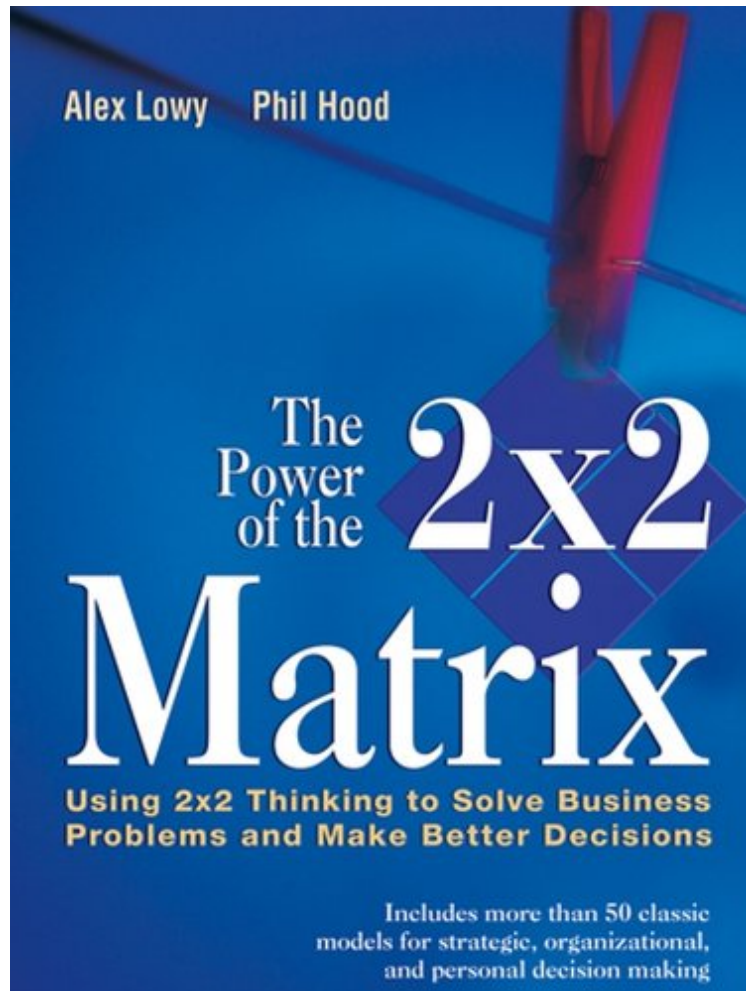


(Download pdf) The Power of the 2 x 2 Matrix: Using 2 x 2 Thinking to Solve Business Problems and Make Better Decisions (Jossey-Bass Business Management)

## **The Power of the 2 x 2 Matrix: Using 2 x 2 Thinking to Solve Business Problems and Make Better Decisions (Jossey-Bass Business Management)**

*Alex Lowy, Phil Hood*  
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#135001 in eBooks 2008-03-11 2008-03-11 File Name: B000VO3F9S | File size: 18.Mb

**Alex Lowy, Phil Hood : The Power of the 2 x 2 Matrix: Using 2 x 2 Thinking to Solve Business Problems and Make Better Decisions (Jossey-Bass Business Management)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Power of the 2 x 2 Matrix: Using 2 x 2 Thinking to Solve Business Problems and Make Better Decisions (Jossey-Bass Business Management):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great book. Can be applied to any business. By Electrical Residential Service When I got this book, at first I was a little disappointed, because of the price. It had a book cover, it's not hard cover, its pages are not full color, as you would expect to see in a text book, and it's a bit on the slim side in size. I got

