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BUSINESS BOOKS

# STRATEGIC WISDOM

Time-Tested Thinking  
in Only 10 Minutes

By William Guidry

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Little Brown Business Books

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time-tested thinking for entrepreneurs, founders, and builders — presented with clarity, brevity, and enduring relevance.

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# STRATEGIC WISDOM

Time-Tested Thinking  
in Only 10 Minutes

WILLIAM GUIDRY



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LITTLE BROWN BUSINESS BOOKS

## Dedication

**To Karis,**

whose steady faith, wisdom, and encouragement make every journey possible.

Your love is the foundation beneath every good thing I build.

**And to my mother,**

who first taught me the value of persistence, discipline, and quiet excellence.

Your example shaped more than words ever could.

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## Preface

Welcome to Little Brown Business Books.

This book is part of a growing library of short, sharp guides designed to give you strategic clarity—without wasting your time.

In each volume, you'll find principles, not just tactics. You'll find models, not just methods. Most of all, you'll find ideas that stand up over time, drawn from decades of proven business experience and adapted for today's entrepreneurs.

Each book has multiple chapters designed to be read in about 10 minutes, but we hope the thinking stays with you much longer.

Use this book however you need—read one chapter a day, one lesson a week, or revisit it when you need perspective.

Thank you for thinking with us.

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## Introduction

In an age of rapid innovation and startup hype, strategy remains the quiet compass guiding entrepreneurs through uncertainty. This book is a reflective journey into timeless principles of strategy, distilled for the modern entrepreneur. Rather than chase the latest trend or buzzword, we will explore enduring concepts that never go out of style – ideas that have guided generals, economists, and business pioneers for generations. The goal is not to provide quick fixes, but to cultivate a way of thinking that grounds your decision-making in wisdom and clarity.

You'll find that each chapter in this field guide centers on a core strategic principle – simplicity, leverage, signaling, and others – recast in an entrepreneurial light. These principles come from the bedrock of game theory, classic strategy, and hard-earned business lessons. They have stood the test of time because they speak to fundamental truths about human behavior, competition, and decision-making.

Each chapter is designed to be read in about ten minutes, offering a focused meditation on only one idea. The structure is deliberate and consistent: we begin with a quote to set a contemplative tone, then articulate the core idea in plain terms, delve into a deeper strategic insight with real-world implications, tell an illustrative story and finally outline practical steps to put that idea into action. A brief *Summary Thought* caps off each chapter – a single takeaway to carry with you.

This minimalist format reflects an aesthetic akin to a classic field guide or a volume from the Harvard Classics. It encourages you to pause and reflect. Read a chapter, ponder its meaning, and consider how it relates to your venture. Strategy, after all, is not a one-time plan but a continuous practice of thinking ahead and aligning actions with principles. By the end of this book, you'll have not just a collection of ideas, but a cohesive strategic mindset to navigate the entrepreneurial journey with calm confidence.

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## The Core Idea

At its heart, this book is about intentional entrepreneurship. The core idea is simple: *successful entrepreneurship is more than just hustle or luck – it is rooted in strategic thinking*. While passion and hard work get you started, it's strategic insight that keeps you on course when challenges arise.

Strategy, in the entrepreneurial context, means making deliberate choices: choosing what to pursue and what to let go, deciding how to allocate limited resources, and anticipating the moves of customers, competitors, and partners. It's about seeing the bigger picture and the long game. This doesn't require an MBA or a complex spreadsheet; it requires a mindset that values clarity, foresight, and adaptability over firefighting and whim.

The timeless principles we'll explore – from the power of keeping things simple to the art of signaling your intentions – form a toolkit for this mindset.

These ideas originate from diverse domains: military strategy teaches us about commitment and deterrence, economics and game theory illuminate signaling and credibility, and business pioneers illustrate leverage, positioning, and timing. By translating these foundations into practical insights, we bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The core idea, then, is empowerment through understanding. When you understand *why* certain strategies work, you can apply them creatively to *your* situation. Think of each chapter as a lens that brings a strategic aspect of your business into focus. Individually, these lenses clarify specific issues; together, they form a coherent perspective on how to build and grow a venture with purpose and wisdom. In the fast-paced world of startups, fads fade and tactics change, but a solid strategic foundation will always anchor you. This book invites you to build that foundation one principle at a time.

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CHAPTER  
ONE

# SIMPLICITY

## CHAPTER ONE: SIMPLICITY

*“Simple can be harder than complex: you have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it’s worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains.”*

— Steve Jobs

**Core Idea:** *Simplicity* is the art of focusing on what truly matters and eliminating the rest. In business, simplicity means stripping down your strategy, product, or operations to the essential elements that deliver value. This doesn’t mean being simplistic or ignoring complexity; rather, it’s about managing complexity by not adding unnecessary layers. Things should only be as simple as necessary to accomplish the task and no simpler. For an entrepreneur, a simple plan is often more actionable and clear than a convoluted one.

By pursuing simplicity, you clarify your priorities – for yourself, your team, and your customers. When everything extraneous is peeled away, what remains is purposeful, clear, and strong. Simplicity is powerful because it directs all your energy and resources toward a singular vision without distraction.

