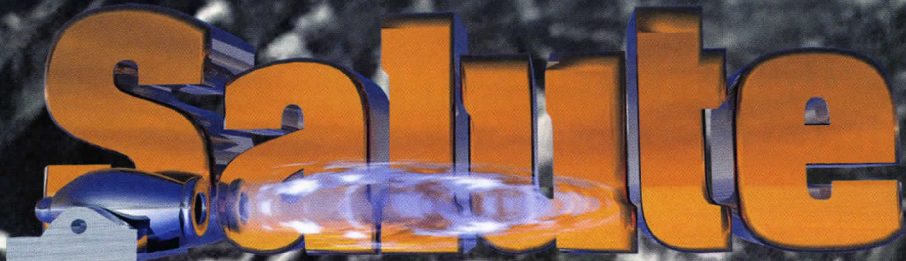


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Leadership Lessons

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as a U.S. Navy SEAL in New "Be Visionary" Book,
Offering Advice & Guidance on Strategic Planning



Author Marty Strong and some of his fellow sailors posing while on mission.

Leadership Lessons

Author **Marty Strong** Draws on Combat Experience as a U.S. Navy SEAL in New “Be Visionary” Book, Offering Advice & Guidance on Strategic Planning

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ

Leadership is often considered a key attribute of many military veterans, and former U.S. Navy SEAL Marty Strong is no exception: After serving in uniform for 20 years, he transitioned into a private sector career as a successful financial executive and author.

Currently working as CEO and CSO of LGS Management Group, Strong is sharing his insights and business acumen in a new book being released in January 2023 called *Be Visionary: Strategic Leadership in the Age of Optimization*, John Hunt Publishing – Business Books. In it, Strong draws upon his experience both in the military and in the financial field to advise business executives on strategic planning and transformative thinking.

“Military life in general – and my experience in special operations specifically – forged me

into a disciplined, confident, and psychologically-resilient professional," Strong states. "I traveled to over 40 countries, was privileged to be a member of an extraordinary group of elite performers; I am also proud to have led these exceptional patriots in combat."

Strong served on SEAL teams for 20 years, stationed primarily in Norfolk, VA; he also did two tours at the Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, CA, as an instructor and member of the Naval Special Warfare Strategy and Tactics Group. "I transitioned into the financial services industry and managed client portfolios for a little over seven years, first with Legg Mason Wood Walker and then with United Bank of Switzerland," he notes. "I left that industry soon after the attacks on September 11, 2001, to work in the counter and anti-terrorism world. Later, I transitioned into corporate leadership, holding several executive positions. I'm currently serving in my 13th year as CEO and Chief Strategy Officer of a multi-company enterprise."

Concurrent with his business career, Strong wrote nine novels under the pen name M.L. Strong, donating the proceeds to the SEAL Veterans' Foundation "to address shortfalls and gaps in care and testing our veterans receive from the government," he says, adding "I speak to veterans groups on transitioning into the private sector, write articles on the same themes, and conduct interviews with organizations and podcasts focused on veteran issues. Of course, I continue to meet with individuals as well.

"I spend time working with transitioning veterans and speaking or writing on the topic

of military transition," he adds. "My transition was difficult and I bring that perspective and apply a scared-straight approach to leaving the service. I explain that we all started as apprentices in the military and over several years we attained well-deserved proficiency, respect, positional authority, and compensation. It is no different outside the military. Primarily I've come to realize I matured quickly in uniform, much faster than my peers outside of the military. Stress management, confidence, emotional intelligence, all these factors and more became a part of my DNA well before retiring and entering the commercial world."



Author Marty Strong (above) is releasing a new book entitled *Be Visionary: Strategic Leadership in the Age of Optimization*

Strong's first business leadership book, *Be Nimble: How the Creative Navy SEAL Mindset Wins on the Battlefield and in Business*, was released in January 2022 and focused on the dynamics of crisis leadership and how to apply creativity to cope with a world in chaos and constant change. "I wrote about strategy in that book and decided to write my second book; I believe strategy is a lost art and this book addresses that opinion.

"Writing a book, any book, is a daunting challenge," he admits. "I'd already published nine novels when I decided to write *Be Nimble*, but writing a business book was an entirely different experience. I first had to decide what issue or issues were topical and worthy of a reader's time and money. Then I had to decide the format. Should I write an academic narrative, chock full of citations and footnotes? Or should I deliver my thoughts and themes in parables and stories? Through

trial and error I found my comfort zone and my writing voice. By the time I began to write *Be Visionary*, I was comfortable communicating my insights and advice."

