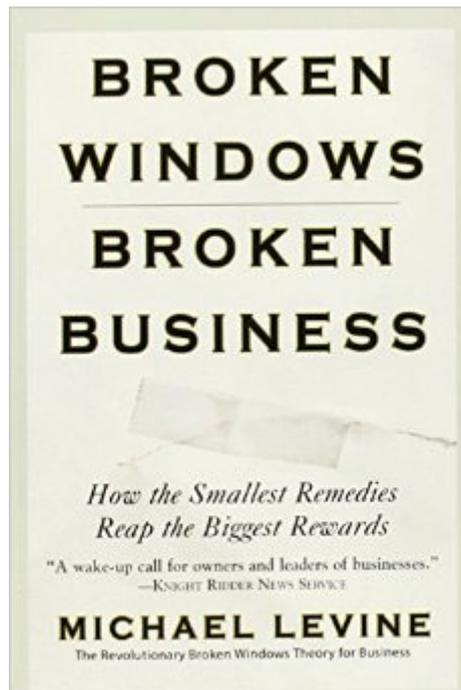# Broken Windows, Broken Business: How The Smallest Remedies Reap The Biggest Rewards

Synopsis

Once every few years a book comes along with an insight so penetrating, so powerful - and so simply, demonstrably true -that it instantly changes the way we think and do business. Such a book is Broken Windows, Broken Business, a breakthrough in management theory that can alter the destiny of countless companies striving to stay ahead of their competition. "In this vital work, author Michael Levine offers compelling evidence that problems in business, large and small, typically stem from inattention to tiny details. Social psychologists and criminologists agree that if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, soon thereafter the rest of the windows will be broken - and the perception will build that crime in that neighborhood is out of control. The same principle applies to business." "Drawing on real-world corporate examples, from JetBlue's decision to give fliers what they really want - leather seats, personal televisions, online ticketing - to Google's customer-based strategy for breaking out of the pack of Internet search engines, to business-to-business firms' successes and failures, Levine proves again and again how constant vigilance and an obsession with detail can make or break a business or a brand." "With tips and advice on changing any business to one that dots its i's, crosses its t's, and attracts more clients, Broken Windows, Broken Business goes straight to the heart of what makes all enterprises successful - the little things that mean a lot."--BOOK JACKET.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As I began to read this book, I was reminded of the assertion that "God is in the details." Some have

credited it to Le Corbusier, others to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Whoever its source may be, the relevance to the contemporary business world is compelling. More about that later. In his Introduction, Levine notes that the "broken windows" theory was first put forth by criminologists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling (in 1982) when explaining what a "broken window" is in criminal justice terms: a "signal" that if petty crimes such as graffiti and purse snatching are not dealt with in a resolute and timely manner, far more serious crimes will also be tolerated.According to Wilson and Kelling, "social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken." Why? Levine: "Because the message being sent out by [something seemingly as insignificant as a] broken window -- the perception it invites -- is that the owner of this building and the people of the community around it don't care if the window is broken. They have given up and anarchy reigns here. Do as you will, because nobody cares."Throughout his riveting narrative, Levine cites hundreds of workplace situations which send "signals that no one is watching." At least not consciously, perhaps, but many of them are absorbed and retained in the subconscious mind.As I was well into reading this book, I thought about the only local car wash which my wife and I patronize. The pricing is competitive. What differentiates it from its competition?

This book reinforces some solid business concepts which you probably have read or heard about previously. The basic logic is that little things count and is best summed up in an old rhyme or proverbFor want of a nail the shoe was lost.For want of a shoe the horse was lost.For want of a horse the rider was lost.For want of a rider the battle was lost.For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.The title and the logic is borrowed from an article published by criminologists George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson in the Atlantic Journal, March 1982 ([...] Malcolm Gladwell addressed this concept very cogently and interestingly in his best seller - The Tipping Point. (Now that IS a five star book).Levine references a large number of corporations to illustrate the impact or fixing / not fixing broken windows. Although the publication date suggests November 2005, this book must have gone to press a long time prior to that. He castigates McDonald's for failure to implement the basics and states if Ray Kroc were to return today, he would die of embarrassment. That might have been accurate three years ago but not today. Indeed, the hamburger giant is now a poster child for the author's argument. It has made a dramatic effort to fix its broken windows including better food quality (quality is relative folks), much cleaner, fresher restaurants and a determined effort to make customers more welcome. It is because McDonald's has fixed many of its broken windows that it can now present consistent and substantial same store

sales growth for the past three years.

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