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A Comic Book About Business Finance

This is the VOA Special English Economics Report.

You probably have heard of comic book heroes like Superman, Batman and Spiderman. But what about Tom the motorcycle shop owner, Joe Knight and Karen Berman?

Tom, Joe and Karen all appear in a comic book called "Financial Intelligence." But Mr. Knight and Ms. Berman are real people. In two thousand six, they wrote a book called "Financial Intelligence: A Manager's Guide to Knowing What the Numbers Really Mean." It was written for people who need to learn quickly about accounting. The book explains, in simple ways, often-complex methods of keeping financial information. It became a best-seller.

This month, publisher SmarterComics released a comic book that provides the same information in easy-to-understand, picture form. The new book is a combination of a textbook and a graphic novel. It tells the story of Tom, a mechanic who must quickly learn how to direct the motorcycle repair shop his father founded. Tom has no experience with finance, and is struggling with the business. Joe Knight and Karen Berman help him. Artist Dave Wachter made illustrations for the comic book.

Franco Arda is the founder and head of SmarterComics. He formerly worked as an investment banker. He started the company almost three years ago with his own money. He wanted to create educational comics that increase understanding.

FRANCO ARDA: "I think almost everybody understands the phrase that 'a picture says a thousand words,' so, I mean, mentally, probably ninety percent of us grew up with comics and they understand that comics or illustrations help learning a concept much quicker than just text alone." (:21)

Franco Arda says "Financial Intelligence" will help readers quickly understand many of the major areas of accounting.

FRANCO ARDA: "Within an hour, you kind of get the idea of accounting, very quickly and not in a boring way. So you get these illustrations, you get the basics of accounting and you get some balance sheets and cash-flow statements." (:13)

The new comic book is available in paperback. There will also be versions for iPad and iPhone users.

The website Entrepreneur.com named SmarterComics to its list of 100 Brilliant Companies of 2012. The company has created comic book versions of more than ten other books. These include "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill, "The Prince" by Niccolo Machiavelli and "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu. Later this year, SmarterComics plans to release a comic book by rapper 50Cent.

You can see some pages from the "Financial Intelligence" comic book on our website, VOASpecialEnglish.com. And that's the VOA Special English Economics Report, written by Chris Cruise. I'm Mario Ritter.