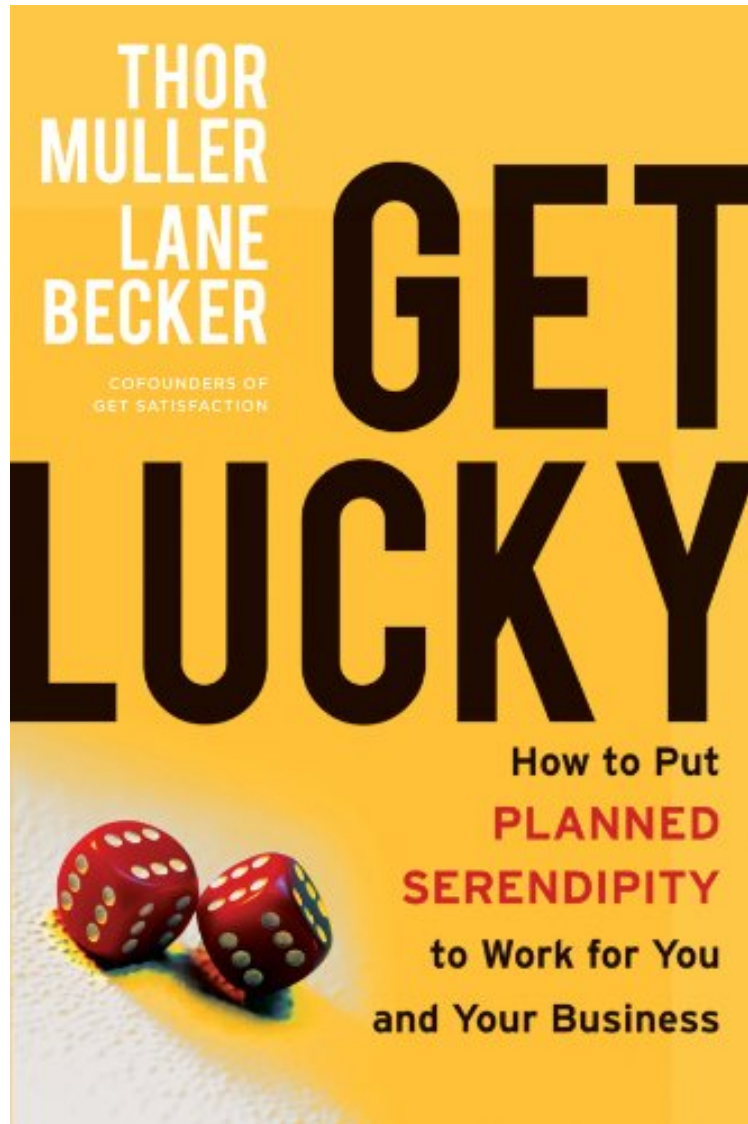


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Get Lucky: How to Put Planned Serendipity to Work for You and Your Business

Thor Muller, Lane Becker

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Thor Muller, Lane Becker : Get Lucky: How to Put Planned Serendipity to Work for You and Your Business before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Get Lucky: How to Put Planned Serendipity to Work for You and Your Business:

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful. The distilled wisdom of entrepreneursBy Alan F. SewellI've been "lucky" in many aspects of life, one of the most rewarding of which has been to work for, as an employee or independent consultant, some wonderfully creative and successful businesses. I've worked for startup companies that

have grown from one-person shops to become renowned global enterprises with hundreds of employees. I've worked for self-made business owners who did not let their upbringings in humble circumstances prevent them becoming multimillionaires. I've seen firsthand many characteristics of successful business people including extraordinary intelligence, mental flexibility that rapidly adapts to changing business conditions, highly specialized knowledge of a particular industrial or commercial niche, a love of their field of endeavor, absolute confidence in themselves and the products and services they provide, a spirit of fairness, positive expectations, a passion for excellence, and the ability to instill these qualities in a team of employees through inspired leadership. If you break it down to the "nth degree" there are thousands of traits that work together to create a successful business. Maybe that's why there are thousands of business books that explain them. But there's one more aspect of business that doesn't get talked about a lot, and that's "serendipity." Authors Thor Muller and Lane Becker define "serendipity" as:=====The best kind of luck--that creative force known as serendipity--is the luck that we attract to ourselves. To explain how planned serendipity works, we need to start with our own simple definition of serendipity, which we'll use from this point forward: serendipity is chance interacting with creativity.=====Decades ago I heard a self-made millionaire who had risen from very humble circumstances explain it that way. He said, "Eighty percent of our product lines don't sell. Twenty percent make us our profits. We never know beforehand what's going to sell and what isn't. We capitalize on the serendipity of discovering products that appeal to our customers and then concentrating our efforts behind them." I think he was making the point that he could only manage the inputs and the outputs of the business to a limited degree. This was a fashion business, and fashions are impossible to predict ahead of time. He succeeded because he managed everything that could be managed and then let "serendipity" take him the rest of the way. This book defines the characteristics that are prerequisite to making "serendipity" happen in your business. Some of them are:

