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EMC Corp.

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Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** Origins: The Founding of EMC
- **Chapter 2** From Office Furniture to Memory Boards
- **Chapter 3** Early Struggles and First Successes
- **Chapter 4** Going Public: The Nasdaq Debut
- **Chapter 5** Product Innovation and the PDP-11
- **Chapter 6** Crises and Comebacks in the 1980s
- **Chapter 7** Entering the Storage Market
- **Chapter 8** The Birth of Symmetrix
- **Chapter 9** Battling IBM: Shifting Market Dynamics
- **Chapter 10** Leadership and Vision: Egan and Marino
- **Chapter 11** Rapid Expansion and Skyrocketing Sales
- **Chapter 12** The Master Entrepreneur of the Year
- **Chapter 13** Software as a Growth Engine
- **Chapter 14** Riding the 1990s Tech Boom
- **Chapter 15** Meeting the Needs of the Fortune 500
- **Chapter 16** From Ruettggers to Tucci: Leadership Changes
- **Chapter 17** Growth by Acquisition: Building the EMC Portfolio
- **Chapter 18** VMware and the Virtualization Revolution
- **Chapter 19** Reinventing Storage for the Cloud Era
- **Chapter 20** EMC's Approach to Security and Big Data
- **Chapter 21** Company Culture: Innovation and People
- **Chapter 22** Industry Impact and Competitive Landscape
- **Chapter 23** The Road to Dell: A Landmark Deal
- **Chapter 24** The Integration into Dell Technologies
- **Chapter 25** Legacy, Lessons, and Future Prospects

Introduction

EMC Corporation stands as one of the most influential technology companies in American history—a pioneer whose journey mirrors the rapid transformation of the information age itself. From its inception in a Massachusetts basement in 1979 to its integration into Dell Technologies nearly four decades later, EMC's story offers a powerful lens for understanding the evolution of data storage, information management, and the very foundations of the modern digital enterprise.

Started by Richard Egan and Roger Marino, EMC's beginnings were humble and resourceful. The company's initial foray into office furniture sales quickly gave way to opportunities in computer memory boards, where technical ingenuity and relentless drive set the firm on an upward trajectory. Early challenges, including intense competition and product setbacks, were met with characteristic resilience. The decision to invest heavily in research and development laid the groundwork for the breakthroughs that would define EMC's rise.

The launch of Symmetrix in 1990 proved to be a defining moment—not just for EMC, but for the entire data storage industry. As enterprises grew increasingly dependent on digital information, Symmetrix addressed a critical need for scalable, reliable, and high-performance storage solutions. EMC's fierce pursuit of "best-of-breed" excellence, combined with an aggressive business strategy and strategic acquisitions, quickly propelled it from a niche player into a global powerhouse. By the end of the 1990s, EMC was synonymous with data storage, powering the operations of most Fortune 500 companies and setting new standards for innovation and growth on Wall Street.

EMC adapted to the seismic shifts of the new millennium by embracing the software revolution, cloud computing, and security—a transformation accelerated by the acquisitions of companies like VMware, RSA Security, and many others. This deliberate diversification expanded EMC's reach while solidifying its position at the forefront of enterprise IT. The company's corporate culture, blending intensity with camaraderie and a dedication to customer success, was both a catalyst for achievement and a blueprint for endurance amid fierce competition.

In 2016, EMC's remarkable run as an independent company concluded with the record-breaking \$67 billion acquisition by Dell Inc. Far from marking an end, this merger signified a new chapter in which the collective expertise and resources of these technology leaders would chart a course for the next era of digital innovation. The impact of EMC is still felt today—its legacy embedded not only in products and patents but in the architecture of modern business itself.

This book explores the full arc of EMC's story: its formation and growth, its pivotal products and people, its influence on the industry, and its prospects as part of Dell Technologies. Through the triumphs, trials, and transformations that marked each stage of the company's life, *EMC Corp.: The Story of An American Company* invites readers to discover what it truly means to build, sustain, and reinvent a world-changing enterprise.

