

Book Review: *The Better Business Book*

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ABSTRACT

The book titled *The Better Business Book: Volume 1--100 People, 100 Stories, 100 Business Lessons To Live By* consists of narratives by numerous authors who provided advice and shared lessons they learned in their business lives. There are several positive features of *The Better Business Book*. First, the reader has the advantage of receiving quality advice, not from only one author, but from many. The advice and lessons are instrumental in sharpening one's view on how to be successful in multiple lines of businesses, including entrepreneurship, marketing, sales, and management. A second attraction is a reader has the choice of reading the book from cover-to-cover or selecting specific chapters that apply to his need or interest. Another strength is the book can serve as an excellent supplement for college business students, granting them the opportunity to build onto their talent as future business leaders. The book is also a benefit to a professor of business who may choose to use one or more of the book's chapters in the classroom as an innovative means of launching a lecture topic or class activity.

Keywords: Book Review, Business Stories, Business Lessons, Authors Unite

Following the Table of Contents and preceding the chapters of the book is a page titled "Wanna Chapter in The Next Better Business Book?" As the title suggests, it is an invitation for anyone interested in writing a narrative for the next published volume. The reader is directed to the following link: <http://authorsunite.com/waitinglist> for more information.

On the final page of the book is a second invitation to the reader: (1) send a review of the book to Authors Unite if the reading were enjoyable; and (2) feel welcome to contact and/or join the community of Authors Unite. To act upon the invitation, the reader is referred to the following link: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/TheAuthorsUniteLounge/>

Interestingly, the individual responsible for coordinating the chapter narratives into a book does not immediately identify himself. In the "Introduction," he speaks as one in union with the contributing authors when he stated, "We hope you enjoy reading this book, half as much as we enjoyed creating it for you" (p. xv). Not until the final narrative, "Your Story Can Move Mountains," does the reader learn that Author Tyler Wagner is the creator of *The Better Business Book*.

In Wagner's chapter, the reader gains an appreciation of the author's previous work and of his interest in other writers' success. He explained how he, as a college dropout, initially encountered significant failure in starting a couple of businesses but due to personal endurance was eventually able to find success when he began writing and marketing a book named *Conference Crushing*. Wagner recalled the overwhelming excitement he felt when he first held a copy of the book in his hands. The book soon became a top seller in its subject category at Amazon.

Wagner also discussed in his chapter the assumption that there were potentially many individuals who would like to engage in the writing and publishing business but unfortunately had not found a suitable means by which to pursue that goal. He recalled his interest in helping them fulfill their dream of being authors [of stories that potentially could move mountains for themselves and others]. He wrote, "I want people to have the support they need to get through the writing and marketing process. I want as many people as possible to achieve their goal of becoming a successful author. I want there to be one place where all authors go to have fun, support each other, and create a positive impact for society. I call this place Authors Unite" (p.332).

Wagner ends his chapter by sharing the website of Authors Unite and encourages the reader to visit the following link: <http://www.authorsunite.com>

Wagner's chapter, along with the other chapters of the book, is written with a strong spirit of enthusiasm and conviction. Although the chapters are only two- to three pages in length, they are substantive in content and directed toward all employed in or aspiring to work in a business environment. To understand the value provided in the authors' lessons, an overview of a few of the chapters is addressed below.

In a chapter titled “The Power of a Single Step,” Author Megan Lyons began with the following quotation by Richard Branson: “If your dreams don’t scare you, they are too small” (p. 5). In her narrative, she discussed the importance of setting and working toward worthy goals. However, she reminded the reader that working to achieve high goals is not enough. In addition, one must be prepared to handle two main obstacles that can potentially interfere with the accomplishment of goals. The obstacles are (1) handling hardships as they occur and (2) knowing how to overcome the fear of failure.

In terms of hardships, the author shared an example of an individual who sets a goal to lose 20 pounds of body weight and believes that with an advertised product promising “over-night success” that he can lose the weight very quickly. Shortly, though, he is disappointed in having minimal or no positive results. Lyons noted there are usually few or no shortcuts but plenty of hardships that can discourage a person from continuing to work towards his goals.

Regarding fear of failure, Lyons noted the fear is often manifested when an individual gives excuses for his inaction. As an example, the author referenced a person who is interested in starting a new business but is afraid that he will be unable to get the business going. As a result, he offers excuses, some which may include: “[I’ll] take the first step in a few months, or once [I] have the business plans finalized, or once [I] feel just a bit more confident, or once [I] research 800 other businesses and figure out the exact statistically proven formula for sure-fire business success” (p. 6). To overcome the fear of failure and inaction, the author advised the reader to take one small step at a time toward reaching a goal and reward himself after completion of each step. Lyons noted this practice allows one to see progress, which in turn, instills an individual with greater self-confidence in being able to move forward and attain his goal.

The chapter ends with the author challenging the reader to take five minutes to determine a worthwhile goal and to decide upon the first step that he or she can take today toward reaching that specific goal. The author wrote, “Go out and do it, and know that you are well on your way: (p. 7).

More information can be learned about Author Megan Lyons at her website found at <http://www.thelyonsshare.org>

In an overview of a chapter titled “Lessons from the Dark Side: What Entrepreneurs Can Learn from Hackers” Author Stas Verberkt began by noting cybercrime is a global problem, impacting the world economy by \$500 billion. He explained that the reason why cybercriminals are very successful at their trade is due to the following principle—to study and respond to the behavior, needs, and mindset of specific individuals whom they plan to manipulate in ways that will allow them [the criminals] to successfully execute their crime. By sharing the following personal story, Verberkt strives to teach the reader that a person operating an ethical business can also benefit by a similar principle--studying and responding to the behavior, needs, and mindset of his customers, thereby allowing him to provide quality goods and services to his customers and a successful business operation for the business owner/manager/entrepreneur.