1. Follow your heart's desire. Each person succeeds to the maximum when they pursue their unique skills. Of course not many people pursue their true callings because that involves risk. It is less risky to work a 9 to 5 job for somebody else than to risk going out on your own to follow YOUR unique callings. But no one achieves their full measure of success unless they are willing to do so. That doesn't mean that everybody should strike out on their own business because not everybody has that calling. But those who do must have the courage to follow it.
2. Do it. You only get better by doing something. A batter learns to hit by swinging at thousands of pitches. Taking action fully engages the conscious and subconscious mind to the task. The best people in their respective fields develop conscious thoughts and subconscious instincts that allow them to raise their performance to levels they never dreamed possible. Business owners are like that too. They learn to sell their product by getting out and selling it. They learn how to advertise it by advertising it. They learn how to make it by making it. They learn to trust their own judgment by trusting their own judgment. As their experience grows they learn to make more and more correct decisions and fewer poor ones. Things that started off discombobulated and shaky merge into an integrated finely-tuned whole known as "the business."
3. Push your boundaries. Be open minded and curious. 99% of the world moves in established tracks. The pioneers who move beyond them open up unimagined opportunities. Of course the old saying is that "the pioneers are the ones with arrows in their backs." It's lonely pioneering any new endeavor, but that is how progress is made and great wealth is achieved.
4. Be yourself, not an emulation of somebody else. Each person is unique. Each business is unique. Customers sense that you are "fake" if you try to be knock off of somebody else's business. Make your own business so unique that it stands out.
5. Exceed your customers' expectations. Become so familiar with their requirements that you feel as if you are part of their business and they a part of yours. Listen to them with your undivided attention. Then work your tail off doing what your customers are paying you to do.
6. Persevere. Business people hear prospective customers say "no" when they are making sales calls a hundred times more often than they hear "yes." Successful business people keep knocking on enough doors until some of them open. Once the doors are open the business can grow as customers learn to trust it and rely on it. When a hundred prospects say "no" and the 101st says "yes," that 101st sales call might be called serendipity. But the businessperson had to have the patience to make it through those first 100 rejections. That is the way most things in life work out. There are others, but these give a good representation of what the book is trying to teach. This book is excellent for a budding entrepreneur who wants to know how others "did it." It took me decades to absorb these lessons by the "school of hard knocks." I now know how to succeed in the two or three fields of endeavor that I'm uniquely qualified for, but it was a long time getting there. If I had read this book as a young fellow I would have got there sooner. (Actually, I had read of these principles while young, but in a less coordinated and less meaningful way than they are put together here.) I don't think it is at all an exaggeration to say that the practical wisdom of hundreds of business books have been distilled into this one. Yes, it's REALLY that meaningful. This is one of the very few books that I will keep going back to read and reread most every day.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good content, should be 150 pages and to the point...By Pan"

The book could have been cut short and, at times, seems to be full of a lot of filler." I really liked the book, but I totally agree with another reviewer on this one. I wish that authors, publishers (and maybe readers?) would understand that we do not have infinite time and making a book larger with filler is certainly not a plus! I wish there would be a trend with smaller (and to the point books) now before I buy a book I am looking how many pages it has. Together with the content and reviews, it gets extra "points" if its not "too long". 0 of 0 people

found the following review helpful. Neat BookBy Lawrence MaturoThe book is about how to make serendipity work for you. It's planned luck, if you will. According to the book, and according to my personal experience, good things happen if you put all the right ingredients together. A good example of this is Apple and Pixar.I've strived for this my entire career, and have succeeded enough to have a few patents, but until reading this book, I wasn't aware of all the ingredients involved. I could never have applied what I was doing personally to an entire organization, but obviously Steve Jobs could, showing it's quite possible. This is the book to read if you want to be more successful individually, but even more importantly, if you want to make your organization more successful.On the "technical" side, it was easy to read and understand, though parts dragged a little.

A guide to getting luck on your side As the pace of change accelerates and the volume of information explodes, we're under great pressure to connect just in time with the people and ideas we need to thrive. But we can no longer plan our way to success; there will always be factors beyond our control. This uncertainty, however, cultivates one of today's key drivers of success: serendipity. More than blind luck, serendipity can produce quantifiable results: breakthrough ideas, relationships that matter, effortless cooperation, synchronized market timing, and more. Get Lucky shows businesses how to succeed by fostering the conditions for serendipity to occur early and often. Distills planned serendipity into eight key elements: preparedness, motion, activation, attraction, connection, commitment, porosity, and divergence Features stories of serendipity in action at well-known companies including Avon, Target, Steelcase, Google, Facebook, Walmart, and more Written by serial entrepreneurs and cofounders of Get Satisfaction, a breakout platform for online customer service communities with over 100,000 clients Planned serendipity is not an abstract, magical notion, but a practical skill. Get Lucky is the indispensable resource for anyone who wants to learn this skill and to make serendipity work for them.

