

To lowan, nature explains business

Biz Buzz



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Tom Porter's new business book has an unusual chapter about boards of directors.

The book is "All I Need To Know About Business I Learned from a Duck."

The chapter about directors begins with the story of the scorpion that asks a frog to carry him across a pond. The frog is afraid of being stung. The scorpion explains that if the frog is stung both would sink and drown. The frog agrees. Halfway across the pond, the scorpion stings the frog. Why, asks the frog. The answer: "I'm a scorpion, it's my nature."

Scorpions have changed little in 400 million years, Porter notes. "So until we find a sure-fire way to keep them out of top management positions, the best thing we can do to protect shareholders is to place elf owls and lizards (scorpions' natural enemies) on the board of directors of publicly held companies."



Porter

Porter, a Des Moines marketing and branding expert, said he wrote the lessons to help improve business ethics.

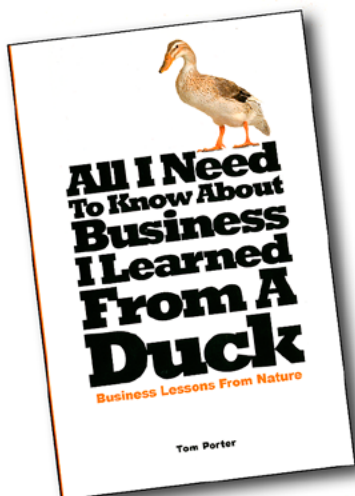
Each lesson is one page long and begins with a story or fable from nature that is the basis for a business lesson.

For example, the chapter on managing says that humpback whales have a technique called "bubble feeding" in which several whales surround a school of herring and begin swimming in a circle below the herring, "blowing bubbles and making vocalizations that panic the herring and condense the school."

A cylinder-shaped curtain of bubbles creates a wall through which the herring will not pass, he writes. Then, the whales "explode like missiles from the deep with mouths open gorging on herring."

From this, Porter presents three short business lessons:

"(1) It is important to think as one team (2) Teams are most effective if the group works on a one single concept and (3) Clear communication among participants is crucial to success."



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

This collection of business lessons was written by Des Moines marketing authority Tom Porter.