

The Business Sergeant's FIELD MANUAL



Military Grade Business Execution
Without the Yelling and Push-ups

★ CHRIS HALLBERG ★

FOREWORD

I'm so glad and proud that Chris has invested the time to share his experience and this powerful message with you.

This book is a rare treat. At EOS Worldwide, we have almost 200 extraordinary EOS Implementers around the world who work hands-on with their clients, helping them implement EOS in their businesses. By fully implementing EOS® (The Entrepreneurial Operating System®) in their businesses, our clients realize amazing results: growth, better life balance, increased profits, and the ability to make a huge impact on their employees, their customers, and the world.

Every one of our EOS Implementers has their own style that makes them unique. Chris Hallberg is truly one of our best EOS Implementers. The reason this book is a rare treat is that Chris shares his real-world life experience and stories of how his clients have benefited from EOS and his uncommon background.

Chris's military, law enforcement, and business background, along with his intense, disciplined, fun and energetic style, makes for a thrilling experience for his clients and for you as the reader.

Chris shares his extensive, emotional, and inspiring background with stories, insights, and teaching that have made him who he is.

This book will help you become a more disciplined leader and build a great organization.

Enjoy!

Gino Wickman

Author of *Traction* and Creator of EOS Worldwide

INTRODUCTION

ENLISTING TO BECOME A BUSINESS SERGEANT

A-ten-tion!

My name is Chris Hallberg, and I'm known in entrepreneurial circles as the "Business Sergeant." As a leadership and management coach to entrepreneurs and their leadership teams, my job is to help you get control of your business, so you can achieve your mission—it's that simple. How do I do that? By distilling the best practices of military and para-military organizations and helping you apply them to your business. I believe that a military team-building mindset plus a proven business operating system = a better, faster, and more predictable way to achieve business success.

The military has a system for everything, and those systems can help you harness the energy of your employees and lead them to greatness. This book is simply a modified version of that military training, designed to help entrepreneurs of small and medium sized businesses, their leaders and managers, and even much larger organizations in the corporate world. These concepts apply in any field to gain optimal performance from their business. Because without a proven system, I find it's very difficult to consistently run a business of any size successfully.

To be clear, *The Business Sergeant's Field Manual* is not about my career in elite military units and all the unbelievable things I did in the most dangerous places in the world. The world already has several of those kinds of books and amazing heroes. Rather, this book is about how I've successfully borrowed and adapted many strategies, tools, and lessons from my military and law enforcement leadership training, and adapted these concepts with great success during my nearly 20 years in leadership roles in the business world.

My clients asked me to write this book because they loved the Business Sergeant mentality I brought to their business problems. They thought other entrepreneurs and business leaders would appreciate my "no-nonsense, let's-get-it-done" perspective at a time when leadership and management are woefully lacking in the workplace. Because of their encouragement and support, I will now share my methods with you.

The whole point of the Business Sergeant mentality is to build a powerful and dynamic team that provides results, not excuses. The reason why people are disengaged at work is because most managers and senior leaders are generally inept at effective leadership (and can be oblivious to this fact). But when you're very intentional about the type of unit you want to create and the goals you want to reach, you can create a cohesive workforce where your staff will want to re-enlist every quarter, voluntarily and happily.

You should think of this book as a reference guide, a field manual, a handbook of field-tested best practices that you'll be referring to over and over again during the course of your entrepreneurial journey. In the military, we don't teach something to a soldier only once. We teach it to them a hundred times, so they know exactly what to do when they're in a difficult and stressful situation. They've been trained in a system and they know exactly how to put that training into action—especially when times get tough.

The best Sergeants know their job inside out. In the military, we call it being technically and tactically proficient. They lead from the front, they earn the respect of their troops, they're very approachable, and they're not afraid to get their hands dirty. They are ultimately responsible for the health and welfare of their team and the execution and success of any mission. Entrepreneurs and business leaders really need to have that kind of mindset to succeed in the business world.

