



Sony: The Private Life

John Nathan

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From its inauspicious beginnings amid Tokyo's bomb-scarred ruins to its role as the world's chief purveyor of electronics and mass culture, Sony's story is one of the signal fables of our age. In **SONY: THE PRIVATE LIFE**, John Nathan, a preeminent expert on Japanese culture, dissects this fable, pulling the veil from one of the world's most successful and secretive corporations. He uncovers persuasive evidence that Sony's biggest triumphs, from color TV to CDs, and most calamitous failures, like the Betamax debacle and the vexed takeover of Columbia Pictures, stem from the web of intense relationships that have always characterized its top ranks. Nathan traces this emotional web as no other writer has or could, by drawing on his unmatched expertise in Japanese culture and his unique, unlimited access to Sony's inner sanctum. With a novelist's skill - honed by translating the works of Yukio Mishima and Kenzaburo Oe - Nathan etches incisive portraits of the company's famously enigmatic cofounder, Akio Morita; its patrician, autocratic CEO, Norio Ohga; and its edgy new leader, Nobuyuki Idei, who already has brought wrenching changes to Sony. Nathan's exploration of the Sony empire also reveals how it invented color TV as we know it and used bold marketing techniques to best the inferior yet dominant American competition; why Sony ignored the conventional wisdom of the time to enter a groundbreaking partnership with archrival Philips to perfect the CD; how Sony manages to prosper despite Japan's economic malaise; and what innovations and strategies it plans for the new century. With authority and wit, Nathan dispels the myths that surround Sony and crafts unparalleled corporate drama. *Sony: The Private Life* is at once an engrossing chronicle of astounding entrepreneurship and a poignant account of loyalty's consequences.

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