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## Harry potter always gifts

February 1st, 2001 11 min Read This story appears in the February 2001 issue of Entrepreneur. Subscribe » If you're like us to an entrepreneur, and like millions of children and adults around the world, you're not just a fan of the Harry Potter book-you're a fan of withdrawal. It looks like the next book in the series, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, may not hit bookstores until 2002, and the first film won't be released until November. You have two options: Go mad or read this article. Like many entrepreneurs, Harry Potter author E.K. Rowling began in humble digs and with big dreamers. She had to rewrite the entire manuscript for the [first] book because she couldn't afford to have it copied, notes Jeff Blackman, a specialist in business growth in Glenview, Illinois, and author of Result \$ (Successors). Now, more than 30 million [Harry Potter] books have been sold. It's remarkable evidence of [her] perseverance and passion. Rowling studied French and literature, not business, in college. However, she worked for several years in the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester, England. Maybe something has disappeared, because young Potter can teach us a lot about running our own businesses. We're not going to get it out of here. Even The Wall Street Journal ran a story about how business Muggles are embracing books, referring to emails like owls and ATMs like Gringotts. (Confused by that sentence? Consult Potter's mouth.) Of course, since Harry Potter books are ostensibly for children, some hidden and not-so-hidden business lessons may seem basic. But like all eternal truths, it's a good idea to revisit them occasionally. So get milk and biscuits, pull up a chair, and let's read the story . . . Book one: Harry Potter and the Wizard of Stone Book Two: Harry Potter and the Chamber mystery book three: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban Book Four: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire Book One: Harry Potter and the Wizard of Stone storyline: Ten-year-old orphan Harry Potter lives in a closet under the stairs at the home of his carefree relatives, The Lord and Mrs Dursley Harry learns that he has witchcraft blood and has to go to the train station on kings cross '93 4 platform to travel to Hogwarts, a school for witches. There, for the first time, Harry makes friends. He also confronts his enemy, Lord Voldemort. Business Lesson #1: Understand the different cultures in your company. On Harry's first day at Hogwarts, he and other first-year students meet Grading Hat, who tells his audience, try me on and tell you/Where you should be. Once donned, Hat sends each student to one of four hostels: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw or Slytherin. The most talented wizards (including Harry) are sent to Gryffindor and the sinister ones in Slytherin, where you'll find Draco Malfoy, the most famous high school student in the fictional universe. You know what's really going on in your If you're not sure, check out The Shadow knows for tips on determining which of your employees yield real power. The bigger your business gets, the more cultures it's going to have-and you have to be aware of them, says Don Andersson, a sales coach in Cranford, New Jersey, and author of Rent For Fit (Oak-hill Press). When he read the first book about Harry Potter, he immediately noticed how Hogwarts' academic culture reflected the academic culture of the corporate world. If you want a new lease to thrive, the person who makes the hiring decisions needs to understand your company's culture well enough to know where this [candidate] is going to be best, says Andersson. An employee may have wonderful skills, but in a bad culture, they won't really [work]. Business Lesson 2: When you own a company, you should be in good company. Your partners and employees are everything: You're aware of that, don't you? Such wisdom is an example of Harry's best friends, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley. Hermione deceives the professor to keep Harry and Ron out of trouble for confronting the troll, and Ron risks death in a live-action chess game so Harry can prevent the Philosopher's Stone from falling into the wrong hands. But loyalty is not enough. You also need employees and partners to tell you what they think, not what you want to hear. And if they're smart, all the better. Potter Mouth If you haven't read the book, here's a quick guide to key concepts: 9: The platform where the train leaves to take Harry to Hogwarts. You'll never find him if you're tortured. Gringotts: a bank where guides keep their money; Wild goblins guard. Hogwarts: Seven-year academy of magic Harry attends. Mudblood: A derogatory slang term for offspring muggle and magical parents. Muggle: A person without magical power. It can be spoken as an insult, or with tinge regret in one voice. Owls: Owls carry messages back and forth-not as fast as email, but more fun. Think of football on broomsticks, and you have an idea. Book two: Harry Potter and the Secret Chamber Story line: Harry returns to Hogwarts a year later to discover that a bad being turns students into living sculptures. Business Lesson 1: The initiative is rewarded. Sometimes the rules have to be bent or even broken. Caryn Beck-Dudley, a professor of business law and ethics at Utah State University, Logan, notes: If you kicked Hogwarts students every time they made a mistake, you wouldn't be left with a very virtuous organization. And you wouldn't even have Harry Potter. When you're trying to create a work environment that makes people enjoy coming to work, treating people like people should be tops on your list. Read Manage your employee to better figure out how to do this. Just as entrepreneurs rarely stick to the 9-to-5 regime, Harry breaks a curfew to sneak around the school and fight evil. When he flies on a broom against orders, he is not punished, he is rewarded with the coveted place in the Quidditch team. Since he flew to the aid of a classmate, and he