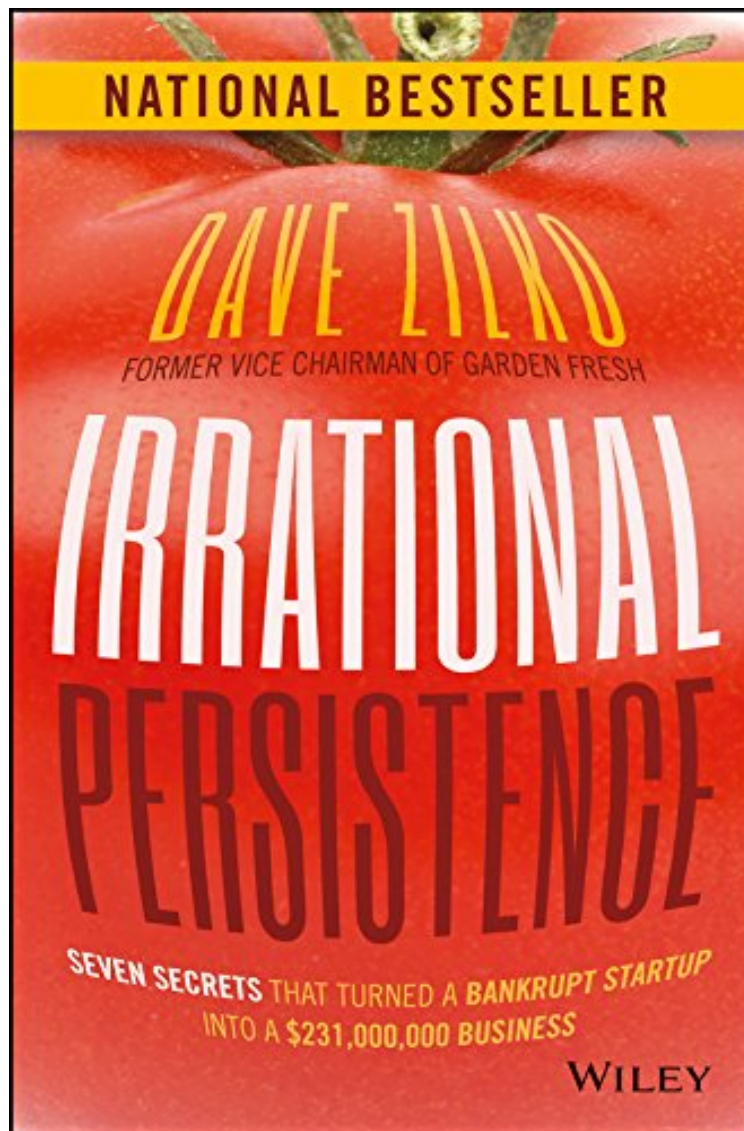


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Irrational Persistence: Seven Secrets That Turned a Bankrupt Startup Into a \$231,000,000 Business

Dave Zilko

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Dave Zilko : Irrational Persistence: Seven Secrets That Turned a Bankrupt Startup Into a \$231,000,000 Business before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Irrational Persistence: Seven Secrets That Turned a Bankrupt Startup Into a \$231,000,000 Business:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Doug BaarmanIt was an excellent story about the passion and hard work it takes to start and grow a business.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five

StarsBy ozloved it!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great business idea that required a lot of community supportBy Connie (She who hikes with dogs)This story is very familiar: a man determined to make his salsa recipe work at whatever cost did what he felt he needed to go to get his business idea off the ground. He had the financial support from his then girlfriend and now wife, as well as the help from his father to get his business going. But as in so many other success stories for young entrepreneurs, he had the support of other young people who wanted the product to succeed. This was in Detroit that desperately needed a success story. It took a lot of patience, hard work, and endless hours sacrificing personal time to get the business going. Dave Zilko had to go over \$400,000 in debt, a debt that took a while to work around. He partnered with another couple and eventually saw a 50% profit increases, something he knew he couldn't sustain. Major retailer bought his brand and eventually he sold it to Campbell's Soups.It's an inspirational read that doesn't hide the pitfalls and failures.While the story is refreshing, the writing style is choppy. He writes too many one-sentence paragraphs when multiple sentences are quite fine. It's as if he wants to write a marketing ad for his business. The English is basic and easy to understand.He leaves many lessons at the end of each chapter.It's a quick read and brings up the message of how a good business has the support from the community in which it is based.

A modern-day Detroit success story that fuels the entrepreneurial fire Irrational Persistence tells the story of Garden Fresh Gourmet, and how two entrepreneurs turned a million-dollar debt to a 100-million-dollar annual revenue. Woody Allen famously said that 80 percent of success is just showing up; but any entrepreneur can tell you that it's the other 20 percent that's key. The founders of Garden Fresh took that old saying to heart, building so many strategic advantages into their products and business that their 'sales' team didn't have to do any sellingmdash;they simply had to show up. In this book, you'll find out what kind of legwork goes into building a mega-success product, and the strategies, methods, and just plain stubbornness that helped two guys from Detroit build a market leader. Garden Fresh Gourmet is now the number-one fresh salsa in the US, shipping over a million units every week to Costco, Walmart, Whole Foods, and other national chainsmdash;and it all began with two middle-aged guys with negative funds and plenty of ideas. This book shares their journey, insight, and passion to help you build a better business and take it to the top. Learn how two entrepreneurs went from major debt to major revenue Discover the key characteristics of a product that sells itself Consider why selling out might not be the ultimate goal Track a journey of 'irrational persistence' from rags to riches Garden Fresh Gourmet is an inspiration beyond the journeymdash;the way you run things at the top matters, too. Irrational Persistence shows you how to make the tough decisions, live with the sacrifices, and prioritize your values as you build your brand and just keep on going.

