Lucidum Literature Review

Title	**Incorruptible**
Author	**Eric Ries**
Published	**2026 by Authors Equity**
Review By	**Nilesh Makan (Lead Business Architect)**
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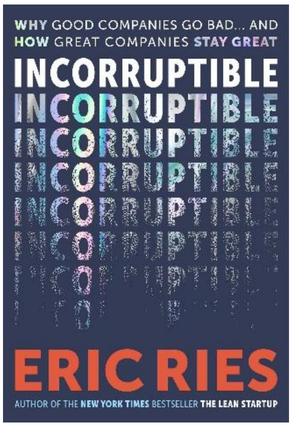
Lessons For	**Relevance**	**Overall Rating**
Directors, Prescribed Officers, Executives	10	
Governance Officers, Company Secretaries	9	
Ethics Officers, Risk Managers, Compliance Managers	9	
Audit Professionals	4	**7.3**
Strategy Professionals	7	
Line Managers	5	



Synopsis

Eric Ries builds on top of his foundational work in *The Lean Startup*, with a deeper and richer exploration of "the duty of business". For anyone who has grappled with the tension between doing good versus focusing on profit, or short-term gains over long-term sustainability, *Incorruptible* provides the moral compass, tools, and examples that allow leaders to architect a moral "true-north". *Incorruptible* offers a blueprint that consists of two parts. First, to create something worth protecting, an inspirational initiative, aligned with human flourishing and grounded in a principled ethos. Second, to build that business with structural integrity and robustness, including the right governance, security, and operating models. The right structures and ownership can enhance long-term sustainability. He advocates for organisations to be mission-controlled, with a mission that is duty-bound to customers, employees, communities, and human flourishing, rather than with maximising profits alone. There is overwhelming evidence that mission-led companies tend to outperform their conventional competitors and achieve better long-term results. These companies are also less susceptible to systemic shocks and tend to be more resilient to environmental shifts. The book draws on examples from mission-led companies, such as Patagonia, Costco, Johnson & Johnson and Tony's Chocolonely, among others, and how they remain a force in society while achieving significant financial success. Reis also introduces the concept of organisational "Gravity", the invisible force that pulls companies down, and creates mission drift over time. He highlights cases like Google's famous transition from its 'Don't be Evil' motto to a state of cultural erosion as a very different company today. His commitment to long-termism extends beyond theory. Reis is the founder of the Long-term Stock Exchange (LTSE), an initiative focused on investing in companies that offer long-term value creation and the pursuit of customer trust through enlightened capitalism.

Key Concept: Mission Controlled. Creating a long-term, sustainable business requires a clear mission that considers customer, employees and community. Mission-led businesses have longevity, beyond the people leading the business at the time.

Quotes: "Not every form of making money is equally good." "The more golden the goose, the stronger the temptation to butcher it." "Recognizing that companies that extract value rather than create it have structural weaknesses that lead to real problems in the long run. Deferred liabilities eventually come due." "If the players change but the play remains the same, then something deeper is at work." "First, create something worth protecting." "It is time to recognize that operations and governance are two sides of the same coin. Builders create the value that governance is meant to protect." "When making any decision, visualize the faces of your own family members and loved ones, then ask yourself: If this decision impacted them, what would you do? Then go do that thing, big or small."

Practical Tips

- Be clear about the organisational mission and ensure the mission improves lives in a meaningful way.
- Consider the mission in every transaction. Whenever money, power or status changes hands, ask whether mission and ethos were considered alongside conventional factors.
- Make the mission the tie-breaker. When all other factors are roughly equal, value alignment should determine the choice.
- Create a clear path for allies. Removing artificial barriers and investing in aligned partners builds an ecosystem that collectively amplifies the mission.

Think About

- Do you know your company's mission, and does it genuinely promote improving human lives? If not, how could you shape one within your organisation, team, or department that aligns with values and guides decision-making?
- As a director or executive, is your company's shareholding dominated by short-term investors, or by stakeholders who protect the mission and uphold strong governance?
- Do you want to build a company that makes the world better for future generations? This starts with deliberate action today and a commitment to incorruptible governance.

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