

# What I learned from Sam Zemurray, America's Banana King

My learnings from [The Fish That Ate The Whale](#) about Sam Zemurray:

- Fire people who can't get the job done, and replace them by people who can.
- Fast decisions. Don't nibble. Get things done.
- Get your hands dirty. Work hard. Go out to the fields with the machete. "We are here, they are there."
- Make gold out of other peoples trash (Sam did this with ripe bananas)
- Invent things. Be innovative. The company missed to invent the banana box, because Sam was not there anymore. When Sam was there, they were the innovation leader.
- Founder led companies are stronger than companies where the founding generation has already passed away.
- Get creative with your solutions! E.g. Sam double purchased land that was owned by two different parties. His opponents hired lawyers. Sam just purchased it twice and got it done. ([Effective vs. efficient](#))
- Never complain. Just play the hand you are dealt.
- Want to replace current management? Get enough proxies and fire the board.
- Listen to the people on the front lines. They have the best information. Go to the docks. Talk to people ([scuttlebutt method](#)).
- Companies have a lifecycle. Even the most innovative, most profitable or most powerful companies fade away. What are the characteristics of companies that survive for hundreds of years? They need to keep reinventing themselves. A young generation needs to take over and rebuild the business.
- Keep a low profile. Don't attract too much attention. Be a doer, not an attention seeker.
- Give anonymously. If you don't, you are not giving, you are trading (e.g. for status or reputation).

What have you learned? Let me know on [Twitter](#).

(Thank you for recommending the book, [Brent Beshore](#).)