Like a lot of young people, I desperately needed some discipline and accountability when I graduated from high school. And like most young men lacking direction, the military gave me the focus to harness my energy. It gave me a framework for life that empowered me to operate at a high level of excellence, rather than just trying to figure it out or wing it as I went along.

I enlisted at 17 (with Mom and Dad's signature on the age waiver). I served for nine years as an M.P. in the Army National Guard in the 34th Military Police Company, rising to the position of Squad Leader at the rank of Staff Sergeant.

During my nine-year, part-time military career in the National Guard, I became a corrections officer at a super maximum security correctional facility in Minnesota for violent felons, the worst of the worst, so to speak. Not a place where you could let your guard down, even for a minute. I learned a ton from that experience, mostly about following process to the letter, understanding and respecting other people, watching body language, "feeling" the mood or direction of the day, because if you were to misjudge a potentially dangerous

situation building or disrespect the wrong person on the wrong day that could be your last day on the job or on this planet. Very high stakes on a day-to-day basis for several years of my life.

From my experience in the military and as a correctional officer, I saw the difference between Non-Commissioned Officers (Corporals to Command Sergeant Majors) and Commissioned Officers (Lieutenants to Generals) who were respected and those who were not. I prided myself on being a dedicated, squared-away leader, which is why I got my Sergeant stripes a few years early at age 21. I succeeded because I was 100% committed to being a leader. In a business setting your troops will take their cues from your consistent day-in-and-out dedication, one of your most important priorities as a Business Sergeant.

After leaving both uniforms in 1999, I started a sales career in the home improvement industry, first selling exterior remodeling for a remodeling company. As a sales representative, I closed well over a million dollars of remodeling in each year. As a sales manager, I helped a remodeling company grow from \$3 million in sales to \$8 million in sales in three years, and a restoration company grow from \$9 million in sales to \$20 million in one year.

How did I make that happen? I was simply using the same leadership style I picked up in the Army and the Department of Corrections, and it's the same leadership style I'll be teaching you.

And, like any entrepreneur, I've also had my setbacks and failures. So, part of my success is based on having rebounded and learned from those failures, making sure they didn't repeat themselves in my future business endeavors.

During my time in the military and law enforcement, I paid close attention to my people. That was my job, because I was in leadership positions almost the whole way. I learned a ton about what makes people tick and how to get them moving in the right direction. In short, I learned how to lead and manage people in challenging, often dangerous circumstances, where there was little or no margin for error.

As a business coach, I've been able to translate those leadership lessons and teach them to other business owners and leaders. And the essence of leadership is following and carefully executing a system, day in and day out. To apply this military mindset effectively, to harness the power of this Business Sergeant attitude, you need to adopt a business operating system.

You'd be surprised at how many businesses—even large businesses that have been around for years—don't have an operating system. They don't know how to hire the right people. They don't have a vision to inspire their people. They don't have a brand that sets them apart from the crowd. They don't know how to keep track of their numbers or use their sales force in the most efficient ways.

Without a system to keep you on track, it's very difficult to get better at executing. But if you apply a military-grade execution strategy at your business, you'll put together a plan that makes sense, anticipates contingencies, and ensures you have the right resources. You'll have the right people in the right seats, and everyone on your team will know precisely what their individual roles and responsibilities are. When you do that, your chances of executing to a higher standard are much, much greater.

As a business owner, everything must be systematized to make sure you're best serving your employees and clients, period. As a Business Sergeant, you must manage and interact with every aspect of your business, from where the marketing conversation begins to final execution and another referral. I've yet to see a business that can't be helped by installing a business operating system, where prioritizing and accountability are made visible and systematic. The systems I followed in uniform helped turn grey into black and white and made critical decision making easier and faster than without them. When I was helping a particularly troubled client in a turn-around of his construction business, I stumbled upon a business operating system that a peer was using with great success.