.com "The 8 Skills of Planned Serendipity" (click on image to enlarge) Q A with Thor Muller and Lane Becker, authors of Get Lucky Why should we not dismiss luck as a mere superstition? Luck is a fundamental part of how the world works! Open any history book and you'll find stories of curious people looking for one thing and finding another. Whether it's Columbus running into the New World or Tim Berners-Lee setting out to create a document sharing system for physicists and inadvertently inventing the World Wide Web, the world we live in was built on top of serendipitous occurrences. Accidents happen--there's nothing mystical about them. But it's our practical ability to cultivate and take advantage of the best accidents that transforms these from forgettable moments into incredible opportunities. This is the essence of planned serendipity, the kind of luck you make for yourself. What is "planned serendipity"? Why is it important to learn these skills now? "Planned serendipity" is the best way to succeed in our fast-changing world, where so much of what we need is out of our control. Most planning focuses on fostering predictability and reducing risk, but this kind of planning often leads us to focus so intently on what we already know and can predict that we're likely to miss out on all the chance opportunities that appear along the way. Moreover, our ability to make definitive plans is largely an illusion. Too much is unknown at the beginning, and only becomes clear as part of the process. Admitting that this is the case isn't admitting failure--it's simply acknowledging a fundamental truth about the large, complex, information-saturated world we now live in. It doesn't mean we can't plan successfully; it means we need a new set of tools to help us plan for the seemingly unplannable. "Planned Serendipity" is just this: eight skills that help us open ourselves to all the opportunities that appear along the way. Who can use your planned serendipity approach? What's an example of a company that is successfully using "planned serendipity"? Here's a little secret: Every successful person on this planet already employs the skills of planned serendipity. No one succeeds without an assist from the unexpected. Even Sergey Brin, one of the cofounders of Google, when asked about the secret of Google's meteoric rise, replied, "The number one factor that contributed to our success was luck." Brin didn't give this response in order to dismiss his (significant!) accomplishments. Instead, he was sharing a crucial insight: For something to succeed with the scale and speed that Google did, it required more than any one person can fully take credit for--even someone as clearly talented as Sergey Brin. What Brin can take credit for is being open to serendipity and being willing to use it to his advantage. He combined a passion for his work, a commitment to his organization's purpose, and a willingness to do whatever it took to find the best way to put them to work in the world--all part of the skills of planned serendipity. How can I introduce serendipity into my business and life? What is the first step someone should take if they want to start harnessing luck? Break out of your routine. Routine is the enemy of serendipity. Doing the same thing day in and day out almost guarantees that you won't run into anything new. In order to take advantage of unexpected surprises you have to put yourself in a position to actually encounter the unexpected in the first place. We call this the skill of "motion"--putting yourself in unfamiliar situations, but within familiar environments, in order to engage with previously unfamiliar people and ideas that are connected to your job, your projects, or your interests. Visiting with a different department inside your organization, attending a conference in an area related to your job, or even picking a different place to sit for lunch in the cafeteria each day: these are all examples of motion in the workplace. By looking for relevant experiences that are outside of your normal activities you're giving new people, opportunities, and information the chance to find you. How did you come to write on this

topic? In 2007, we founded Get Satisfaction, a community platform that lets companies participate in an ongoing online conversation with their customers. At Get Satisfaction, we were in the remarkable position of witnessing the practices that power the most innovative companies in the world, including Procter Gamble, Facebook, and Wal-Mart. Over the years we began to see unmistakable patterns in the companies that were the most successful. Those companies that were willing to speak openly and honestly with their customers--embracing both the good and the bad that resulted--were also the most nimble, the most effective, and the most likely to gain the huge benefits that arose on a daily basis through chance interactions with their customers. Working with these companies taught us that "getting lucky" wasn't something that just happened to these businesses--instead, it was the result of a particular mindset, a set of specific behaviors, and a willingness to do the hard work of turning unexpected insight into meaningful action. Several years, some hard work, and a few serendipitous occurrences later, we found ourselves on the path to writing this book! Guest by Tony Hsieh Tony Hsieh is the New York Times best-selling author of *Delivering Happiness* and CEO of Zappos.com, Inc. Serendipity has been part of our not-so-secret sauce at Zappos from the very beginning. We've seen first-hand how breakthroughs are so often due to the spontaneous collisions between people and ideas. The things that end up mattering most are often the things that we can least predict. *Get Lucky* explains, through entertaining stories and usable practices, the specific ways that we can create the conditions for serendipity to thrive. Thor and Lane's central idea, that there are eight learnable skills of "planned serendipity," is as empowering as it is actionable. *Get Lucky* provides a framework for understanding how serendipity works, and shows how it can be used as a practice in life and business.