By gaining a deeper understanding of the climate crisis and the actionable steps needed to address it, individuals can make rational choices in their daily lives, advocate for policy change, and contribute to collective efforts towards a sustainable future.

The book’s impact is further enhanced by the author’s creation of an accompanying website, “Speed & Scale: We Can Save the World.” This online platform enables readers to monitor the advancement of the book’s key objectives and results, alongside offering access to current articles from leading sources like the World Economic Forum, The Guardian, and The New York Times. This interactive and educative resource motivates continued action and engagement beyond the final page.

In essence, “Speed & Scale” is not just a book; it is a catalyst for constructive transformation and a guide towards a sustainable future. As an educator in sustainable management, I wholeheartedly encourage both organization leaders and individuals who care about the world to read this book, engage with its insights, and join the global movement towards a healthier, more resilient planet. The path to making a meaningful difference is well laid out throughout its pages.

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