



[Rana Florida](#)

CEO, The Creative Class Group

## Your Start-up Life: Best Business Books to Groom Your Team

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Thursdays at the Huffington Post, Rana Florida, CEO of [The Creative Class Group](#), will answer readers' questions about how they can optimize their lives. She will also feature conversations with successful entrepreneurs and thought leaders about how they manage their businesses, relationships, careers, and more. Send your questions about work, life, or relationships to [rana@creativeclass.com](mailto:rana@creativeclass.com).

*Dear Rana,*

*I lead a team of 20-30-year-old management consultants. Most of them are very self motivated and need little guidance. One new hire asked me what she should be reading and other than our standard newsletter and industry publications, no management/leadership books came to mind because I haven't had time to pick one up since *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Do you have an up to date reading list?*

*Roger  
Dallas, TX*

Hi Roger,

I'm so excited you asked this question. I've incorporated feedback from my own team and we selected books, old and new spanning not only business and management but creative thinking, technology, the global economy, sociology and psychology. I had a lot of fun putting it together and had a hard time narrowing it down to my top 25.

It's such a great thing to suggest readings for your team. Perhaps you should think about building a department or corporate library. Zappos encourages growth and learning through its "[family library](#)" located in their front lobby. Books not only encourage professional development but provide debate and dialogue as well.



*The Zappos Library*

Insights about business can be gleaned from almost any good book -- whether it's a memoir by a professional athlete like Andre Agassi, in which he shares not just his passion and dedication but the lessons he's learned from failure, or a page-turning account of the ups and downs of a frenetic political campaign like *Game Change*. This list will give your team a great foundation while pushing the boundaries of creative thinking.

**[Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin and the Race of a Lifetime](#)**

John Heilemann and Mark Halperin (Harper, 2010)

*Based on hundreds of interviews with the people who lived the story, Game Change is a reportorial tour de force that reads like a fast-paced novel. Great lessons about flexibility, adaptability, media strategy and surrounding yourself with the right team.*

**[The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More](#)**

Chris Anderson (Hyperion, 2008)

*The editor of Wired magazine shows how businesses like Amazon and eBay have created a new*

paradigm. The age of the blockbuster bestseller might be over, but consumers are buying more overall.

### **The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life**

Richard Florida (BasicBooks, 2002)

*My husband's classic study of the ways that creativity has come to drive the post-industrial economy, affecting every aspect of life -- from how we make our livings to where we choose to live. A tenth anniversary revision, [The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited](#), will be published later this spring.*

### **The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail**

Clayton M. Christensen (HarperBusiness, 1997)

*Sometimes being too attentive to a customer's present needs can work to a company's disadvantage. The rise of disruptive new technologies creates both challenges and opportunities for forward-looking businesses.*

### **Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose**

Tony Hsieh (Business Plus, 2010)

*The young CEO of Zappos tells how he created a corporate culture with a commitment to service that not only "delivers WOW" to his customers but improves the lives of his employees, vendors, and backers.*

### **A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future**

Daniel H. Pink (Riverhead, 2006)

*The holistic, intuitive skills that we associate with artists, storytellers, and inventors are more and more the keys to professional success -- not the numbers crunching analytics they teach in business school. The Harvard Business Review has named Pink one of the top 50 business thinkers in the world.*

### **What's Mine is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption**

Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers (HarperBusiness, 2010)

*Zipcar and bike sharing services allows urban dwellers to rent transportation on an as-needed basis; eBay allows consumers to redistribute goods at a fair price. What began as an "alternative" economy is permanently transforming the mainstream economy in a more sustainable direction, according to this groundbreaking study.*

### **Steve Jobs**

Walter Issacson (Simon & Schuster, 2011)

*The biography of the genius behind the Apple empire -- the creative visionary who has already taken his place in the pantheon of innovators alongside Gutenberg, Edison and Ford.*

### **Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything**

Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner (Morrow, 2005, 2006)

*Steven D. Levitt asks questions that nobody else thinks of -- and fearlessly follows the data*

wherever it leads. He has "the most interesting mind in America," says Malcolm Gladwell -- and *Freakonomics* is one of those books that you'll never stop talking about.

