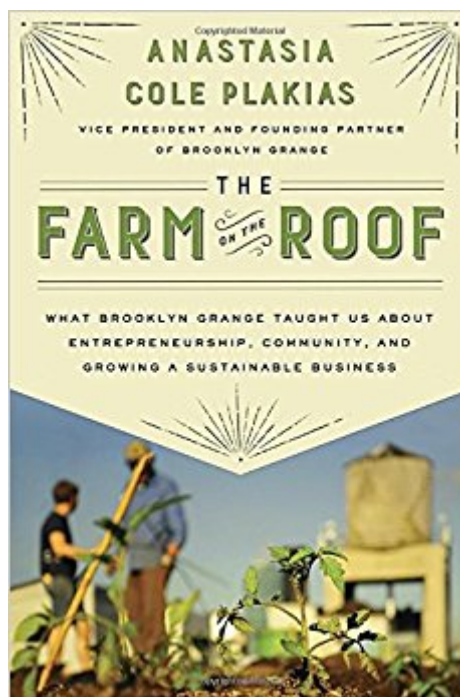




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# **The Farm On The Roof: What Brooklyn Grange Taught Us About Entrepreneurship, Community, And Growing A Sustainable Business**



## Synopsis

The founders of Brooklyn Grange, the world's largest green rooftop farm, share their inspirational story of changing the world through entrepreneurship. In their effort to build the world's first and largest commercial green rooftop farm, the founders of Brooklyn Grange learned a lot about building and sustaining a business while never losing sight of their mission to serve their community by providing delicious organic food and changing the way people think about what they eat. But their story is about more than just farming. It serves as an inspirational and instructional guide for anyone looking to start a business that is successful while making a positive impact. In *The Farm on the Roof*, the team behind Brooklyn Grange tell the complete story of how their "family" made their dream a reality. Along the way, they share valuable lessons about finding the right partners, seeking funding, expanding, and identifying potential sources of revenue without compromising your core values—lessons any socially conscious entrepreneur can apply toward his or her own venture. Filled with colorful anecdotes about the ups and downs of farming in the middle of New York City, this story is not just about rooftop farming; it's about utilizing whatever resources you have to turn your backyard idea into a sky-high success.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a sweet and inspiring story about what can be accomplished by a group of smart, idealistic young people dedicated to environmental and business goals" — Publishers

Weekly "Brooklyn Grange is the incredible rooftop farm I dream of seeing in every city across the

country. • "Alice Waters, Owner Chez Panisse Restaurant, Founder the Edible Schoolyard Project • Brooklyn Grange represents the best of passion and purity, and every page of this book oozes the sweet nectar of creativity, community, and commercial wisdom. That the story reads like a fast-paced novel simply confirms the power of visionary sustainable businesses. • "Joel Salatin, author, farmer, and owner of Polyface Farm • The Farm on the Roof tells an unvarnished and gritty tale about what it takes to build a business with purpose and profit. This book is jammed with inspirational stories of overcoming entrepreneurial challenges and provides endless lessons that can be applied to any organization. • "Eric Ryan, cofounder of Method and Olly • The remarkable tale of how a bunch of savvy do-gooders turned their socially conscious dreams into an innovative and economically thriving reality. The Farm on the Roof is an engrossing story of how hard work, ingenuity and an utter refusal to settle for the status quo led to the largest for profit green roof farm in the world. • "Joe Bastianich, author of Restaurant Man, restaurateur, and TV personality • This book answers the big, tormenting question: how can a small, organic, local farm become financially independent? It's a blue print for sustainable agriculture, which requires not only that we don't pollute Mother Earth, but that we find ways to make farming work financially in order to perpetuate and sustain it. • "Isabella Rossellini, actress, filmmaker, and conservationist • The Farm on the Roof is not just a heartwarming success story about how a group of young people with a shared dream faced every challenge head on to reach their goal. It's also the story of the search for a new way of living, one that makes the reader reflect on the endless opportunities sprouting in the streets of our cities. • "Carlo Petrini, founder of the international Slow Food movement

Anastasia Cole Plakias is a published writer, photographer, and veteran of the NYC restaurant industry. As co-founder and vice president of Brooklyn Grange, the world's largest green rooftop farm, Anastasia focuses on creating strong and meaningful connections between the farm and the communities it serves. A born-and-raised New Yorker, Anastasia is dedicated to making her native city a greener and more sustainable place to live.

