

The Black Box Institute

25 Best Business Books of
the Past 50 Years



The Timeline of Great Books and Concepts

These are the top 5 books of the last 50 years that provide practical business advice and insights as well as introduce new groundbreaking concepts

1980

Competitive Strategy
Competitive Advantage, Porter's 5 forces



2005

Blue Ocean Strategy
Blue Ocean vs. Red Ocean



1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

1977

Toyota Production System "JIT", "lean manufacturing"



1997

The Innovator's Dilemma
Disruptive innovation



2014

Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future
Thinking for yourself



Title	Publishing Year	Genre	Author	Abstract	Influential Concept
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Toyota Production System: Beyond Large-Scale Production

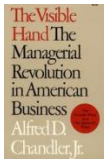
1978

Operations

Taiichi Ohno

This is a must read book for anybody involved or interested in operations, manufacturing and maximizing efficiency. Written by Taiichi Ohno, the inventor of the Toyota Production System, the book introduces many influential concepts in the field of operations such as just-in-time and lean manufacturing.

Just-in-Time (JIT) production methods; Lean manufacturing



The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business

1977

Management

Alfred Dupont Chandler

Chandler uses eight propositions to argue that Adam Smith's invisible hand has been supplanted by the "visible hand" of middle management, which has become "the most powerful institution in the American economy".

The visible hand of management versus the invisible hand of market forces



Men and women of the corporation

1977

Organizational Behavior

Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Rosabeth Moss Kanter shows how the careers and self-images of the managers, professionals, and executives, and also those of the secretaries, wives of managers, and women looking for a way up, are determined by the distribution of power and powerlessness within the corporation.

Discussed how work experiences shape people's social attitudes and behavior



The Nature of Managerial Work

1973

Organizational Behavior

Henry Mintzberg

This text describes the manager's job using findings of empirical studies conducted internationally throughout many levels of management. The text summarizes eight current schools of thought on the manager's job and analyzes the consistencies and variations in managers' roles and working characteristics.

One of the few books that actually examine what managers do, rather than discussing what they should do



A Monetary History of the United States, 1867-1960

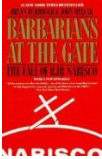
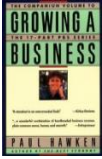
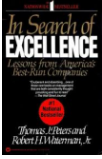
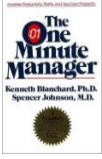
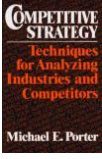
1971


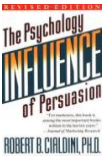

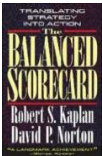
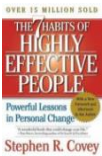
History

Milton Friedman and Anna Jacobson Schwartz

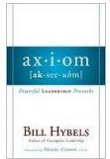
Written by Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz, the book is considered to be one of the most prominent works on macroeconomics, and monetary policy in particular. The authors present substantial amounts of data and analysis in the support of the argument that monetary policy is a strong instrument in influencing economic growth and fluctuations.

Sets a new standard for the writing of monetary history

Title	Publishing Year	Genre	Author	Abstract	Influential Concept
	1989	Strategy	Bryan Burrough and John Helyar	A #1 New York Times bestseller and arguably the best business narrative ever written, Barbarians at the Gate is the classic account of the fall of RJR Nabisco.	The definitive account of the largest takeover in Wall Street history
	1988	Entrepreneurship	Paul Hawken	Using case studies and real world examples, Hawken's shows that successful businesses are an expression of individual person. The most successful businesses grow from within an individual and can't be stolen since the idea so uniquely belongs to the individual.	Restorative economy
	1982	Operations	Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr.	The book written by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman is one of the biggest bestsellers in business literature. The book presents the most effective management practices exercised in more than 40 large organizations in the USA. The book is famous for providing company executives with 8 valuable lessons for successful management of a company.	'In Search of Excellence' eight themes
	1981	Leadership	Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson	Techniques to improve productivity, increase job satisfaction and boost personal prosperity. The book reveals three practical secrets: One Minute Goals, One Minute Praisings, and One Minute Reprimands.	Change management
	1980	Strategy	Michael E. Porter	One of the most influential business strategy books which was written by Michael Porter, a distinguished leader in the field of competitive strategy and analysis. The book presents different strategic theories, generic strategies and frameworks such as Porter's Five Forces – which all are concepts widely accepted by scholars and business leaders and applied both by large and small companies. Furthermore, Porter's work is a common educational material covered in business schools all over the world.	Competitive Advantage; Porter's 5 forces