**Strategic Insight:** In a startup’s journey, there is constant pressure to add more – more features to your product, more goals to your roadmap, more metrics to track. Ironically, this pursuit of “more” can dilute your impact. Strategic simplicity is about choosing less to achieve more. Consider a new SaaS entrepreneur who initially offers a broad suite of features to please every potential user. Customers, however, find the product confusing and the value proposition unclear. By *simplifying* – focusing on the top two features that solve a real problem – the entrepreneur not only makes the product easier to use but also communicates its value more clearly. The result is often a better user experience and a stronger market fit.

Simplicity extends to how you articulate your business strategy. A concise strategy can be communicated and understood by your team without endless explanation. It provides a clear north star for decision-making. When faced with tough choices, referring to a simple core strategy (e.g., “We only build tools that improve business outcomes”) can guide what to do and what to decline. Moreover, simplicity in operations – such as streamlined processes or a “less is more” approach to meetings and reports – frees up time and reduces friction. This creates an organizational culture where people can act with clarity and speed.

In the noise of modern entrepreneurship, simplicity also signals confidence and focus. It suggests you *know exactly what you’re doing* and aren’t distracted by every opportunity that comes along. Legendary strategists often emphasize that if you have too many priorities, you have none. By committing to simplicity, you send a message: we know our core value and we deliver it exceptionally well. Over time, a simple, focused strategy can compound advantages – it leads to a better product, cohesive branding, and loyal customers who appreciate the clarity of what you offer. In sum, simplicity isn’t a lack of ambition; it’s a clarity of purpose that amplifies your effectiveness as a founder.

## **Cutting the Knot**

In a distant age, a young leader arrived at a city known for an impossible challenge. At the center of a dusty square stood an ancient oxcart, its yoke bound by a massive knot of bark and leather. The tangle was so complex that no one remembered how it was tied. Prophecy whispered that whoever could untie the knot would conquer the world beyond. Many had tried laboring for hours to find a loose end or secret twist, but the knot held fast, defying every conventional effort.

The young leader paced around the oxcart quietly, fingertips tracing the rough, weathered cord. Bystanders and rival contenders watched in smug anticipation; certain this would end like all the rest – in frustrated failure. But the leader's mind was calm as a still lake. Rather than lose himself in the knot's endless loops, he paused and considered the problem from afar. Why, he wondered, must the knot be untied in the usual way at all?

Suddenly resolved, he drew his sword in one smooth motion. With a single decisive stroke, he cut clean through the knot. The ropes fell loose to the ground, the impossible tangle solved in an instant. Onlookers fell into stunned silence, then erupted in awe. The young leader simply wiped his blade and gave a modest shrug.

His solution was bold and unconventional, yet profoundly simple. Where others saw complexity to be painstakingly unraveled, he saw an opportunity to remove complexity altogether. This clear-minded action freed him from the trap of overthinking. In the end, what mattered was not following the expected process, but achieving the desired result. By slicing through the knot, he demonstrated that a simple, direct approach can sometimes overcome even the most convoluted of challenges.

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**Take Action:**

- **Define your core:** Identify the one or two things your business does best or the primary value it provides. Focus your efforts there.
- **Trim the excess:** Review your features, services, or tasks this week. Eliminate one that isn't clearly contributing to your main goals.
- **Clarify your message:** Describe your business in a single sentence. Ensure your website and pitch reflect this simple message without jargon.
- **Streamline operations:** Simplify one process (e.g. onboarding, customer support) by removing unnecessary steps. Make it easier for your team to execute.
- **Practice daily focus:** Start each day by listing the top three tasks that matter most. Commit to completing those before anything else.

***Summary Thought:** Simplicity isn't about doing less for its own sake – it's about doing more of what matters most, with greater clarity and impact.*



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CHAPTER  
TWO

# LEVERAGE

## YOUR NEXT STEP...

### **Go Beyond the Page**

You've just finished the first chapter of Strategic Wisdom: Volume 1.

If it sparked something, it's not because the idea was new. It's because it was finally clear. That's what this book is built to do — one chapter at a time.

But clarity fades in isolation. That's why the next step isn't just to keep reading. It's to step into a serious community of entrepreneurs who are thinking, building, and sharpening one another — quietly and consistently.

We call it The Cheddar Chase.

Inside, you'll find thoughtful discussion around every chapter, tools for turning ideas into action, and most importantly — people who are moving forward with discipline, not noise.

This isn't about access. It's about alignment.

**Serious builders don't go it alone. They move together.**

Join The Cheddar Chase

Free. Focused. Built for Builders.

Visit: <https://www.skool.com/thecheddarchase>

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In a world of business noise, these books offer calm clarity.

Each volume in the Little Brown Business Books series distills enduring business wisdom into a focused, 10-minute read. Designed for builders, founders, and entrepreneurs who value substance over sizzle, these compact guides deliver insights that last longer than trends.

No hype.

No jargon.

Just proven thinking—refined for the modern enterprise.

Whether you're sharpening your strategy, tightening your cash flow, or building customer relationships that last, this book meets you where you are—with depth, not distraction.

Start smart. Stay wise. Read slow, or fast—but never shallow.

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***Volume Two*** – *Customer Gravity*

***Volume Three*** – *Cash*

***Volume Four*** – *Returns*

***Volume Five*** – *Growth*

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