A great read especially for people in the throes of planning and developing a unconventional style business - reads like a novel as well as a business guidebook. You cannot help but anticipate a sequel to see what happens next with Brooklyn Grange ....I run a small organic farm business and I was able to compare and contrast the experiences, decisions, and results made by Brooklyn Grange and broaden my own understanding of my successes and failures and farming as a

business... a very supportive read for me!

Wonderful book, describing a wonderful project! Very well written. Shows how very diverse folks can work together for something wonderful.

Amazingly well written and a moving account of great people who are changing the world one tomato at the time ! It is inspiring funny and full of great advise for any start up

THE FARM ON THE ROOF caught my eye because I'm considering growing vegetable crops. However, I live on a farm in the country, and I couldn't imagine running a farm on a roof in New York City. But I thought the idea of a rooftop farm was genius, because there are so many advantages to using such an underutilized space. THE FARM ON THE ROOF is the story of Brooklyn Grange, a business that focuses on the triple-bottom-line: people, planet, and profit. The farm started as a way to prove that yes, urban farming can be fiscally and agriculturally sustainable. They started operations in 2010 and are still going strong five years later, having learned a multitude of lessons and how to, in their terms, "domesticate" it. I thought the book was quite interesting. Much of it deals with setting up and launching the business, finding opportunities for growth, and developing alternate revenue streams. Although the subject is, of course, the rooftop farms, it's easy to apply those lessons to other businesses. Entrepreneurs with super crazy ideas might find some tips too, because who would have thought of fundraising for an urban farm? I enjoyed the author's writing style. It's very readable, entertaining and informative. You know how business books can be dry or boring? That wasn't the case here. Anastasia Cole Plakias is one of the founding partners of Brooklyn Grange, and it was easy to see her passion and pride in every page. I liked that she wasn't afraid to admit to her own faults in the business world, and how she relied on her partners to help out there, just as she helped them. Reading THE FARM ON THE ROOF left me feeling hopeful. It was so great to see a business that wants to help its community prosper. It was also great to see a "crazy" idea really take off, to show that yes, you can follow your dreams, succeed, and leave the world a better place all at once.

The story about the creation of Brooklyn Grange is full of inspiration, determination and devotion to a dream. It's just before the 2008 recession and several young people find themselves sharing a dream to create something in which the community can reap back. There's of course the author,

who quit a well-paying job as executive assistant with restaurant experience, Ben the business writer and head farmer, Brandon the one with restaurant experience and a knack at rallying up support, there's Christopher the project launcher and Gwen the passionate doer who goes out of her way to clear the way through her determined labor. These four people get together and work on getting an organic rooftop farm started in Brooklyn. These people quit or lost their well-paying jobs and had to start anew. The best thing about this heart-warming story is the positive tone that Anastasia Cole Plakias uses all throughout the narrative. Getting the Brooklyn Grange (BG) was expensive and full of hurdles. The first two years just barely kept everyone afloat. Despite supportive friends and family and a few other neighbor businesses, there were obstacles along the way that threw in a few wrenches. Crane operators threatened to strike. The city's department of buildings threw in a fine. That didn't stop the group. It was obvious that local merchants were supportive of the endeavor and helped make the Brooklyn Grange profitable and community-centered and a step forward in the urban agricultural movement taking over our culinary tastes. There are two, perhaps three stories here. The first story is of course the start-up and how the BG got started. Then the secondary story is how the BG is running today, the who's who of the BG and what they all do. The BG is more than just a group of rooftop farms on a few acres in Brooklyn and Queens, it's more like a group of businesses that work together to make BG work for everyone. The third story, and perhaps the less interesting story, is the "How To" part toward the end. This part may interest young entrepreneurs more, however, as it talks about the pros and cons, the sacrifices and disappointments that comes with creating a new business that's still outside the norm. Written in first-person, Plakias tells the story chronologically. She is humbling and honest and never bitter in her story. As both a personal story and a business story, this is well worth the read.

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