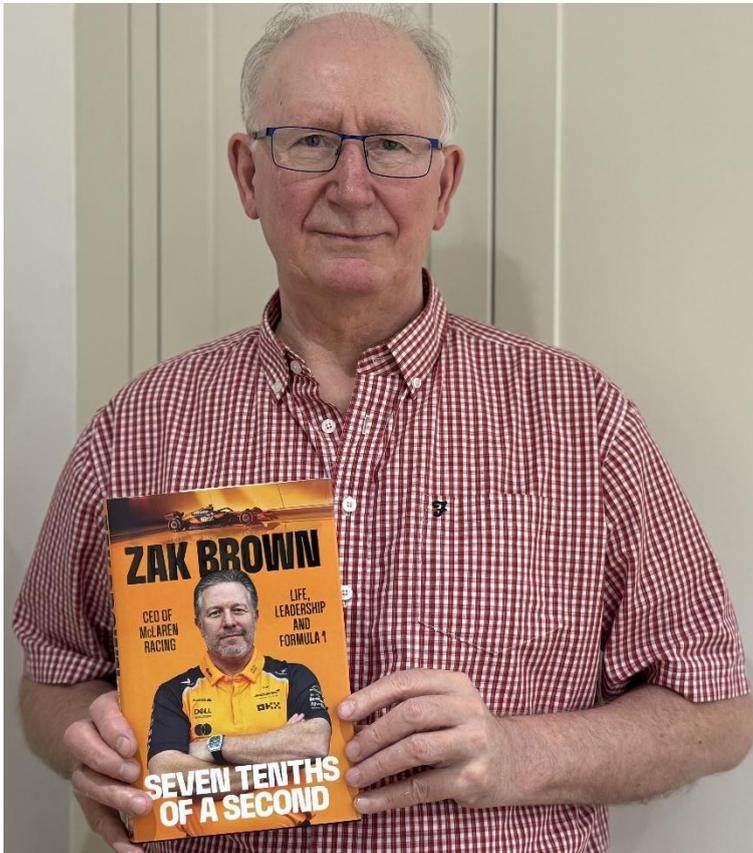


# Wealden Business Group

## Book Review: “Seven Tenths of a Second” by Zak Brown Report by Bill Ferguson, 25 March 2026

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McLaren Racing CEO Zak Brown shares lessons from Formula 1 about leadership, culture, teamwork, and business strategy.

The title reflects the tiny margins that determine success in F1, highlighting how small improvements, strong culture, and effective leadership can transform organisational performance.

Zak interviews well, his various YouTube appearances are worth a look.

The book is a different matter. We have 256 pages with very few pit stops. The writing style is punchy, it ignores the normal grammar conventions of using past tense to describe completed events, preferring a sort of continuous present tense which has immediacy at first but after a while began to wear out my mental tyres.

The writing reflects how he speaks. It gets his message across, effectively with no ambiguity. He tells you. Facts. Warts and all. But maybe not everything. I've looked at his Key Themes and wondered how to interpret them for our group:

**Marginal Gains:** Success often comes from many small improvements that together create a decisive competitive advantage. *Are you competing in an environment where winner takes all? Where is your sweet spot? Can you apply the 80/20 rule to optimise returns – would 80% of the market for 20% of the effort be acceptable.*

**Leadership in High-Performance Environments:** Leading elite teams requires clarity, quick decisions, and alignment across highly specialised experts. *Does anyone here have experience of this environment? How do you make good decisions quickly when the stakes are high? When is a collaborative leadership style effective, and when is a more dictatorial approach needed?*

**The importance of team Culture:** A culture of trust, accountability, and shared purpose enables teams to perform at their best. *Which matters more to performance: exceptional individuals or a strong culture—and can a strong culture compensate for lack of talent?*

**Managing Elite Talent:** The need to empower high performers while keeping them aligned with the team's overall goals. *What motivates people? How do you retain high performers? How much autonomy should leaders give specialists, and when should they intervene?*

**Commercial Strategy:** Partnerships, sponsorship, and brand positioning are essential to sustaining success. Without funding there is no team. *Is this sport specific? Are you the brand for your business?*

**Innovation and Risk:** Continuous experimentation and calculated risk-taking are necessary to remain competitive. *Sport specific? How should organisations balance innovation with the risks experimentation creates?*

**Resilience and Turnarounds:** Transforming a struggling organisation needs persistence, long-term thinking, and rebuilding belief. *Can anyone do this? To what extent can leaders deliberately shape organisational culture? What should leaders prioritise when rebuilding a struggling organisation?*

**Passion in Leadership:** How much does a leader's personal passion influence their effectiveness and the culture of their organisation? *Do organisations succeed primarily because of great leaders, or because of well-designed systems and processes? Do high-pressure environments bring out the best in people, or do they eventually damage teams and performance?*

There are a lot of things to consider in this book especially if you are looking for a model, or a blueprint. Hands up who wishes they were like Zak!