This operating system is EOS® (Entrepreneurial Operating System®), created by my now good friend Gino Wickman. Gino shows readers the entire system in his bestselling book *Traction, Get a Grip on Your Business* published by BenBella Books. After researching EOS, plus the two or three other popular business operating systems on the market, I concluded that all my clients moving forward would have to commit to an operating system, a framework, or scaffolding to help us get our arms around the whole thing. Because I felt EOS was the simplest to understand and implement, and in my opinion the most holistic, that is the one that I chose to work with.

You will read quite a few specific references to EOS (www.eosworldwide.com) in this book; keep in mind that to fully understand EOS or another operating system, you'll need to put in the time to implement the operating system purely as it was intended—not piecemeal—as the system only works optimally

when you've done it correctly. While I wholeheartedly endorse this masterful system, I understand that another system might be a better fit for you, so not to be pushy or sales-y to you, I'll just refer generically to "Business Operating System" or "Operating System". You'll see just a few of the many EOS tools in action in some of the chapters, along with some simple tools that I created that dovetail with the EOS tools.

I'll also share some client stories of their experiences working with me as their EOS Implementer™. I currently spend the majority of my time teaching EOS with around 20 clients at any given time. Following the proven EOS Process™ where I get together with the leadership team for 10 full-day, off-site sessions, plus coaching as needed between those quarterly sessions over about a two-year time frame.

But first, as the team leader, you need to fortify yourself with some military-grade business logic that's going to allow you to conquer any business hill you want to assault. That's what this book is all about—to get you thinking in military terms whether or not you're part of the small percentage (around 7% of Americans) who have served, or the vast majority who have never worn a uniform.

Why is thinking in military terms so important? Because, to put it simply, business is war. Please consider the following statistics, especially if you're considering going out on your own as an entrepreneur for the first time:

- **Eight out of ten entrepreneurs who start businesses fail within the first 18 months.¹**
- **"There is recent research by Harvard University's Shikhar Ghosh that three out of every four venture-backed firms fail."²**

To say that business is war is not just a statement. It's a mindset. Your competitors are literally battling you for the same dollar, and while they're not firing bullets they are firing marketing messages like commercials and online ads, they are executing sales calls with powerful sales presentations that close business and take clients off the market. How are you going to respond? How do you compete with these people on the field of business battle? It's up to you to put the right tools of business war—the right business weapons essentially—in the hands of your troops, and to make sure they know how to use them effectively.

Forbes magazine recently offered testimony to this type of approach with the following declaration: "Leadership in the 21st century requires mental

¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2002-03-03/the-bottom-line-on-startup-failures>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2014/01/27/do-9-out-of-10-new-businesses-fail-as-rand-paul-claims>

toughness, stamina, and patience. Being a market leader demands a new breed of leadership that can withstand the punishment of the daily grind and the people pressures along the way.”³

A Business Sergeant is exactly that kind of leader—he or she has the toughness, stamina, and patience to recruit the right troops and develop them to reach their fullest potential. I read somewhere that someone once asked legendary entrepreneur Richard Branson, “How do you motivate your best employees?” He replied, “That’s easy. My very best employees are already motivated. My job is to find people who are already motivated and get the hell out of their way!”



Please note: when I say, “business is war,” and make other military comparisons, I certainly don’t intend to offend anyone in uniform or out of uniform. Please understand that I’m using military terminology and systems to create a foundation for your business success. I have the utmost respect for my nation’s military and especially for those who have shed blood in defense of our liberties. Starting a new business or running an existing one is nothing close to the stakes you face fighting in combat for our country. Like most soldiers, I believe war is a tragedy and an absolute last resort.

Having said that, if you’ve ever failed badly in business (Again... most people do!) you might wish you were dead, because it’s a very dark place that requires lots of soul searching, reflection, and putting the pieces back together mentally and financially to gain the confidence to take another run up that hill.

The best businesses in the world are made up of small units and teams of “A players” that use tested systems to excel in performance. You may know very little or nothing about the military, but why not learn from the U.S. military, one of the most effective team builders in the world?