it at about 60 USD at the time. It was about 80 USD when it came out, and now I see why it's worth every penny even at 80. The main focus of the book is to both teach and illustrate how to apply the 2x2 thinking matrix for problem solving. They illustrate several examples of real companies which have succeeded and failed in the past and present. It's worth more than its weight in gold, if you have the intellectual hunger and ambition to see what it offers. At first they illustrate the theory of how to set up the 2x2 matrices. It's a little on the, what-do-I-need-this-for side, but when you get to the applied scenarios, you really start to see the great power in this kind of thinking and realize we use this every day, just not in an ordered way, as they aim to teach in this work. I own a couple of small businesses, and almost every scenario in the book can be applied to their scale. Furthermore, each scenario gives you the steps to apply the matrix yourself with your own variables aiming to illustrate a particular matrix for decision making. It all boils down to DECISION MAKING. It's important to make that note, because the aim, as they themselves explain in the back of the hard copy is to consider not just the either/or but the both/and (sorry if I got that last part wrong, I don't have the copy in front of me, but I'm sure you get my point) scenario. With applied calculus and your math software of choice, excel and access work great, you can take this work a step further, as it deserves, and draw scenarios at a professional level. Rebutting the negative review of 2 stars; yes, I understand it's a basic level for consulting firms. It's still a great book and a way to if not altogether suspend the use of consulting firms services, a way perhaps to understand what to expect from them, how they work, and what to ask from them. In these matters, it's common sense and a very particular scenario, your environment, you must know to succeed. I believe the 2 star review was precisely because it challenges a consulting firm in not using their services, as the saying goes, "Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day; teach him how to fish, and he'll eat forever." Well, again, you get my point. The book goes as far as illustrating personal scenarios of mind vs heart and the like. So, this is very POWERFUL stuff. I recommend this for anybody who wants to hone their skills at critical thinking and optimization scenarios. The only thing I regret, why haven't they written another book like this or the second part of this piece. Thank you Lowy and Hood. 40 of 40 people found the following review helpful. A rich new approach to structuring business problems By A Customer Alex Lowy coauthored "Digital Capital," which was arguably one of the best books on the internet economy. Now teaming up with Phil Hood, "The Power of the 2x2 Matrix" has the potential to become a timeless reference. Lowy and Hood take a familiar tool, the 2x2 matrix, and turn it inside out in a book that offers a rich new approach to structuring business problems, iterating them until core dilemmas are revealed, and finding solutions that might even draw a smile from Hegel. The book is a hybrid of sorts, offering context and advice for the practitioner in the first two sections, with the final 200 or so pages devoted to an encyclopedic look at 55 different 2x2 matrices that span strategic, organizational and individual realms. While the ultimate aim of the book is to show how to use the 2x2 matrix to improve decision-making, it is apparent that the process of distilling business problems into two opposing axes is where much of the value lies. At the heart of this book is how to use 2x2 thinking to gain a better understanding of the key tradeoffs in decision-making and to identify solutions which transcend those tradeoffs. The three sections of the book are: (1) 2x2 Thinking - Discusses the Hegelian dialectic which underpins the logic and structure of the ideas behind the 2x2 framework. This includes a thoughtful analysis of the nature of the conflict between the X and Y axes in a 2x2 matrix, as well an explanation of how changing the context of the problem space helps to iterate the issues to the point where new and more powerful solutions emerge. The section closes with an examination of eight archetypal dilemmas, including Head-Heart, Cost-Benefit and Change-Stability. Interestingly enough, rethinking these dilemmas in a 2x2 manner adds depth and clarity to issues where typical thought processes tend to be restricted to well-worn paths. (2) 2x2 Practice - The second section makes the jump from theory to practice and outlines an eight step approach for how to incorporate 2x2 thinking into the course of solving business problems. The eight steps are simple enough that a novice practitioner can dive right in and have a reasonable expectation of success. The Fujitsu case study that closes the chapter, however, reveals how experience is important to help navigate the more subtle aspects of the 2x2 approach. While this case study draws upon much of the theory that precedes it, I suspect most readers will be left looking for additional examples. (3) 2x2 Frameworks Inventory - The inventory of 2x2 frameworks contains the nuggets most of us are likely to return to again and again. In fact, while the first two sections are easy to breeze through, the inventory is a conceptual thicket that readers will likely prefer to tackle bite by bite, with ample time to chew on the ideas packed into each matrix. In some respects, reading the frameworks inventory is like reading an informal history of strategic thinking through a new lens. On the other hand, the 2x2s cover a wide enough range of ground to incorporate a discussion of Myers-Briggs personality types, the works of Stephen Covey, and even game theory problems, such as the classic Prisoner's Dilemma. All told, the 55 frameworks captured here comprise a virtual 2x2 Hall of Fame. This book is first and foremost a fun read. I particularly enjoyed seeing the Hegelian dialectic brought to life, dusted off, and used as a means to evaluate conflicts and tradeoffs in such a way that it makes it easier to get at the root cause of complex issues. The ideas in the book can be applied across the entire problem-solving universe, yet the authors tailor the book to focus on decision-making in the business world. Their approach will appeal most to consultants and managers who struggle with complex problems, but also to anyone who wants to improve their ability to think about a wide range of issue and make better decisions. The book could benefit from additional case studies, such as the Fujitsu case, and conceptual omnivores will wish there were more than 55 frameworks. The bottom line, however, is that 2x2s

represent a new and useful way to catalogue a variety of types of knowledge, hold it in a format that is likely to yield new insights more easily, and apply it in novel and powerful ways. 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A must buy...By A CustomerIf you want to learn about how to go deep in strategy this is a really good book. The authors propose a method to help you define core dilemmas facing your business and then use that as a starting point for developing strategy. They say that dynamic tension and conflict are the starting point for change and growth, both in the firm and as managers. The second half of the book is devoted to 55 classic and not-so classic 2 x 2 matrices. The typical business student may be aware of many of these such as BCG portfolio grid and Stephen Covey's urgency and importance. However, the best value is the 2 x 2 models and cases in areas such as marketing, risk, and organizational processes. I think every organization will see itself in these examples. The authors include a method for each 2 x 2. You can literally begin to apply the thinking right away. I think anyone in business or a business strategy course would benefit.

By studying the work of hundreds of the most original and effective business minds, the authors present a common architecture that illuminates exceptional analysis and creative performance. 2 x 2 Thinking is characterized by a fundamental appreciation for the dynamic and complex nature of business. The best strategists go out of their way to tackle dilemmas rather than merely solve problems. They use opposition, creative tension, iteration and transcendence to get to the heart of issues and involve critical others in finding the best solutions. The authors demonstrate how to apply the 2 x 2 approach to a wide range of important business challenges.