The central message of *Be Visionary* is how to anticipate and plan for the future. "As a CEO I was personally aware of a widening gap over the last 15 to 20 years, between hyper-emphasis in businesses on optimized micro-measurement of their business history," Strong explains. "This rearview-mirror mentality has been enabled by technology. Leaders have ceased looking out at the horizon for threats and opportunities. *Be Visionary* focuses on this strategic apathy and describes how today's leaders can regain the lost art of visionary transformation.

"*Be Visionary* is a guide to people and organizations on how to anticipate the future," he continues. "The future is not a proven and analyzed set of data points. It represents the unknown and there's the rub, the future is scary. I want readers to digest my philosophy about embracing this unknown because to live a life or lead an organization by standing in the dark, pretending the future will look exactly like the past, is foolish and fraught with risk. I hope readers will see the simple logic of the book's thesis and practice what it preaches. Being visionary, thinking strategically, is the only way to prepare for and shape the future."

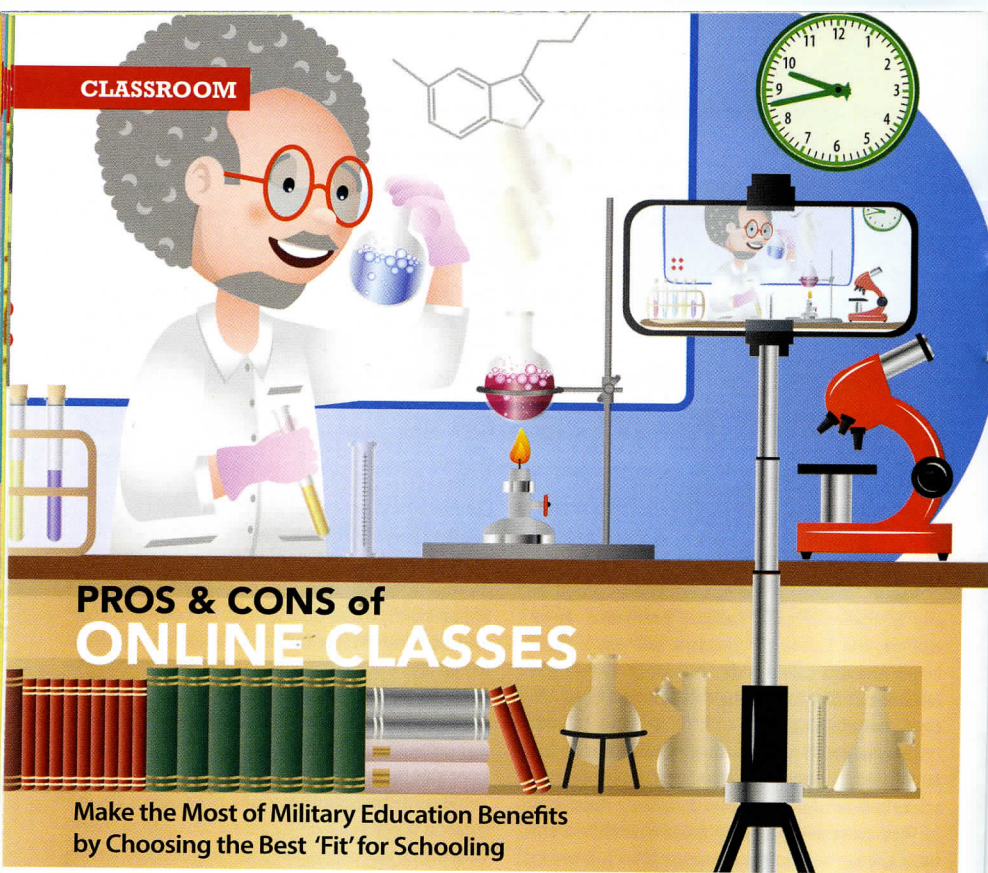
Strong says his experiences in active duty service and as a veteran have helped shape his approach to business. "The drive, the will to excel, to complete a critical task or mission, is the backdrop of every day in the SEAL teams," he remarks. "This level of continuous engagement is designed to create failure, for through failure we learn the deepest lessons. Failing therefore is a part of a SEALs experience in the Navy and failing is funny. Put a few team guys in a room and pretty soon the air is filled with hilarious stories of operations gone wrong. I miss that humor, that collective healthy comfort with failure."

Strong admits that not every military experience was a positive one, but says he has learned from the negative episodes as well. "By far, the loss of friends, both in training and in combat, was the worst," he relates. "It was part of the job, I knew it, we all knew it, but it didn't make losing our brothers any easier to deal with. When you train at the intensity we did as SEALs, we bonded at the molecular level. This incredible human connection is also broken when we leave the service. This separation haunts many veterans well after they've left the military.

