

**BUSINESS**

Casual

**Business books: The Last Link; The Big Book of Small Business**

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By JIM PAWLAK / Special to The Dallas Morning News

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The Last Link

**Gregg Crawford** (Greenleaf Group Book Press, \$21.95)

A chain is as strong as its weakest link, which most business-to-business sellers believe is cost structure.

The real weakest link: sales strategy. Most companies think: Make the sale at all cost, and keep the customer satisfied. It should be: Execute a profitable sales strategy while keeping the customer satisfied.

Mr. Crawford introduces a 3-D approach to sales strategy – data, dialogue and discipline.

**Data:** You need margin detail; without it, you can't manage pricing. Include the effects of prompt payment discounts, warranty extensions, expedited shipping, etc.

**Dialogue:** Salespeople need the data for negotiations. Counter price with value.

**Discipline:** Require a plan for every prospect and customer. No winging it. It forces the salesperson to prepare.

The Big Book

of Small Business

**Tom Gegax with Phil Bolsta** (Collins, \$29.95)

This book's nine sections contain common-sense refreshers that cover every aspect of running a business. Each section is broken into chapters readable in five minutes.

Of particular interest is a chapter on "Growing the Culture." It summarizes creating team spirit:

- If everyone thinks alike, then no one is thinking. People need to value diverse perspectives. It builds "team ego."
- Talk the walk. Forget the "I" in conversations about what needs to be done; it's "we."
- Hire team players.
- Reward team spirit. Incentives should be based on team achievement, not just individual performance.
- Embody team spirit. Look for and listen to feedback. Share ownership of decisions.

Jim Pawlak reviews business books for The Dallas Morning News.

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