is the best broom-flyer the school has seen in the age-to-delight students, professors and even headteacher Albus Dumbledore. But if Dumbledore was like many bosses, says Beck-Dudley, he would focus on the bad things Harry did. Then either Harry leaves and takes his skills elsewhere, or his creativity would be crushed. Business Lesson 4: Create an educational work environment. If Harry Potter worked at most companies, he would be fired now, argues Beck-Dudley. Sometimes harsh punishment is not the best medicine, he notes. Business owners often fire someone because it's the easiest [way] without realizing it creates an environment where people are afraid and unproductive. Hogwarts includes everyone. You're not punished if you don't succeed. Poor Neville [one of the students] tries hard but never quite makes it and is still part of the group. The emphasis is on how it contributes, not how it doesn't. Book three: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban Plot: Our Hero Returns to Hogwarts in the hope that he will not delay the journey of the infamous murderer Sirius Black. Business Lesson 5: Networking. This theme runs throughout the series, but seems best illustrated in this installment. Harry and Hermione are good at making contacts that pay off. Before starting the book, Hermione agreed with one of the teachers to take three classes at once (through time travel) and get further ahead academically. But Harry is the network king. In a chamber of secrets, he meets Dobby, a house-elf who later saves his life with advice in The Goblet of Fire. In Azkaban, Fred and George Weasley (Ron's brothers and Harry's classmates) provide Harry with a map of Hogwarts that shows where individuals are at any given time. In Goblet, Harry helps his opponent, Cedric Diggory, during the Triwizard tournament; Later, Cedric returns the favor. If not for his contacts, Harry would probably have been done a long time ago. Need to brush up on your network skills? Make Connections can only say what you need to know, meet and say hello to the best of them. Business Lesson 6: Abandon your business plan if necessary. Little goes as Harry expects, but he learns to be flexible in this book. (If you haven't read it yet and want to, consider skipping this section.) After hearing he can't visit the magical village of Hogsmeade with his classmates, Harry plans to spend the day reading. But when he gets a secret map of the school, he discovers a tunnel to Hogsmeade-which will later help him uncover the villains. And although many heroes (entrepreneurs) might be forgiven for not wanting to be with someone who was once a competition, Harry befriends Sirius, who becomes one of his closest allies. Harry's willingness to change direction quickly captivates Blackman. The decisions you make affect your future, he explains. Do you decide to in upgrade, imitate or vegetate? If it is the last, you can abdicate. So much of Harry Potter deals with innovation-thinking creatively from a unique perspective. Dumbledore muses, the consequences of our actions are always so complex, so diverse, that predicting the future is indeed a very difficult business. You can make predictions for your company, but you can't rely on them. Book Four: Harry Potter and the Fiery Cup Conspiracy: Harry returns to Hogwarts and competes in the Triwizard Tournament. Business Lesson No. 7: Entrepreneurs triumph over big corporations. Anne Warfield, a sales coach, professional speaker and owner of Impression Management Professionals in Minneapolis, thinks business lessons are the most important in the books. No matter how powerless we think we are, we can have a powerful effect, he says. What is important is to get the tools to develop this potential within yourself. Harry does just that at Hogwarts and ends up besting Lord Voldemort. Business Lesson No. 8: Adequate funding is essential. Invest wisely. The money Harry inherits from his parents and saves along the way allows him to provide money when George and Fred Weasley need funds for their magic joke shop. Who would have thought? Harry Potter may not grow up to be an entrepreneur, but he's already a venture capitalist. Ratings Figures We asked business experts how Harry and his cohorts would fare as entrepreneurs. Harry Potter Characteristics: kind, ethical, courageous, headstrong, independent as an entrepreneur: It would be great. He would be willing to work through the challenges to find an answer, says business coach Anne Warfield of Impression Management Professionals. His Achilles heel: He may not rely enough on others, he handles every adventure himself. As with spiders, he didn't think over the dangers of being putting Ron because his quest to get an answer was driving him, says Warfield, referring to the time Harry persuaded Ron to accompany him to the Forbidden Forest in a chamber of secrets. Ron Weasley Characteristics: loyal, brave, ethical, but sometimes envious of the more successful as an entrepreneur: He should partner with a friend or mentor. He would be a better vice president than [the CEO], says Warfield. He has the strength of character, but. His Achilles heel: Keeping it tough for Ron, adds Warfield. He expects Harry and Hermione to pre-send ideas. Hermione Granger Characteristics: Intelligent, Ambitious, Loyal, Very Ethical, Serious, Kind, Friendly As an Entrepreneur: She Would Probably Be Better Than Harry. She's logical, detailed and has contacts, warfield says. She would be the most visionary and insightful. Her Achilles heel: She could overhaul her people, says Warfield. He doesn't know how to lighten up. Draco Malfoy Characteristics: means unethical, bad, the kind of person who would send orphans Father's Day cards as an entrepreneur: His type often goes far, says business professor Caryn Beck-Dudley of Utah State He would be surrounded by yes men and manipulated to make things happen, adds Warfield. He would be successful if he got the organization going and then sold it. His Achilles heel: He's bad, and you know what usually happens to the bad guy at the end. End.

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