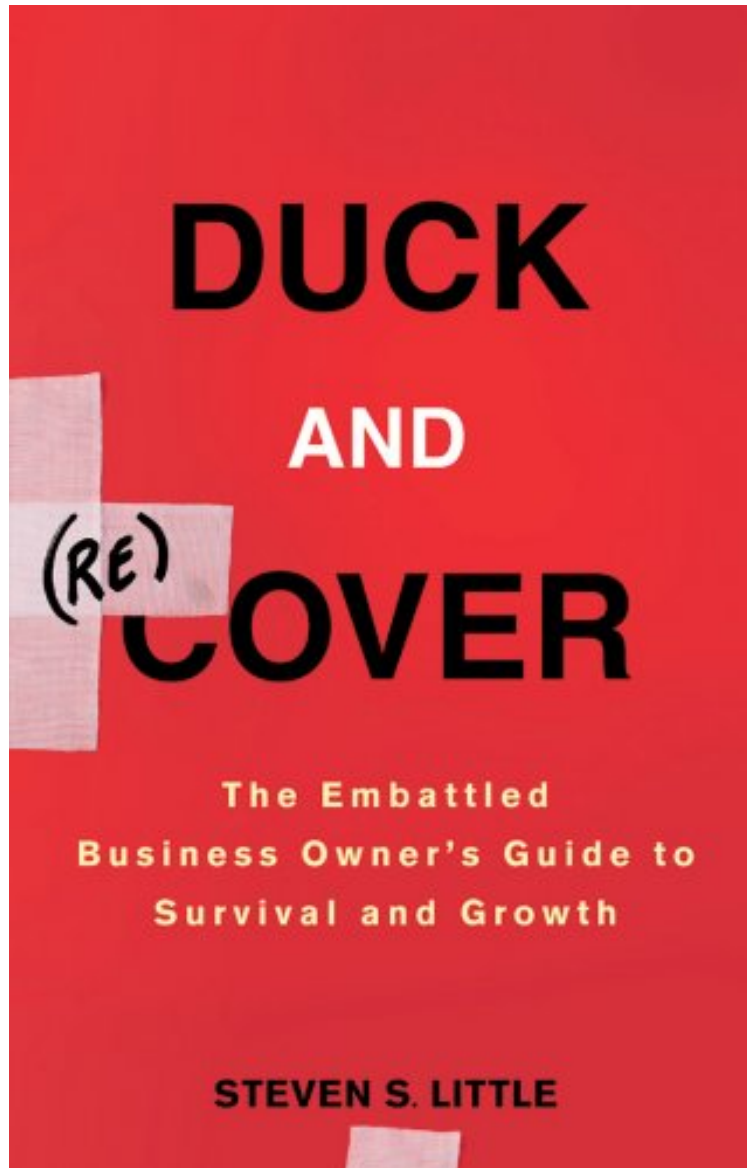


# Duck and Recover: The Embattled Business Owner's Guide to Survival and Growth

*Steven S. Little*

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**Steven S. Little : Duck and Recover: The Embattled Business Owner's Guide to Survival and Growth** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Duck and Recover: The Embattled Business Owner's Guide to Survival and Growth:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read! By Tim Chiappe I have read all of Steven Little's books. He is a great writer and knows business inside and out. This is a great book and still applies to the current economy.5

of 5 people found the following review helpful. "Every battle is won or lost before it's fought." Sun Tzu

By Robert Morris

In this volume, Steven S. Little provides what is described as "the embattled business owner's guide to survival and growth." In fact, his insights and suggestions can be of substantial assistance to anyone who has a number of business concerns. The title refers to a situation in business that is analogous to one in sports when, for example, baseball players on defense crouch while awaiting a batter's response to the next pitch or when linemen on defense in football await the next snap of the ball: "It puts them in the best position to release a focused, explosive movement when the time is right." Think of a company that is fully prepared to respond quickly and effectively to a threat (e.g. a competitor's advertising campaign promoting a price discount) or to an opportunity (e.g. to enter a market the competition has vacated). In *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu suggests that every battle is won or lost before it is fought. Hence the importance of preparation. "You should put your organization in a similar position right now in order to focus your potential energy. And effective duck now will enable you to focus your potential energy." In which areas do organizations tend to be most vulnerable? Little identifies four.