Verberkt’s story was from his college days when he was Master’s student in the field of computer security and learned to implement the principle of cybercriminals. His professor required the students to group in pairs to “join the dark side” (p. 95) for a brief time. Verberkt and his teammate were assigned to act the part of cybercriminals who were to take possession of a confidential university asset. They chose to take a computer file from a research professor’s computer located in the professor’s office.

During this exercise, the author realized “to truly be effective, [he] needed to position himself in the shoes of his target group,” (p. 95) i.e., to understand the behavior, needs, and mindset of those individuals that stood in the way of his retrieving the electronic file. The plan was to take the computer file during evening hours. However, he knew that the building manager, who supervised the building in which the research professor’s office was located, would not allow entrance of an individual(s) unknown to him unless a legitimate reason were offered.

Thus, prior to Verberkt and his teammate’s planned entry during the upcoming night-hours, they researched “with great attention for detail” and drafted a fake, but authentic looking, email addressed to the building manager from the university’s security office. The email stated that there was a security issue in the building, and a student worker would drop by shortly to pick up spare security badges for security officers who would be entering the building during evening hours. A few hours after the email had been sent to and received by the manager, Verberkt dropped by the manager’s office, playing the role of a student worker with a fake work order in hand to request pick-up of

the badges. Because the building manager believed in the authenticity of the email and work order, he gave the badges to Verberkt, the student, and provided authorization for entry that evening.

To make a long story short, Author Verberkt and his partner successfully gained access to the building during evening hours, made entry into the research professor's office, hacked into the professor's computer by overriding the password, and acquired the university confidential asset—the computer file. All was successfully accomplished by Verberkt and his teammate due to their understanding the behavior, needs, and mindset of the building manager. In summary, the author's story is a strong, yet an entertaining, lesson for many.

For additional information about Stas Verberkt, the reader may find his website at <http://www.stas.verberkt.net>

The next chapter is titled “After the Age of 50, Your Life Experience Is Your Resume” by Kim Kirmmse Toth. Based on statistical findings that older women are often unable to financially support themselves outside the traditional workplace, the author recommended that senior women consider becoming entrepreneurs. Toth advised that in starting a business, there are some items to address. For example, money is needed to purchase a few items, including a computer and a phone, set-up of a website for marketing, and possibly hiring someone to coach oneself as a new entrepreneur in the initial stages. The author further directed focus to a new entrepreneur's need of self-confidence to achieve goals, patience to grow a business, willingness to work hard, independence to make decisions, and professionalism to interact with others.

For seniors who question what it is that they are qualified to do in a start-up business, the author encouraged them to think about their many life experiences, skills, and talents. Based on these personal resources, they will be able to construct a satisfactory and acceptable business.

Finally, the author emphasized some of the principal benefits of being an entrepreneur: (1) the freedom to decide how many hours to work each day, (2) at what hour to begin and close the work day, and (3) the freedom to schedule personal activities around business tasks.

Toth ended by sharing the following thought with the reader: “What a huge benefit this is for women ‘after 50.’ This is a time that you can take your employability back—on your own terms. Did you realize that this was even possible? I promise you, it is” (p. 159).

To gain more insight from the author, check her website at the following link: <http://positiveaginginc.com>

The final overview is on the chapter titled “Embracing the Spontaneous, Childlike and Playful Messiness of Dreams.” The author Terril Van Hemert advised the reader to approach his business goal like a child with a fun-loving and creative spirit that allows one to naturally become proactive and unafraid of making mistakes or looking “stupid” in the process of striving to acquire his quest. Although there are times when one fails, at least he has learned that which does not work. The reader is reminded of the well-known adage by Thomas Edison in his quest to create a light bulb: “I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work” (p. 306).

Van Hemert further encouraged the reader to break out and escape from the mental “box of control” and be aware of and act upon the potential greatness that lies inside oneself. To reinforce his point, the author used the simile that the potential greatness within a person “is like a pilot light on a stove. It's unable to ignite a flame without a spark but once that spark hits the pilot light, the potential is released and the flame is ablaze” (p. 307). To establish the author's faith in the potential greatness of each reader, Van Hemert ends the narrative with the words: “I believe in you” (p. 307).

The author provides information about *The Better Business Book* on the website at the following link <http://Terril.me>

There are several positive features of *The Better Business Book*. For example, the reader has the advantage of receiving quality advice, not from only one author, but from many. The advice and lessons are instrumental in sharpening one's view on how to be successful in multiple lines of businesses, including entrepreneurship, marketing, consulting, sales, management, perseverance, confidence, and the spiritual self. A second attraction is that a reader has the choice of reading the book from cover-to-cover or selecting specific chapters that apply to his need or interest. Another strength is the book can serve as an excellent supplement for college business students, granting them the opportunity to build onto their talent as future business leaders. The book is also a benefit to a

professor of business who may choose to use one or more of the book's chapters in the classroom as an innovative means of launching a lecture topic or class activity. A final aspect of the book is that it offers the reader an invitation to join Authors Unite and contribute one's own personal business experience to the upcoming version of Volume 2. In summary, the book is an outstanding read for its purpose—to share lessons on how to move forward, how to be successful, and how to reach goals in one's business journey.

REFERENCES

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