

aCatalyst -- Top 10 Favourite Management Books

Volumes of books on management and business come out every year. If you were stuck on a desert island and wanted to learn about ‘management’ [defined in a quite liberal, more eclectic way] here are our suggestions. Ranging from analysis and ‘how to’ to biography, what they all have in common, is describing approaches of ‘how to think about management problems’.

- 1. Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*** – a black swan is a random impossible to predict event that has a profound impact on our lives. Perfect reading to understand the unusual corona virus times we are in. “A deeply intelligent, provocative book” according to *The Economist*. [London: Penguin, 2007]
- 2. Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*** – will change the way you ‘think about thinking’ and how you make choices, both rational and irrational. Kahneman, a psychologist won the Nobel prize for economics in 2002. [London: Penguin, 2012]
- 3. Richard Rumelt, *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters*** – when you see the word strategy, it usually refers to an operational plan. McKinsey refers to Rumelt as ‘a giant in the field’. [New York: Crown Business, 2011]
- 4. Clayton Christensen, *The Innovator’s Dilemma: When Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*** – required reading in Silicon Valley. *The Economist* referred to it as one of the seven most important business books ever written. Describes what innovation really is and how a company can do everything right, yet fail. [Remember Kodak invented digital photography.] [Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 1997]
- 5. Walter Isaacson, *Steve Jobs*** – a brutally honest and insightful biography about someone who transformed how we work and play, with his profound impact on our digital world. It’s fascinating to learn how Jobs got himself fired from Apple, the company he founded, only to come back and create one of the world’s most valuable iconic companies. Products built based on simplicity and a Zen like attention to detail, are but one of the many legacies he left behind. [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011]
- 6. Eric Ries, *The Lean Start Up*** – describes an approach that revolutionised how entrepreneurs work, by continually quickly testing, adapting and adjusting how products are brought to the market. [London: Portfolio Penguin, 2011]
- 7. Tom Peters & Bob Waterman, *In Search of Excellence*** – written by two McKinsey partners, sets out the 8 principles, which forty years ago, made companies excellent. Published at a time when Japanese companies like Sony dominated the business landscape, and American business was playing a game of catch up. While some of their winner companies, like Atari and Wang, turned out to be wrong this is the ‘mother of management books’ that has stood the best of time. [New York: Harper Collins, 1982]
- 8. Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie’s World : A novel about the history of philosophy*** -- A *New York Times* bestseller that condenses 3,000 years of thought about Western philosophy into one paperback. Written in an entertaining way to a 14 year old girl named Sophie. Useful to understand the foundation on which management thought stands today. [London: Phoenix, 1995]

9. Josh Kaufman, *The Personal MBA* – allows you to master fundamental business concepts without sitting in a classroom. Covers 246 business ideas and practices in a clean concise way, very useful addition to your [cerebral] business toolkit. [New York; Portfolio – Penguin, 2012]

10. Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, *The One Minute Manager* – tells a simple short story, demonstrating three practical management techniques, on how to get the best out of those you work with. [New York: Harper Collins, 1982]



Please don't be shy, give us your feedback and tell us what you are reading.

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