1. Not focusing on root causes: "Don't allow symptoms to distract you from treating the real trauma." Symptoms can usually be grouped and usually reveal a pattern that indicates causality. They do not occur in isolation. They are not self-generating.
2. Not prioritizing areas that need your attention: "Whatever your bent, that area of expertise and comfort in your business is probably pretty well covered. Too often, it is the area you haven't paid attention to that needs your attention now." More often than not, prioritizing involves identifying a sequence of action steps. For example: turn off the water, repair the broken pipe, and then clean up the mess.
3. Not putting new and recent problems in proper perspective: "Whatever the crisis du jour is, be sure that you are able to frame it properly. Is it really the most important thing for you to address today, or is it simply the most unsettling issue you've dealt with recently?" Urgency, not familiarity or novelty, should determine area or problem on which to focus.
4. Not knowing how to apply tourniquets: "You should know that in business, as in first aid, the decision to apply a tourniquet could cause you to lose that arm of your business forever... In which areas of your business do you have the experience and the expertise to apply tourniquets? As you look for ways in which to stop the bleeding, remember that crudely applied devices can produce unintended and deleterious consequences." At one point in his narrative, Little cites an old saying "that is both conventional wisdom and common sense: 'Revenue is vanity, margin is sanity, but cash is king'... Margins matter, but more often than not, the cash created by a better bottom-line matters more. With these principles in mind, you should be able to ride out any storm. Things are going to be bumpy, but that's hardly a secret. If you keep your head down but your mind open, the duck phase [i.e. an immediate and prudent response to a crisis] will probably position your organization for the smoother recovery phase ahead. In order to duck effectively, be sure you develop... a sound cash management monitoring system, encompassing all of the relevant data, a realistic understanding of which customers are worth the effort to retain an organizational environment that fosters TRUST in the people who work with and for you, a diligent effort to create a crisis plan that is written, communicated, and regularly updated, a well-rounded team of objective, expert advisors, and a comprehensive marketing strategy that puts you in the best position to seize the inevitable opportunities created by change." Near the conclusion of his book, Little focuses on seven specific areas in which sustained growth companies "look for innovations, evolutions, and revolutions that lead to growth, no matter the industry in which they compete nor economic environment to which they must adapt: a strong sense of purpose, outstanding market intelligence, effective growth planning, customer-driven processes, using appropriate technologies to achieve a decisive competitive advantage, attracting and retaining "the best and brightest" people, and seeing the future more clearly.

Years ago, Andrew Grove (former chairman and CEO of Intel) observed, "I'm often credited with the motto, 'Only the paranoid survive.' I have no idea when I first said this, but the fact remains that, when it comes to business, I believe in the value of paranoia. Business success contains the seeds of its own destruction. The more successful you are, the more people want a chunk of your business and then another chunk and then another until there is nothing left. I believe that the prime responsibility of a manager is to guard constantly against other people's attacks and to inculcate this guardian attitude in the people under his or her management." That said, when quoting Mark Twain, Steven Little offers another perspective: "I am an old man and I have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened." Presumably other troubles did, however, and therefore it makes sense to be ready to react and respond if and when they do occur. For Grove, that is the only way, not only to survive but also to conquer.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Timing Is Everything

By Harlan C. Rimmerman

Timing is everything and Steven's new book, *DUCK AND RECOVER* could not have been published at a better time. Yes, we are in a recession and Steven tells us how to continue to grow our businesses even in this cash strapped time period of history. Each chapter is a thoughtful masterpiece that will get the reader thinking about new strategies as well as reviewing what they are doing with their business. This book could be one of the best investments you ever make.