The kind of Sergeant I’m talking about in this book is *NOT* a Drill Sergeant who is belittling, berating, or yelling at people. My approach is *NOT* about breaking people down to build them back up. What I’m advocating is *the mentality and mindset* of a senior unit Sergeant, a coach, a mentor, an expert with a lot of answers for your junior people. A mindset that says, “We’re going to start building our highly professional team from day one, and anybody who doesn’t want to be part of that team is not in the right place. We’ll help you find the right unit if this one isn’t right for you.”

³ http://www.glennllopolis.com/online_certification/the_dangers_of_complacent_leadership

The Business Sergeant's Field Manual lays out its strategy by looking at core issues that every business leader faces, described in eleven chapters. Each chapter contains core lessons I've learned over the years, followed by a detailed look at how I worked with business clients ranging in size from \$1 million to over \$500 million in annual sales on the issues discussed in the chapter. Finally, I'll share some simple tools (some I've created, some are from EOS®) and action steps at the end of the chapter, which you can use immediately to put my suggestions into action.

Here's a look at how I organized this book:

CHAPTER ONE ★ Are You Committed?

As a business leader and owner who has led troops and team members, one immutable lesson has stood out for me among all others: ARE YOU COMMITTED? That's a question you'll need to ask yourself before you even think of asking it of your troops. Having a committed team will help create an environment that is both passionate and profitable for your company. But it starts with you, as a leader, having a passion for your work and complete commitment to your people.

When your team members share that same vision and drive, and you have full buy-in from your team, you've liberated the hidlers and cut loose the dead weight. They see that you've made long-term decisions based on culture over profit, and that level of commitment by the owner will start to be reflected back to you by your employees.

CHAPTER TWO ★ Leadership: Are You a Leader Worth Following?

One of my favorite business quotes: "All businesses are only one leadership team away from extinction." (Author Unknown) That, in my opinion, is so true—a couple of wrong decisions and you're dead. You can't unwind it, you're just done. Just like most airplane crashes are usually the result of three or four bad decisions strung together, and not just one big mistake, going out of business also usually happens after "enough" bad calls are made.

Great leaders have an operating system and enforce accountability through consequences. Great leaders are consistent and fair, direct and decisive. Great leaders inspire and help people grow. Great leaders put their people first and park their egos at the door. Great leaders nurture talent and build the next generation of leaders who will follow in their place. Great leadership is the foundation on which all business success is built.

CHAPTER THREE ★ One Team, One Vision

Vision is all about creating that “bigger-than-ourselves” moment, because people really want to be part of something special, something larger than themselves, and being part of a winning team can be just as sweet as individual success. But if the vision is uninspiring, it will be very difficult to get anyone to follow you or to gain any traction in your business.

You need your employees to be as fired up about your passion as you are. That fire is fueled by your company’s vision.

In the armed forces, a long-held credo weaves its way through every branch of service—a unit is only as strong as the person to the left or right of you. As a business owner, you want employees working for you with every fiber of their being, who are nearly as passionate and committed as you are (nobody cares as much as the people with the everything on the line...). To create that culture of reliability among your team of troops, you must start with an inspired, vivid, and shared company vision.

CHAPTER FOUR ★ How to Build a Strong Culture: Slow to Hire

Culture in the military is called *esprit de corps*. In the business world, it means defining who we are, what we do, why we do what we do, and ideally, fostering pride of the team or company we all belong to. A great culture is one where your employees will police themselves internally because they really value being part of a unit of like-minded people, and they want to protect what you have built together, because it’s so valuable to them and you.

That’s the mindset soldiers have: we’re all in it together, all working toward the same goal of being the best. An intentional culture can inspire the same loyalty in your business and make your people *THINK BIG, GO BIG*, and ultimately *BE BIG!* They’re willing to put in 100% to achieve the goal you’ve helped them visualize. Building that type of culture is something that takes an immense amount of effort. It begins with being very selective about who you hire. Be unrelenting in your vision to find the right people for the right seats, and to do that you have to create a culture that rests on high trust and high performance.