From the Inside FlapWhat's it like to take a small salsa company, founded in the back of a bankrupt restaurant just outside of Detroit, and grow it into the #1 brand in the country? And why would anyone, even though they're producing 75 tons of fresh salsa a day, decide to do so virtually by hand in five gallon buckets? Then what's it like to sell it to a Fortune 500 company for almost a quarter billion dollars? Irrational Persistence is Dave Zilko's openly personal and informative account of the rags-to-riches entrepreneurial journey he took and the lessons he learned along the way. Doing all this with nothing would have been hard enough, but when he and his partners joined forces they were in so much debt they were actually starting with less than nothing. Eventually learning from his mistakes as well as his smaller victories as an entrepreneur Dave developed a system of principles he came to rely on for consistent success and business growth. Looking back, he realizes these seven secrets weren't always apparent, which inspired this book. Dave delves into each of his seven business secrets in enthralling narratives that put you in rooms where strategic decisions were made during Garden Fresh's history. He lets you join the conversations he had with his partners Jack and Annette Aronson during their unpredictable business venture of expansion, near disaster, passed-on opportunities and eventual fortune. If you think the heads of major companies always have everything under control you're going to enjoy this read. Whether you're a business owner or want to be one someday, the refreshing and motivating strategies from a leader at the top of his industry can improve your approach to business right away with end-of-chapter exercises that let you take the first steps. Written with such exhilarating drama you won't be able to put it down, this practical business guide shows you: How to adapt a counterintuitive approach to sales by not researching your customer, not bringing sales brochures or data to meetings, and in fact to grow your company by never selling anything Why choosing the right market is just as important as developing the right product How to take a strategic approach to developing your company, not just your products, layering in strategic advantages your competitors cannot possibly match How your values are often your destiny Even in you have less than nothing, you can still build something great with Irrational Persistence.From the Back CoverPraise for IRRATIONAL PERSISTENCE "Many business books are dense and hard to follow. Not this one. Full of wit and charm, Irrational Persistence is a fantastic read that I felt emotionally connected to as I turned the pages. The captivating story not only shares the lessons learned along the way, but conveys them in a manner that any entrepreneur can relate to. The sympathetic connection makes these lessons easy to take to heart." mdash;TED SERBINSKI, Managing Director, Techstars Mobility "Irrational Persistence is a true 'Made in America' story, and should be an inspiration to entrepreneurs everywhere. At a time

when news of the business world often focuses on impersonal mega conglomerates behaving badly, the incredible history of Garden Fresh Gourmet shows us that real, long-term success is achieved not by ignoring time-honored values of hard work, honesty, and commitment to excellence, but rather by embracing them. A team with the passion to grow a company the right way did just that, focusing on creating a quality product, establishing unique customer relationships, working to help their community and, most of all, taking no short cuts. In the end it is a story that makes even the most cynical of us proud; proud that this kind of success can and still does happen in America."

—CHRIS RIZIK, CEO, Renaissance Venture Capital Fund "Dave Zilko has ridden the roller coaster of a successful business. He has experienced the pitfalls and rewards of the American dream all the while staying true to the core values inside his soul and the great company he helped build. This book takes you on a journey of self-discovery while reaching for the unknown in true entrepreneurial spirit. Zilko describes how grabbing your boot straps or doing a grass roots marketing plan can still work if your core principles are real and you live up to them without compromise. A must read for anyone who's thinking about starting a business, who has a business, or retired from business."

—BRIAN POLCYN, Professor of Charcuterie, Schoolcraft College, Author of the bestselling books Charcuterie and Salumi Restaurateur "The naysayers who believe that some sacrificing of quality is essential to scaling up a national and international brand need to take heed. The fresh and natural food revolution is real, and the Garden Fresh founders created products and a business model through relentless customer service, innovation, and an unshakable trust that consumers would value the difference."

—RICHARD BAIRD, Senior Advisor and Transformation Leader, Office of Governor Rick Snyder, State of Michigan "An incredible look inside the mind of an entrepreneur. Was it luck that brought a bankrupt startup to a quarter billion dollar business, or was it a mindset that was immune to the prospect of failure? If you have ever wondered what drives an entrepreneur to succeed when others turn back, this book is a must read."

—JIM MAHONEY, Partner, Huron Capital Partners

About the Author DAVE ZILKO is the former Vice Chairman of Garden Fresh Gourmet, makers of the #1 brand of fresh salsa in North America and the premier deli supply company in the United States. He is also an operating partner at Huron Capital, a Detroit-based private equity firm that has more than \$1 billion under management.