### **On Competition**

Michael Porter (Harvard Business School, 1998, 2008)

*Updated and expanded in 2008, this book collects the Harvard Business school's best and most accessible articles on competitive strategy written over the past 20 years -- a must read for anyone in business or public policy.*

### **Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard**

Chip and Dan Heath (Crown Business, 2010)

*The authors draw on decades of often counterintuitive findings in psychology, sociology and other fields to shed new light on how we can effect fundamental, transformational change-- whether to ourselves, an organization, or the world.*

### **Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap....And Others Don't**

Jim Collins (HarperBusiness, 2001)

*Although he included the now-defunct Circuit City in his list of companies that achieved "greatness," Jim Collins book remains the definitive study of what causes some corporations to break out of the pack. The secret is not superstar CEOs or a grand new paradigm, he says -- the companies that truly prosper are those that foster a culture of competence and discipline.*

### **The World is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twentfirst Century**

Thomas Friedman (FSG, 2007)

*From the three-time Pulitzer Prize-winner, an updated and expanded new edition of his classic treatise on "the globalization of the local" -- and the challenges, opportunities, and drawbacks it poses.*

### **Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance**

Nouriel Roubini and Stephen Mihm (Penguin, 2010)

*Roubini was one of the few pundits who clearly foretold the disaster that was coming in 2008. Crisis Economics reveals how he did it -- and how the methods he used to foretell the crisis can help us prepare for a more prosperous future.*

### **Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization**

Jeff Rubin (Random House, 2009)

*The chief economist and strategist at CIBC World Markets envisions a world without cheap oil -- a world that will be smaller than the one we live in today, but that is potentially not just greener but more prosperous.*

### **The Experience Economy: Work is Theater and Every Business a Stage**

B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore (Harvard Business Press, 1999)

*Newly updated and expanded, this book argues that it's no longer enough just to provide goods and services to your customers. To make your brand stand out, you have to give them an experience as well -- a lesson that Disney, Starbucks and Zappos all well understand.*

### **Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die**

Chip and Dan Heath (Random House, 2007)

*Why are some ideas swiftly forgotten while others make an indelible impression? Drawing extensively on psychosocial studies of memory, motivation, and emotion, the bestselling Heath brothers conclude that an idea's stickiness depends upon how it's conveyed. Required reading for salesmen, marketers, politicians, advertisers -- and anyone who wants to make a lasting impression.*

### **The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era**

Jeremy Rifkin (Tarcher, 2004)

*The combined forces of automation and globalism are dividing the world into two classes -- the information elite that manages the high-tech economy and the increasingly vast numbers of displaced workers, who have little stake in the system and few hopes. The result, Rifkin provocatively suggested, could be the end of civilization as we know it -- which is not necessarily a bad thing. A book to ponder and argue with -- but one that can't be ignored.*

### **Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone**

Eric Klineberg (Penguin, 2012)

*In 1950, only 22 percent of American adults were single. Today more than 50 percent of American adults are single and 31 million of them live by themselves. Klineberg is one of the first sociologists to recognize the significance of this social shift -- perhaps the most important since the Baby Boom. Great book for understanding customers.*

### **Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy** Isadore Sharp (Portfolio, 2009)

*From Toronto developments to international business success, the founder of the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts tells his astonishing life story -- and lays out the business philosophy that made him a multi-billionaire.*

### **Outliers: The Story of Success**

Malcom Gladwell (Little Brown, 2008)

*What makes a Bill Gates, a Mozart or a Beatle? Genius, yes, but also hard work and the opportunity to study a skill intensively, gaining the kind of mastery that enables them to rise to the top. Fascinating, counter-intuitive, and always thought-provoking, Gladwell invites the reader to see the familiar in a totally new light.*

### **Open: An Autobiography**

Andre Agassi (Knopf, 2009)

*Among the many revelations in Agassi's frank and always-engaging memoir is the fact that, for much of his career, he hated the game of tennis with a passion. An incredible story of struggle and redemption by one of the greatest competitors that tennis -- or any other sport -- has ever seen.*

### **Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything**

Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams (Portfolio, 2008)

*A leading authority on innovation, media, and the economic impact of technology explains how*

*Wikipedia points the way to a new era of massive collaborations. The Human Genome Project, for example, is in part a product of peer innovation, which is unleashing our collective creativity and knowledge on a never-before-seen scale.*

### **The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement**

David Brooks (Random House, 2011)

*Drawing on the latest insights in sociology and neuroscience and writing with his signature wit, David Brooks explores the ways that our unconscious minds shape the way we live, love, and work. Most importantly, he tries to understand what it all means -- for ourselves as individuals, spouses, parents, businesspeople and politicians. His story, as he puts it, is based on science, but it's really about emotion and character.*

### **Imagine: How Creativity Works**

Jonah Lehrer (Houghton Mifflin, 2012)

*Drawing on the latest findings of neuroscience, the author of How We Decide ("the most talented explainer of science that we've got" -- Joshua Foer) shows that creativity is not a single gift possessed by a fortunate few -- it is a combination of ways of thinking and interacting that we can all adapt and make use of.*

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