CHAPTER FIVE ★ Accountability: Quick to Fire

High accountability = high execution. If we're accountable to each other, if we have a culture of accountability, then when somebody says they're going to do something, it gets done. Your people are essentially putting their names, reputations, and ability to execute on the line. When we have high levels of accountability, we're not worried if your teammates will get things done if they said they would.

To build accountability, it's vital to set the bar high at the start and then *leave it there*. One of main points in this field manual is that if you stop lowering the bar, your company will start to perform at a higher level.

This involves creating an environment that's open and honest, where there's no retribution for speaking the truth. When you have a system in place for helping identify mistakes, that presents the opportunity to correct them, coach the correct response that you want, and check-ins to see if that remedial training has worked, your people won't feel bad about making mistakes, because that is how we'll all get better together. Mistakes are OK, as long as they are not repeated over and over again, so you'll need to have clear consequences for any habitual failures in performance.

CHAPTER SIX ★ Marketing and Branding

For your business to not only survive but thrive, it needs both marketing and branding. But they are NOT the same thing and are commonly confused as being so. Your brand is the key to attracting consumer interest, from how it makes them feel to buy your product, to how they talk about your brand afterwards to other potential customers when you are not around. How you market that brand and reach and engage new customers is what determines how successful your business will be—it's that simple.

Your brand is your *unique value to the world*, it's what you stand for. Your customer should clearly understand how and why you do it better than the competition, and why they need to be talking to you over your many competitors. What kind of experience will your customers have with your brand that will make customers continue to give you repeat business, and tell others about how amazing you are?

CHAPTER SEVEN ★ Sales and Sales Management

Sales are the life blood of any organization: without them, you will soon have no company. I've found that those businesses that have sales problems usually have a bunch of other problems too. Even my clients who have more sales than they know what to do with often lack an effective sales management process, which means lost business.

Often overlooked is that selling and managing sales people are two very different specialties that require very different talents. Companies will often make their top salesperson the sales manager, the wheels come off, and they wonder why. To make the distinction clear: a sales manager is somebody who spends approximately a third of their time training their sales people, another third of their time holding them accountable for the results of that training, and the last third of their time recruiting new sales people to replace those who can't meet the standard.

CHAPTER EIGHT ★ Know Your Numbers!

You may not believe this, but a lot of business owners don't really know their numbers. They just operate on gut feeling, a dangerously ignorant way to do business.

If you don't know your numbers, then you're sitting on what I call the Chaos/Control Meter, which in business is ALWAYS ticking! If somebody's business is at 0 on the meter, they have a system in place for everything, they've automated it with technology, and a solid process is consistently followed by all. If you go up to a 10 on the scale, it means (literally) that there's a wad of cash in a desk drawer that people can grab whenever they want with little or no accounting oversight.

Most companies rank at 4 or 5 on Chaos/Control Meter. They can be functional. But to truly excel, you need financial controls, systems, policies, and procedures to make most of the chaos go away. Until then, you'll be in a kind of free-for-all where a lot of avoidable mistakes will be made. And those mistakes can be very costly.

CHAPTER NINE ★ Mission Execution (GSD)

Execution should be the expectation, not the exception to the rule. That's the bottom line: *in business, execution is paramount!* I believe vision is sold by the pound, and there's an unlimited supply of it. Great business traction or execution is sold by the carat—it's scarce and very valuable. Great business execution is rare and it takes a lot of work to achieve it. You need to commit to being great at executing, and you continue to get better at it by tracking how many of your weekly to-dos are getting ta-done.

CHAPTER TEN ★ You'll Need Some Help!