Title	Publishing Year	Genre	Author	Abstract	Influential Concept
 <p>SIX THINKING HATS EDWARD DE BONO</p>	1999	Psychology	Edward de Bono	Through case studies and real-life examples, Dr. de Bono reveals the often surprising ways in which deliberate role playing can make you a better thinker. He offers a powerfully simple tool that you-and your business, whether it's a start-up or a major corporation-can use to create a climate of clearer thinking, improved communication, and greater creativity. His book is an instructive and inspiring text for anyone who makes decisions, in business or in life.	The six thinking hats; Parallel thinking
 <p>The Psychology of Persuasion ROBERT B. CIALDINI, PH.D.</p>	1998	Marketing	Robert B. Cialdini	Influence, the classic book on persuasion, explains the psychology of why people say "yes"—and how to apply these understandings. Dr. Robert Cialdini is the seminal expert in the rapidly expanding field of influence and persuasion. His thirty-five years of rigorous, evidence-based research along with a three-year program of study on what moves people to change behavior has resulted in this highly acclaimed book.	The six universal principles of persuasion
 <p>The Innovator's Dilemma When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail CLAYTON M. CHRISTENSEN</p>	1997	Strategy	Clayton M. Christensen	The dilemma presented by Clayton Christensen is about the possibility of failure of large companies despite listening to customers, accommodating current demand and sustaining technologies. He argues that in a rapidly evolving environment disruptive technologies and innovations have the strongest positive impact on the performance of companies in the long term and therefore managers should neglect any negative short term effects caused by them.	Disruptive innovation
 <p>BALANCED SCORECARD TRANSLATING STRATEGY INTO ACTION ROBERT S. KAPLAN DAVID P. NORTON</p>	1996	Strategy	Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton	While this book may have not reach the masses as much as others in this list, the work by Robert Kaplan and David Norton introduced an influential concept of the balanced scorecard that is used in many large organizations all over the world. The balanced scorecard is a performance measurement tools that monitors and evaluates performance based on a set of various characteristics that include both financial and non-financial metrics.	The balanced scorecard
 <p>THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE POWERFUL LESSONS IN PERSONAL CHANGE STEPHEN R. COVEY</p>	1990	Self-help	Stephen R. Covey	Written by Stephen Covey and published in 1990, this piece of business literature is widely regarded as one of the most distinguished works in the field of self-development. A concept of paradigm shift is introduced along with a list of 7 habits that will help anybody become a more effective person when in to personal development and achievement of goals.	Paradigm Shift

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Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs

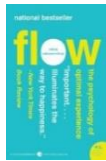
2008

Leadership

Bill Hybels

After serving thirty five years as the senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, Bill Hybels presents a unique leadership workpiece with 76 concise chapters or leaderships principles summarized into four categories: vision and strategy, teamwork and communication, activity and assessment, and personal integrity

76 practical proverbs of leadership



Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience

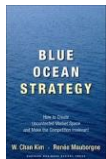
2008

Psychology

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

In this new edition of his groundbreaking classic work, Csikszentmihalyi examines the positive state of Flow and the ways this positive state can be controlled, not just left to chance. Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience teaches how, by ordering the information that enters our consciousness, we can discover true happiness and greatly improve the quality of our lives.

The flow model



Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant

2005

Strategy

W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne

The book written by INSEAD professors in 2005 introduces the concept of “the blue ocean strategy” which suggests that the right strategic moves will make competition irrelevant. Instead of wasting vast resources and time on competitive tactics, companies should focus on unlocking new value for stakeholders and entering uncontested market spaces.

Blue Ocean Strategy



The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century

2005

Globalization

Thomas Friedman

This international bestseller discusses globalization in the beginning of the twenty first century and its impact on global commerce, economies and societies. In an era of globalization and rapid technological advancements, Friedman calls organization to be ahead of the trends to remain competitive,

10 forces that flattened the world



Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't

2001

Management

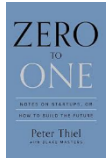
James C. Collins

The vastly popular book on management provides the reader with some ideas on why some companies are able to sustain superior performance over a long term while other organizations fail. The book is famous for listing seven characteristics of “good to great” companies, author’s main messages to the companies is to focus on core competences.

Level 5 Leaders; The Hedgehog Concept; etc.



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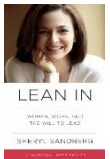
2014

Entrepreneurship

Peter Thiel

Legendary entrepreneur and investor Peter Thiel begins with the contrarian premise that we live in an age of technological stagnation, even if we're too distracted by shiny mobile devices to notice. Information technology has improved rapidly, but there is no reason why progress should be limited to computers or Silicon Valley. Progress can be achieved in any industry or area of business. It comes from the most important skill that every leader must master: learning to think for yourself.

Learning how to think for yourself



Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

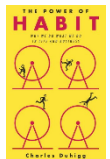
2013

Leadership

Sheryl Sandberg

Sandberg is the chief operating officer of Facebook and is ranked on Fortune's list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Business. In Lean In, Sheryl Sandberg examines why women's progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling, common sense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential.

The Myth of Doing It All



The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business

2012

Psychology

Charles Duhigg

In The Power of Habit, award-winning New York Times business reporter Charles Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed. With penetrating intelligence and an ability to distill vast amounts of information into engrossing narratives, Duhigg brings to life a whole new understanding of human nature and its potential for transformation.

Habit Creation and Reformation



Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions

2011

Entrepreneurship

Guy Kawasaki

Kawasaki argues that in business and personal interactions, your goal is not merely to get what you want but to bring about a voluntary, enduring, and delightful change in other people. By enlisting their own goals and desires, by being likable and trustworthy, and by framing a cause that others can embrace, you can change hearts, minds, and actions.

Voluntary Change



Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard

2010

Psychology

Chip Heath and Dan Heath

The Heath brothers (coauthors of Made to Stick) address motivating employees, family members, and ourselves in their analysis of why we too often fear change. Change is not inherently frightening, but our ability to alter our habits can be complicated by the disjunction between our rational and irrational minds: the self that wants to be swimsuit-season ready and the self that acquiesces to another slice of cake anyway. The trick is to find the balance between our powerful drives and our reason.

The Rational and Emotional Mind



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