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Corps Business: The 30 Management Principles of the U.S. Marines

David H. Freedman

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CORPS BUSINESS

DAVID H. FREEDMAN

Foreword by GEN. CHARLES C. KRULAK,
Thirty-First Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps

"For the current business world . . . the Marines do indeed have a better idea." — *Wall Street Journal*

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David H. Freedman : Corps Business: The 30 Management Principles of the U.S. Marines before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Corps Business: The 30 Management Principles of the U.S. Marines:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Second CopyBy Richard Mclaughlinthis is the second copy that I bought for myself. I used to work for Microsoft, and while there I bought 30 copies for my team and made it a required reading. there are some things not taught in the business world today that the Marine Corps teaches even its youngest members - like taking direction and doing what's best to reach the final objective. I am tired of my present team coming to me and asking for instructions on Every Single Thing.Recommended to any new college grad, new

manager, new director or person new to a business. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of my favorites of all time
By Wryfox
This is one of my favorite books, a great guide for new leaders. I particularly like the simple aspects like its not good enough to plan for success, you have to plan to avoid failure. That lesson alone has served me well in leadership positions over the past 20 yrs. I have just bought this book again (4th or 5th time now I think) because whenever I loan it out, it never comes back.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Practical Approach to Planning
By Randy
Corps Business is an entertaining read. I was turned on to the book by our corporate attorney a few years ago. It provides a practical approach to the anxieties and pitfalls of planning. It provides guidance on how much planning is enough and provides clear insight into the do's and don'ts of planning. An interesting side benefit is the insight it sheds on the Marine Corps for those who might not be familiar with the organization. This book applies to anyone. This last copy I bought went to the minister in training in our congregation who is struggling with planning programs and events.

Fast. Motivated. Hard-hitting. That's what every business wants to be. And that's why the U.S. Marines excel in every mission American throws at them, no matter how tough the odds. In *Corps Business*, journalist David H. Freedman identifies the Marine's simple but devastatingly effective principles for managing people and resources -- and ultimately winning. Freedman discusses such techniques as "the rule of three," "managing by end state," and the "70% solution," to show how they can be applied to business solutions.

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Several business bestsellers in recent years have been books about warfare strategy and tactics. Sun Tsu's *Art of War* and Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* are titles widely recommended for insight and inspiration preparatory to corporate battle. In *Corps Business*, author David Freedman examines the organization and culture of the United States Marine Corps and sees "the best management training program in America." For this book Freedman, a senior editor at *Forbes* ASAP and author of *Brainmakers*, trained with the Corps and interviewed scores of marines of every rank to discover 31 management principles "built around simple truths about human nature and the uncertainties of dynamic environments.... The Marines are used to facing entrenched enemies, short time-frames, chaotic conflicts, and unfavorable terrain --all of which have come to be hallmarks of the New Economy." Some of the ideas that Freedman encountered include Principle No. 1: "Aim for the 70-percent solution. It's better to decide quickly on an imperfect plan than to roll out a perfect plan when it's too late"; Principle No. 13: "Manage by end state and intent. Tell people what needs to be accomplished and why, and leave the details to them"; and Principle No. 21: "Establish a core identity. Everyone in the organization should feel they're performing an aspect of the same job." It's hard to argue with two centuries of battlefield success, and the wisdom and time-tested management philosophy dissected here should be a valuable prescriptive for any organization hell-bent on winning. --Scott Harrison
"An excellent book...David Freedman's analysis of the management principles of the U.S. Marine Corps offers a compelling guide...Reading it reminded me how much I have relied upon what I learned in the Marine Corps to build FedEx." -- Frederick W. Smith, founder and chairman, Federal Express
"On the complex, asymmetrical battlefields of the 21st Century, effective decentralized control and execution will be essential to mission success. The Corps has acknowledged this reality and has reinvigorated its efforts to prepare Marines with the leadership skills needed to deal with the high-stake challenges of the three block war...Mr. Freedman accurately captures the essence of Marine Corps leadership and thoroughly describes our unique approach to leadership training. Clearly, there is common ground between Marine leadership and business management." -- General Charles C. Krulak, 31st Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps
"This outstanding work reveals the leadership secrets that make the Marine Corps the world's most motivated and successful organization. The lessons are universally applicable." -- Robert A. Lutz, CEO, Exide Corp., and former president, Chrysler Corp.
David Freedman would like to see some martial virtue enter the equation. In "Corps Business," he writes about a young Marine sergeant on leave visiting a friend at his workplace. "I met a manager there who didn't know the names of all his employees," the astonished Marine told him. In the Marines, immediate superiors know not only the names of their subordinates but the names of their subordinates' family members as well. Mr. Freedman -- who interviewed more than 100 Marines of all ranks and observed them in training -- believes that business enterprises could benefit from Marine values. These include sacrifice, perseverance, integrity, commitment and loyalty. For the current business world -- where a firm's loyalty extends to only the next downsizing effort and an employee's to only the next vesting date -- it would seem as if the Marines do indeed have a better idea. One of the strategies the Marines use is called "authority on demand." That is: allowing someone at the lowest ranks to make decisions under critical circumstances. Mr. Freedman cites an example from the Gulf War, where a corporal's squad was pinned down by an Iraqi machine-gunner. Without checking with higher-ups, he took half his squad around the gunner's side and took him out by surprise. It was a kind of "drive-by shooting," the corporal (a native of East Los Angeles) explained later, triumphantly. Certain firms could benefit from initiative like that. --
The Wall Street Journal, 01/31/2000
About the Author
David H. Freedman is a journalist specializing in business and technology. He is a senior editor at *Forbes* ASAP, and his work has appeared in *Inc.*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *New York Times*, *Wired*, *Science*, and the *Harvard Business* . He is the author of two critically acclaimed books on

artificial intelligence and (with Charles C. Mann) on computer hacking.