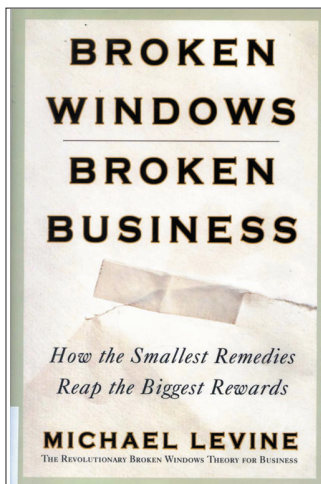


**Book Review Courtesy of Halton Hills Library**

**Broken Windows, Broken Business:  
How the Smallest Remedies Reap the Biggest Rewards**

Michael Levine  
Warner Business Books  
ISBN 0446576786 „2005 0446698482 (pbk) „2006

Levine's latest book, Broken Windows, Broken Business is about "broken windows in business – how they happen, why they happen, why they are ignored, and the fatal consequences that can result," if they are ignored. As Levine explains, "social psychologists and criminologists agree that if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, soon thereafter the rest of the windows will be broken – and the perception will build that crime in that neighborhood is out of control." A business that cares about itself will endeavor to repair the metaphorical broken windows.



By obsessing over the details and creating a plan to keep potential broken windows crack-free, Starbucks enjoys continued success.

Although Levine offers practical advice to repair both physical and virtual businesses

I especially enjoyed his chapters on the net, I find his chapter on the employee as a broken window lacking emotional intelligence. Levine advocates a "three strikes and you're out" philosophy in terms of performance, as well as describing poor employees with poor attitudes as viruses that can cripple a business. His matter of fact approach may not motivate business owners to act.

Similarly, Levine encourages businesses to develop the "obsessive, compulsive, almost violent need to find the flaws." Don't be mistaken, Levine doesn't suggest micromanaging the repairs. He wants business owners with a vested interest in having a successful business to understand that the small things do matter.

Whether the disappointment stems from unclean restrooms, rude employees, slow service, peeling paint, broken web links, or unanswered inquiries, it adversely affects the customers experience with the business. Levine explains that "poor customer service" is the "ultimate broken window." He discusses the failures of K-mart and American Airlines to meet and maintain customers' expectations verses the successful measures taken by Starbucks. By adding additional training hours for all employees, Starbucks ensures employees know their product and can better serve the customers.

Overall Levine's book is worth the read. It offers well-illustrated practical advice that many businesses should heed - pay attention to all of the details in order to identify and repair broken windows quickly. As a consumer, I can assure all business owners, the small details – friendly and prompt service, easy to navigate websites, litter-free facility, and bright, clean walls - do make a difference.

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retirement homes, home care and related support services. Parallel services are available focusing on childcare.

Employees can also call on the Chambers Plan's EAP for legal advice in the areas of family law, separation, divorce, child support and custody. Similarly, financial advice is available to help employees deal with credit card and debt management, bankruptcy, budgeting, and the financial aspects of divorce.

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\* Inception date: December 31, 1991 \*\* Inception date: March 31, 2003 \*\*\* Inception date: November 30, 1998

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