Business growth expert Steven S. Little gives you the real-world strategies you need to navigate your business through economic uncertainty. If you're a business owner or leader, you're no doubt feeling inundated on all sides by the gathering forces of this financial downturn—shrinking revenues, tightening resources, anxious workers, plunging profits. When economic storms hit, it's the clear-minded and action-oriented leader that ultimately guides their

business to success. In order to position your business for the growth opportunities ahead, it is imperative for you to address your most critical issues now. *Duck and (re)Cover* is the ultimate business owner's guide to prevailing and prospering through tough economic times. It questions much of the "conventional wisdom" we all hear about recessions and instead offers an irreverently common-sense approach to survival and growth in the midst of economic uncertainty. This book focuses on the most significant challenges and opportunities facing embattled businesses today. Recommends specific, and effective strategies for keeping your business up and running, even if the economy continues to stall Includes a wealth of been-there-done-that advice that will help you clear your own path to sustainable, profitable growth Written by Steven S. Little, former president of three fast-growth companies and author of *The Seven Irrefutable Rules of Small Business Growth* Now is not the time for timidity. Instead, make the bold moves recommend here to not only weather the storm but to chart a course for your ultimate destination.

From the Inside Flap If you own a business or lead an organization of any kind, you're no doubt feeling threatened on all sides by the gathering forces of this financial downturn—shrinking revenues, tightening resources, anxious workers, plunging profits. When economic storms hit, it's the clear-minded and action-oriented leader that ultimately guides a business to success. In order to position your business for the growth opportunities ahead, it is imperative for you to address your most critical issues now. *Duck and (re)Cover* is the ultimate guide to prevailing and prospering through tough economic times. It questions much of the conventional wisdom we all hear about recessions and instead offers an irreverently common-sense approach to survival and growth in the midst of economic uncertainty. You don't need philosophical suggestions about maintaining a positive attitude or "thinking like a winner." What you need is real-world, practical solutions for what you can do today to make sure your business is growing profitably tomorrow. Here, you'll find actionable advice on the most significant challenges and opportunities facing embattled businesses today. Divided into two distinct sections, the book covers both essential survival strategies and your best growth opportunities. You'll learn how to improve your cash flow, cut costs through greater efficiencies, and improve profits by examining your pricing strategies. Once you conquer your most immediate challenges, you'll be in a better position to seize the opportunities created by unprecedented change. This one-of-a-kind business survival and growth guide shows you how with innovative concepts such as filling market vacuums, creating profitable new partnerships, and implementing powerful new tools. Now is not the time for the timid. Instead, make the bold moves recommended here to not only weather the storm, but to chart a course for your ultimate destination.

From the Back Cover How Your Business Can Survive and Prosper in an Uncertain Economy Inside, business growth expert Steven S. Little focuses on an embattled business leader's most immediate challenges and the most attractive opportunities. Short on theory and filled with practical, no-nonsense advice, *Duck and (re)Cover* delivers: STARK NEW REALITIES CREATIVE CASH CONTROLS PROACTIVE PLANNING TECHNIQUES EFFICIENT MARKETING STRATEGIES POTENTIAL UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITIES PROVEN GROWTH INITIATIVES PRAISE FOR STEVEN S. LITTLE'S *The 7 Irrefutable Rules of Small Business Growth* "This is a readable, sometimes funny, and always wise book. It's valuable both to small business owners and to the chambers and other organizations that serve small business." —MICK FLEMING, President and CEO, American Chamber of Commerce Executives "Steve goes straight to the heart of what makes business work and packs practical how-to's from start to finish. More than just an engaging read, this book delivers the goods on how to create and sustain a winning small business." —JOE CALLOWAY, bestselling author of *Becoming a Category of One*, *Indispensable*, and *Work Like You're Showing Off*

About the Author Steven S. Little is an expert on the subject of business growth and the future of opportunity. A former president of three fast-growth companies, he now advises thousands of business leaders each year. Steven is also the author of *The 7 Irrefutable Rules of Small Business Growth* and *The Milkshake Moment*, both from Wiley. Visit his Web site at [www.stevenslittle.com](http://www.stevenslittle.com).