



Putting Together The Entrepreneurial Puzzle: The Ten Pieces Every Business Needs to Succeed

Mary E. Marshall

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The US has a long history of independent thinking, innovation, and creativity—a culture that is evident in an economy largely driven by small businesses and entrepreneurs. Creating and growing a successful business is incredibly challenging. Only about half of new businesses survive 5 years. Just one third survive 10 years or more. What causes this high level of failure? Certainly there are multiple reasons, but lack of practical knowledge about the basics of running a successful business is key. Entrepreneurs often have a dream for a service or product, but not a comprehensive picture of what it takes to run a business. Given the precarious state of the economy and the significance of small business success, it's as important as it's ever been to support entrepreneurs in developing their practical business knowledge. Putting Together the Entrepreneurial Puzzle is based on Mary Marshall's many years of experience working as an entrepreneur and with business owners. Working and consulting with entrepreneurs over the course of her career, Ms. Marshall has collected a list of the most common problems that hamper small business success. She has compiled her solutions to those problems in one book. Putting Together the Entrepreneurial Puzzle is written as ten interconnected but freestanding chapters addressing the fundamental areas of business any successful entrepreneur must be prepared to develop and manage. It takes a nuts-and-bolts approach for a real world audience needing to address real problems right now and provides solid, practical tools for building a successful business or correcting a struggling one. Based in a real life perspective, and using examples from Ms. Marshall's own experience, this book covers both fundamentals (e.g., financial metrics) as well as the more elusive, but equally critical, elements of entrepreneurship (e.g., being a strong leader). The chapters specifically cover, Intentional Purpose (Mission, Vision, Values), Intentional Culture, Role of the CEO, Hiring, HR and the Employee Handbook, Marketing, Sales, Financial Metrics, Strategy + Operations = Execution and, having an Exit Strategy. This book is for entrepreneurs, business owners and small business CEOs who want to develop and grow a successful business beyond the new venture stage. It will guide readers through key elements of developing and running a business, while providing practical tools to approach and handle each one successfully. Crucially, the book also provides preparation steps and information for creating an exit plan. This book is based on Mary Marshall's extensive experience working inside and leading multiple small to mid-sized businesses, as well as providing executive consulting for more than 100 CEOs in the Seattle, Washington area through her work with Vistage International. In her time at Vistage, Ms. Marshall also oversaw the training and development of executive coaches who provided coaching for thousands of CEOs and top executives in the Western United States. All of this experience has given her both breadth and depth of insight into what makes entrepreneurs succeed and fail. As featured on the US Small Business Administration's web site, author Michael Ames says the number one reason for small business failure is "lack of experience." This book gives small business owners and executives an edge by providing them with insights gained from Ms. Marshall's years of extensive experience.

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