



TOPIC: What book has had a significant impact on you and your business?

You asked for it and we listened. In this column, we ask operators of all sizes and from all walks of the industry a question about their business and report their answers so you can assess how your own company compares to your peers. If you would like to participate, please email Rob Smentek at rob@chauffeurdriven.com for next issue's question.



I have two books that I would recommend. The first, one of my favorite business books, is *Mastering the Rockefeller Habits: What You Must Do to Increase the Value of Your Growing Firm* by Verne Harnish. It's a quick and easy read that gave me several takeaways, including the importance of holding regular meetings at the same time on the same day with your staff and of a five-year strategic plan. The second is *Never Eat Alone and Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time* by Keith Ferazzi, which has great tips for networking and details the significance of giving first.

Kristina Bouweiri, President/CEO
Reston Limousine in Dulles, Va.



My absolute favorite piece of business literature is *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, even after all these years. Collins summarizes five years of study, focused on 11 companies that rose from good to great during a time their competitors failed. The focus defined what behaviors and practices were consistently seen in all 11 companies, and why these specifically had such a profound impact. The summary of his findings was this: "Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice." As an entrepreneur and a business coach, I have always found that the magic is in the sweat, the numbers, and the heart. *Good to Great* provides a roadmap of that same concept, as well as the principles that work, if you have the commitment, integrity, endurance, and humility to apply them.

Kristen Carroll, Founder/CEO
The LMC Group in Manchester, N.H.



Very early in my career, *The Fred Factor* by Mark Sanborn was given to me by a mentor who astutely realized that my company was about not only cars and transportation, but also customer service and relationships. Since then, I have read it three or four times—it takes about an hour to read—and have purchased copies for my staff as well. I am actually going to reintroduce it to my staff and chauffeurs, and make it a mandatory read for all new hires before they start with Premier. It's not Jack Welch's *Winning* or Jim Collins' *Good to Great*—two must-reads for business owners—but the foundation it set for me was key to our company's success.

Eric Devlin, President/Owner
Premier Transportation Services in Dallas, Texas



My favorite business book is *Drive* by Daniel Pink. It influenced how I perceive and approach motivation. The book recognizes three factors that "drive" people to achieve great things: 1) autonomy, our desire to be self-directed; 2) mastery, the urge to get better at particular skills/tasks; and 3) purpose, the desire to be part of something greater than our-

selves. The old-school "carrot-and-stick" concept of management is no longer relevant and, as such, when we updated our company's vision and core values two years ago, we put a lot of energy into making sure that these three factors of personal motivation are interwoven in what we do every day.

Sami Elotmani, VP of Operations and Global Partnerships
Destination MCO in Orlando, Fla.



The most influential book for me, by far, is Steven Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*. I was fortunate to actually attend a life-changing, weeklong training session immersed in Covey's habits. I recently started reading his *Speed of Trust* after attending the CD Executive Retreat. I also suggest anything by Covey, Ken Blanchard, and John Maxwell, as well as *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson. If you read it before, then dust it off and read it again!

Kim Garner, Co-owner
BEST Transportation in St. Louis, Mo.



Bill Faeth recommended a book called *The E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It* by Michael Gerber. It's a life-changer. It shows you the difference between what we believe it takes to succeed and what we truly need. There's a big gap in starting your business as a passion project and what it takes to be a real entrepreneur. The author describes a store where the owner gets overwhelmed as she tackles all aspects of the business. I was able to see myself in the story and recognize the mistakes that I made, as well. It leaves you with an understanding of the tools we need as entrepreneurs, and gives you the perspective that entrepreneurship is an art.

Mauricio Herrera, CEO
A Luxury Limo in Sunny Isles Beach, Fla.



A book valuable to me is *The E-Myth Revisited* by Michael Gerber. The book revolves around a central concept that there is a myth in which people believe that small businesses are started by entrepreneurs risking money to make profit. This is not so: The real reasons people start businesses have little to do with entrepreneurship. Understanding this, and applying that understanding to creation and development of a small business, can be the secret to any business's success.

Arthur Messina, Founder/President
Create-A-Card in St. James, N.Y.

The most influential book I have ever read is *Capital Instincts: Life as an Entrepreneur, Financier, and Athlete* by Richard L. Brandt. In the past, I was challenged with pioneering, cultivating, and rebuilding both existing and new markets. The book sits in my office and I have shared

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it with some of my managers. My copy has notes and highlights throughout, so it now acts as a quick reference guide for us. It has also helped me transition from being the owner of my own company to being part of an international transportation provider.

Sal Milazzo, CEO
Signature Transportation Group in Chicago, Ill.



Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell was fascinating. This is a great book for both personal and business development. Gladwell provides a blueprint for making the most out of who you are, and explains that sometimes your success is a result of things you can't control, such as your birthplace, birth date, and family.

Jeff Nyikos, COO
Leros Point to Point in Valhalla, N.Y.

An important book is *The 4-Hour Work Week*. While I don't necessarily believe in a four-hour week, I was able to take nuggets from this book, like better time management and prioritizing tasks to improve sales and growth. I also recommend Michael Gerber's *The E-Myth Revisited*. We as operators



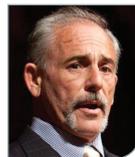
often want to do everything from management to dispatch to reservations. This book helped me to scale things and create systems to work on my business, not just in. For example, even if you're a small operator with minimal staff, create and use a separate email for, say, accounting. It makes you appear that you are larger with functional systems in place that will evolve as the company grows.

Daniel Perez, President/CEO
DPV Transportation in Boston, Mass.



The book that stands out to me the most might be the *Heroin Diaries* by Nikki Sixx, the bass player from Motley Crue. Quite honestly, the struggles of being nothing to something, his perseverance through addiction, and how a person can change their life through effort and dedication really resonated with me.

Andy Poulos, President
MTL Limousines Worldwide in Montreal, Quebec



The last book I read was *Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life* by William Finnegan, a Pulitzer Prize winner and New York Times bestseller. He has been a staff writer for *New Yorker* since 1987, and this book serves as his autobiography that is also an extraordinary, spiritual, and adventurous novel. It touches on love, responsibility, politics, individuality, and morality. I was first attracted to this novel because of my interest in surfing, but then I realized how much gratitude I have for everyday simple pleasures, both in my business and personal life. It's truly inspirational.

Ron Stein, President
Exclusive Sedan Service in North Hollywood, Calif.



The book that has inspired and helped my career the most is *Bag the Elephant* by Steve Kaplan. It is both a sales and management book that shows how he started as a small-time salesperson working his way into Procter and Gamble. It then details different techniques on how to grow your business and keep the customer. There are many great ideas within.

Brian Whitaker, Charter Bus Sales and Operations
Windy City Limousines in Chicago, Ill.



My go-to book is *Secret Service: Hidden Systems That Deliver Unforgettable Customer Service* by John R. Dijulius III. We make all our new hires read it and do an essay on it—it is an easy-to-read customer service book and we give them a \$200 bonus once it is finished. Anyone can buy a car and start a transportation service. What people are truly hungry for is an experience, and this book helps to get others in that service mindset to provide it.

Scott Woodruff, President/CEO
Majestic Limo & Coach in Des Moines, Iowa