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## **Recommended reading for entrepreneurs**

*By Pat Sisneros and Lynne Munoz*

Small business owners should set aside time each day to read about the business world.

Many entrepreneurs spend too little time reading. The reason, of course, is likely that they are working with customers, managing employees, developing marketing plans and meeting a payroll. Who has time to read when you are working so many hours each week?

It's a mistake not to take advantage of the tremendous wealth of information in blogs, magazines, newspapers and books.

These are the places where new ideas are discovered, opportunities are recognized and industry trends are monitored. Entrepreneurs must be life-long learners, people constantly yearning for additional knowledge about the world around them.

We have several suggestions for recommended reading. We also asked three local business owners for their ideas.

### **Blogs**

The Internet provides free access through blogs to some of the best business minds in the world. If you have limited time, this is the medium for you.

Three of our favorites:

**Seth Godin:** Godin is the author of numerous best-selling books about marketing, including "The Purple Cow." He writes about a variety of marketing topics emphasizing the new realities of marketing in the 21st century. He also stresses the necessity and challenges of creating "remarkable businesses." Go to [sethgodin.typepad.com](http://sethgodin.typepad.com).

**Independent Street:** This blog on The Wall Street Journal Online focuses on "news, trends, tidbits and tools for and about the entrepreneur." Many of the entries are connected with recent stories on small businesses in the Journal. Readers are asked at the end of each entry for their feedback or to share their experiences with a particular topic. Go to [online.wsj.com/small-business](http://online.wsj.com/small-business).

**Tom Peters:** This blog is written by the world-renowned management consultant, speaker, and co-author of "In Search of Excellence." Peters offers his famous "rants" on current business philosophies and practices and insightful interviews with today's leading business thinkers. The blog also has an extensive list of Peters' favorite business blogs and members of his management consulting company staff regularly contribute entries to the site. Go to [www.tompeters.com](http://www.tompeters.com).

### **Magazines and Newspapers**

Every business owner should subscribe to industry trade publications and local newspapers such as The Herald and the Snohomish County Business Journal to stay connected with the trends of their industry and business activity in their community.

We recommend the following for national publications:

**The Wall Street Journal:** You can't go wrong with the gold standard of business journalism.

**Phil Bannan,** co-owner of Scuttlebutt Brewing Co. in Everett agreed. "This paper is not only a great source of national and international news, but it also covers the important business events taking place. You get good analysis and commentary on the events and trends. Furthermore, there are feature articles that are always interesting and relevant to the issues in my business."

**Fast Company and Inc. Magazines:** Both of these monthly publications provide timely information on industry trends,

highlight innovative small businesses, and offer ideas on how to improve your business. Each magazine also has regular columnists and blogs on their online site.

## **Books**

If books sit unread on your desk, consider subscribing to a service by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, [www.summary.com](http://www.summary.com). This company provides concise summaries (usually about eight pages) of recently published business books.

If you have time to listen but not to read, think about purchasing audio books through Audible.com. Each audio book is \$14.95 and can be downloaded to your iPod or MP3 player -- pretty convenient, if your business requires you to spend time driving.

Three popular titles:

"Good to Great" by Jim Collins.

"This is my favorite business book of the past 5 years," said Jim Thomas, owner of the Northwest Women's Business Center in Everett, a non-profit organization that provides counseling to small business owners. "In his book Jim Collins explains why some companies grow to become great companies and others settle for just being good. This book can provide a positive foundation for thinking about and learning what makes one company better than another in the same field."

"No-Nonsense Leadership" by Dave Anderson.

"This is a great book that focuses on the people factor in an organization," said Tom Lane, of Dwayne Lane's Family of Auto Centers. "Assuming the basis of people as your most important asset, it teaches that the most effective leader is one who is compassionate and encouraging while still holding people accountable. Long term success won't work without that combination."

"Small Giants" by Bo Burlingham.

This author focuses on "companies that choose to be great instead of big," arguing that growing big isn't necessarily a sign of a great company. He developed a set of seven criteria by which to judge whether a company is great and then features 14 different small companies that meet these standards. Every entrepreneur would be well-served to follow the models of excellence described in this book.

Entrepreneurs need to keep up on the happenings in the business world -- even the busy ones. Don't miss out on the wisdom of some of the great business thinkers.

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