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November 14, 2011 - The Best Advice Around, From Those Who Took It

We asked entrepreneurs which self-help books helped them get their businesses off the ground or run them more smoothly

There are countless self-help books aimed at budding entrepreneurs. But which of them have actually helped people start or improve an enterprise?

We asked business owners and educators for the books that have given them the best advice.

The top pick!



"The E-Myth"

By [Michael E. Gerber](#)

"Gerber's book caused me to rethink what I wanted to accomplish in my business and how I was going to do that," explains J. Richard Braun, owner of Braun Agency Inc., an insurance firm based in Virginia Beach, Va.

"The E-Myth," he explains, argues that most businesses are started by people who know how to do technical work—such as a plumber who launches a plumbing company—but who doesn't know how to run a business. The answer? Build *"replicable systems that can and will operate in an owner's absence,"* Mr. Braun says.



By putting those systems in place, owners can hire other technicians to do the company's core job and then get managers to oversee the business's various operations. Then the owner can concentrate on the true work of an entrepreneur—providing a vision and overall goals for the company, as well as looking for new opportunities.

For instance, Mr. Braun says, creating systems at his own company *"has allowed me to pursue additional ventures, including real-estate investments and other business start-ups."*