

Survive to Thrive

Philip H. Geier Jr.

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In this still-stormy economy, many companies are hunkering down and hoping for better economic weather ahead, but business expert Philip Geier offers a fresh, stellar perspective: stop trying simply to survive and take this opportunity to grow wisely instead.

With a knack for dispensing straightforward insight, Geier counsels executives on strategies such as developing creative marketing platforms, communicating a client-centric philosophy throughout an organization, learning from business troubles, and boosting overall employee performance. Throughout, his tone is similar to a coach communicating can't-lose plays to a team, without jargon or obfuscation—just an emphatic, consistent pep talk on the value of action.

He certainly has the professional pedigree to dispense advice: for two decades, Geier helmed the Interpublic Group, a marketing communications firm that, under his leadership, became a model for the contemporary advertising holding company. When he joined, the company posted annual revenues of \$500 million and employed 8,000 people.

Because he's also acted as chairman of the Ad Council and left Interpublic to start his own marketing communications and venture capital firm, Geier can speak from even broader experience, since he's familiar with industry-wide trends and entrepreneurial issues.

Although Geier's main area of expertise is in advertising—and here he provides a concise and useful history of the field—his insight isn't limited to that industry. In the chapter "Know What You're Selling," for instance, he uses ad examples from powerhouse ad firm McCann-Erickson, but also mentions business principles that can be applied to any enterprise, such as "forget your ego" and "ask for help." He notes, "In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, these basic lessons are more pertinent than ever. Hard work, authenticity, and collaboration are back in favor."

Because Geier weaves his professional and personal stories into the mix, he not only provides accounts of successes and stumbling blocks, but also gives the advice a more intimate tone. He concludes, for example, with thoughts about living past a heart attack and a subsequent transplant, noting that he lives each day with a deeper level of gratitude for everything life offers.

For companies that are struggling to make it through the current economic woes, Geier's whip-smart advice should prove invaluable, giving them a blueprint for developing long-term success.

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