A lot of business owners have trouble letting go of control and delegating down the chain, which can have dangerous consequences. Wearing too many hats can be detrimental to your company's performance. If you make the smart move and reach out to strategic partners who are experts in their specific fields, you will prevent headaches, wasted time, inefficiency, and, most importantly, wasted money. Seeking out partners allows you to scale your business without disturbing its core, while adding complementing capacities and capabilities. You can also outsource something and see if you like it before taking it in-house.

As the Business Sergeant, remember that augmenting your forces with allies from outside the company—otherwise know in military terms as an “Attachment”—can be more efficient than training a whole new platoon of privates. By working with a network of strategic partners, you're expanding your capabilities and adding new areas of expertise that you can offer clients, as well as saving time, money, and frustration in the process.

CHAPTER ELEVEN ★ Take Care of #1

The last lesson in *The Business Sergeant's Field Manual* is also the most important: it's absolutely vital that you routinely take the focus OFF your business and put it ON your life away from the office. What is your Number one thing in life? It's usually not your business. (Even though it can feel like it if you're not careful...)

Huh? Is that really part of the military mindset? Yes, it is—it's the same philosophy that drove the military to create the concept of leave time, so soldiers could spend quality time back home with their loved ones and be reminded of what they're really fighting for.

Spending quality time with family and friends and chasing your passions outside of work keeps you and your home life healthy, and that is mission-critical to be truly healthy at work. In contrast, overworked entrepreneurs and business leaders who wear too many hats and spend too many hours at the office will suffer both personally and professionally in the long run.

The Business Sergeant's Field Manual is about how to gain the confidence, focus, business skill, and fortitude to transform an average business into an exceptional one. If you spend a few hours reading this book, you'll have added a single chevron (Stripe) to your arm. If you master *everything* in this book, you have a whole arm of chevrons, and people will notice those! You'll be a real Business Sergeant and will have the mindset, team, and tools to be really hard to contain. Using the approaches I suggest, you'll win a lot more on the business battlefield.

Now, let's get started!



Captain Obvious says: If you're looking to build strong leadership in your business, I highly recommend hiring a former military leader because they already get all this stuff! There are all kinds of veterans transitioning out of the military who possess extensive leadership experience.

Non-Profit programs like hireheroesusa.org and americandreamu.org, and veteran job websites like VetJobs.com and Military.com can supply you with leads. So, if you like this book's concepts and approaches, go out and hire some veterans who were great leaders in the military. They'll most likely be top performers for you, and your chances of getting to your end goal are going to be much greater than with people who haven't been tested like they have.



NOTES

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper is otherwise completely empty, with no margins, text, or other markings.



ACTION ITEMS

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



There's a big difference between having a leadership title and being a confident, respected, and effective leader. Chris Hallberg's *Business Sergeant's Field Manual* is written for business owners and leaders who need a hand with the day to day rigors of operating a successful business. If you're committed to leading, then this book will help you get where you want to go, and it will give you the tools you need to get there.

The *Field Manual* is a crucial weapon in the arsenal of any small business leader whose spirit is willing. Chris brings decades of military, paramilitary, and entrepreneurial management experience to bear and delivers a no-nonsense, easy-to-follow handbook full of operational advice that, if applied, will help you make the kind of change that can right a listing ship, or propel a fledgling startup into star-bound success.

Inside you'll find 82 Real world lessons covering topics such as:

- ★ COMMITMENT
- ★ LEADERSHIP
- ★ SHARED VISION
- ★ ACCOUNTABILITY
- ★ CULTURE
- ★ SALES & SALES MANAGEMENT
- ★ MARKETING & BRANDING
- ★ UNDERSTANDING FINANCIALS
- ★ EXECUTION
- ★ STRATEGIC PARTNERS
- ★ WORK-LIFE BALANCE
- ★ DOWNLOADABLE TOOLS



Chris Hallberg spends the majority of his time "In the trenches" helping business owners and their leaders execute their mission with military precision. He lives in Denver Colorado with his wife and two sons.

ISBN 978-0-9991018-0-3



9 780999 101803



WWW.BIZSGT.COM