

Lessons My Brothers Taught Me: How to Transform Your Personal Qualities into a Successful Business

Charles D. McCarrick

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The entrepreneur's memoir Lessons My Brothers Taught Me models methods for succeeding in business.

Part memoir, part business how-to, businessman Charles D. McCarrick's engaging book *Lessons My Brothers Taught Me* follows his company's growth from its conceptualization to becoming an eight-figure enterprise.

McCarrick attributes his success to his adherence to four basic principles: salability, sensibility, sustainability, and scalability. Beneath these guiding principles are also crucial elements like having strong teams, capable leaders, good relationships with one's business partners, and practical strategies for dealing with crises. And to give further life and credibility to his concepts, the book is open about naming mistakes that McCarrick made, too, like not vetting a customer's financial capacities, which resulted in huge financial deficits, and selecting the wrong company president.

The book's discussions on topics like encouraging employee positivity, the value of knowing one's customers, and of knowing when to terminate an employee are illuminating if familiar. But beyond the book's more widely applicable lessons and suggestions, McCarrick's memories of his childhood adventures with his brothers imbue the text with particular charm. He recalls attempting to make gunpowder in a microwave and accidentally catching a rat while hunting a rabbit for soup. Some of these memories are mined for additional business lessons, as on the importance of having a tactical exit plan and the value of planning, if less believably than with McCarrick's entrepreneurial accounts. Cartoon images are included and further humanize the text; one shows McCarrick's brother being attacked by a nest of angry hornets.

Though the book envisions a broad audience, speaking to entrepreneurs across industries, its advice is more constrained in practice. It names marketing strategies that McCarrick found effective, for example, including developing multiple products for a few, select customers, though some of this guidance will not apply across sectors. Indeed, the book's tips often feel limited by their origins in McCarrick's own experiences. His accounts of the roles that he's played in his company are nonetheless inspiring; he recalls watching his business grow and celebrates having created a company culture that is conducive to success. Topics like business development and financial management remain underaddressed, however. A sense that some of the successes that McCarrick recalls were partially a matter of chance, as with his story of meeting his company's eventual CEO, undermines the book's guidance further.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (May 4, 2023)

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