

Books by the Stack

10TH-ANNIVERSARY EDITION
REVISED AND UPDATED WITH NEW CHAPTERS

SMALL GIANTS



Companies That Choose to
Be Great Instead of Big

BO BURLINGHAM

Author of *Large, Public, and Creative: The Great Game of Business*

"This well-written book should inspire thousands of entrepreneurs to take a
stealthy path to growth by growing slowly in line of a passionate dedication
to knowing the customer. The Burlington records are a great model."
—The New York Times
"Bo Burlingham is a great writer and a great man."
—The Wall Street Journal

Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Great Instead of Big by Bo Burlingham

In business, it's grow or die. Or is it? In this eye-opening book, Inc. Magazine editor Burlingham shows us a third way: the way of the Small Giants, companies that chose to be 'great instead of big.' Small Giants make a choice to stay small, but build great lives for founders, workers and customers. The book's stories take us to Buffalo, New York, San Francisco, Boise, even back to Michigan, with Ann Arbor's own Zingerman's Community of Business. This book presents a new way of thinking about business that has the potential to change the working lives of all of us.

Why you'll like it: *Entrepreneurship, business, community*

About the Author: Bo Burlingham is an Editor-At-Large at Inc. Magazine. He has written multiple books, including the Great Game of Business and A Stake in the Outcome with Jack Stack, CEO of Springfield Remanufacturing Corp. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts with his family.

Questions for discussion

1. This book was chosen by Mayor Bliss in her State of the City address as the Book of the Year for 2017. Why do you think it's important for the City of Grand Rapids to read this book?
2. Burlingham believes that the purpose of business is to help you lead to the life you want. Do you think that's true? If not, what is the purpose of business to you?
3. Companies that are great seem to have great educational and training initiatives. Why would that be? Have you benefited from a company training or education program? How did it change your working life?
4. We live in an era of hyper-fast change. How do Small Giants cope with change/ How do most companies do so?
5. Some businesses create rave-worthy experiences. Can you name a business here in Grand Rapids that made you want to tell everyone how great they were? What was your experience with them, and what was compelling about it?
6. For Air Weinzwieg and Paul Saginaw of Zingerman's, the path to becoming a Small Giant began with a question: "Where will we be in ten years?" Do most businesses think like this? What long-term questions should a company ask, and why don't they?
7. Danny Meyer said that his restaurant group runs on 'enlightened hospitality.' What does that mean? What Grand Rapids businesses run this way?
8. One of the big ideas of this book is the 'Mona Lisa' principle, that geography reflects the 'flavor' of a business. How does the flavor of West Michigan affect the way we do business?
9. A few Small Giants are 'communities of businesses' like Righteous Babe or the Zingerman's CoB. Do you think this makes a business more resilient? Isn't specialization the key to a successful business?
10. What are the benefits when a company and customer share a common mission?

- 11.** Part of being a Small Giant is having a mission, a higher purpose usually outlined in a mission or vision statement. Have you worked in a company with a vision statement? If so, how did it guide decisions?
- 12.** How does a company, for good or ill, create its culture? What experiences have you had with company culture? Did it positively or negatively affect your work experience in a given role?
- 13.** In what ways do you believe business can be art? And is it better to make art out of a business, or use business to create art?



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