"I've probably talked as many people into staying in the military as I've talked into leaving the service," he continues. "In most cases I never hear how the end of their story played out. However, I've been humbled a few times to hear my insights and experience helped a veteran make the right decision, a decision based on their life, their family, their future. I stay in touch with several highly successful business entrepreneurs I mentored the point of their separation from the military who are passing on my tenets for personal and professional success out of uniform, paying it forward to the next generation of transitioning warriors. I continue to participate in this time-honored exercise, passing hard-won wisdom on to people standing at the edge of one career, staring into the unknown."







PROS & CONS of ONLINE CLASSES

Make the Most of Military Education Benefits by Choosing the Best 'Fit' for Schooling

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ

Enlisted personnel and veterans have numerous opportunities to pursue higher education, but transitioning from military life to college can be somewhat challenging. Today, however, returning students have many more options available for both in-person and online learning: The trick is to figure out the right combination for your individual circumstances.

More than 1 million Americans are currently receiving GI Bill benefits for higher education programs, according to Best Collages, a leading national ranking service, which reports, "In 2020, 80% of student veterans pursuing higher education degrees or credentials were full-time students; student veterans are often older, married, and work full-

part-time jobs while in school."

Many military students are faced with juggling families, children, careers, and the transition to civilian life, all while attempting to pursue their educations. In recent years, spurred in part by the global COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has exploded, with nearly all colleges and universities offering at least some online classes.

According to the college informational website Admissionsly.com, "Since 2020, 98% of universities have offered online classes, and more than 21% of colleges within the U.S offer online courses entirely." The website also reports, "According to a survey by the Babson Survey Research Group, 33% of college students are taking at least one course online."

According to the Industry Expansion Solutions department at North Carolina State University, "Online education can be a highly effective alternative method of education for the students who are matured, self-disciplined and motivated, well-organized and having high degree of time management skills, but it is an inappropriate learning environment for more dependent learners and has difficulty assuming responsibilities required by the online courses."

The primary benefits of online learning include convenience, flexibility, and affordability. The main downsides to online classes include a lack of personalized interaction and attention with both fellow students and faculty, the cost and familiarity with remote learning technologies, and motivation and scheduling. Here is a summary of the pros and cons of online learning:

Pro: Convenience:

Online learning allows you to study and do coursework whenever and wherever you need to be. There is no commuting or travel time to a campus, so you don't have to change your living arrangements or find transportation. And you can access library resources, textbooks, study guides, lectures, and lessons all through a computer or mobile phone. Online students also have access to guest experts, instructors, students, resources, and information from around the world.

Pro: Flexibility:

Online learning allows you to set your own schedule and makes it easier to juggle multiple responsibilities, including an ongoing career and family duties. You can adopt personal study habits that suit your schedule: for example, studying in the evenings if you are a "night owl" or in the mornings if you're an "early bird." You set your own pace for learning and progress; can accelerate your degree program; and can interact with other students and faculty virtually as much – or as little – as you deem necessary.

Pro: Affordability:

Online courses are usually less expensive than on-campus courses: According to EducationData.org, an online degree costs around \$11,000 less than an in-person degree at a public four-year college or university in the U.S. You also avoid paying for

room and board, and you save on transportation expenses such as a car (or the cost of public transportation), gas, parking, and maintenance. Many students taking online courses also continue to work either full-time or part-time to subsidize their education.

Con: Lack of Personal Interaction:

One downside of online learning is limited social interaction with instructors and fellow students. Virtual learners may miss out on group discussions, personalized attention from faculty, and opportunities for social networking. It can be harder to build camaraderie and share ideas with others; although, virtual meetings, group chats, and collaborative projects can help overcome these limitations.

Con: Technology:

You may need to invest in new technologies, including up-to-date computer, software, web access, and more in order to pursue online learning. You also will need to learn new or enhanced computer skills. And, you'll be spending your study time in front of a screen, rather than in a classroom, which can cause fatigue and eyestrain. Make sure to take frequent breaks to let your eyes rest and set up an ergonomic and comfortable study environment.

Con: Motivation & Scheduling:

Some students need the structure of an on-campus classroom schedule in order to stick to their studies. Online learners may find it easy to procrastinate or not stick to a schedule. It is necessary to set and stick to deadlines in order to complete coursework and assignments on time. Plan a study schedule that works with your lifestyle, and set aside time each day for coursework so you don't fall behind or get overwhelmed.

There are pros and cons to any type of learning environment, but the key to success is making an informed decision about what type of learning is best for your individual circumstances. The online learning environment presents both opportunities and challenges; with the right approach and attitude, it can be a valuable alternative for many people. As with any life decision, pursuing a higher education is one that should be carefully researched and considered to maximize your personal strategy and reach your goals. 