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CHAPTER ONE: Origins: The Founding of EMC

The story of EMC Corporation, a company that would eventually redefine how businesses managed their digital information, began not with a grand vision of technological revolution, but with two former college roommates and a pragmatic approach to opportunity. In August 1979, Richard Egan and Roger Marino, armed with an entrepreneurial spirit and a knack for identifying unmet needs, laid the groundwork for what would become a multinational technology giant. Their initials, "EM," would form the core of the company's enduring name, EMC.

Their initial foray into the business world was far removed from the complex realm of enterprise data storage. Egan and Marino started by selling office furniture, a venture that, while perhaps unglamorous, provided them with valuable experience in sales, customer relations, and the fundamental mechanics of running a business. This early exposure to the ebb and flow of commerce, even in a seemingly unrelated field, undoubtedly honed their business acumen and prepared them for the more technical endeavors that lay ahead.

It wasn't long, however, before their attention shifted from ergonomic chairs and filing cabinets to the burgeoning world of computing. The early 1980s were a time of rapid expansion in the technology sector, particularly in the realm of minicomputers, which were becoming increasingly prevalent in businesses and research institutions. Recognizing the immense potential within this evolving landscape, Egan and Marino made a pivotal decision: to pivot their focus from office furnishings to computer memory systems. This strategic reorientation marked the true genesis of EMC as a technology company.

In 1980, the nascent EMC established a crucial partnership that would significantly influence its early trajectory. They became the New England representatives for Intel, a company already making waves in the semiconductor industry with its microprocessors. This association provided EMC with access to cutting-edge technology and a credible product line to offer to their growing customer base. Beyond simply reselling Intel's products, EMC also ventured into the business of renting microprocessor development systems, further embedding themselves within the technical infrastructure needs of the time.

One particular area of focus for EMC in these early days was the sale of computer memory for minicomputers, most notably Digital Equipment Corporation's (DEC) PDP-11. The PDP-11 was a highly successful series of 16-bit minicomputers that found widespread use in a variety of applications, from scientific research to industrial control. As these powerful machines became more common, so too did the demand for

reliable and efficient memory solutions to complement their processing capabilities. This niche, though specialized, offered a clear opportunity for a company like EMC to make its mark by providing essential components for a rapidly expanding market.

The direct engagement with customers and their evolving needs proved to be a fertile ground for innovation. It was, in fact, at the suggestion of a customer that EMC embarked on its first significant product development initiative. This anecdote underscores a critical aspect of EMC's early success: a willingness to listen to the market and respond with practical, value-driven solutions. Rather than simply reselling existing products, Egan and Marino recognized the potential to create their own.

In 1981, this customer-driven insight led to the development of EMC's inaugural product: a memory board specifically designed to be compatible with Prime Computer minicomputers. Prime Computer, like DEC, was a prominent player in the minicomputer market, and their systems, too, required robust memory solutions. The memory board developed by Egan, Marino, and their dedicated team of engineers was not just another compatible product; it was engineered to offer superior performance. It boasted higher reliability and greater capacity than Prime's own offerings, all while being sold at half the price. This combination of enhanced performance and significant cost savings made EMC's memory board an incredibly attractive proposition for Prime Computer users.

The success of this initial product demonstrated EMC's ability to not only identify a market need but also to engineer a technically superior and more cost-effective solution. This early triumph set a precedent for the company's future endeavors, establishing a reputation for innovation and value. Building on this momentum, EMC continued to develop and introduce memory boards compatible with various other types of computers, steadily expanding its product portfolio and solidifying its position within the burgeoning computer hardware market. Each new memory board represented another step in EMC's journey from a small, opportunistic venture to a serious contender in the technology sector, driven by a clear understanding of market demands and a commitment to delivering competitive products.

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