

The Kellogg Sales Institute's Recommended Reading List

Please note: Some of the books below are repeated in different sections, as they apply to multiple topics.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Lean Startup (Ries) - If you are interested in entrepreneurship, start here. A game-changing book that will help you avoid the huge mistakes that many entrepreneurs make (including me) and spend only what you need to create your minimum viable product.

The Four Steps to the Epiphany (Blank) - I'm an unabashed Steve Blank fan. Here, he provides the foundation for how to build a business, not get ahead of yourself, and focus on what he calls "Customer Development" (I like the word "Sales" better, but I wouldn't argue with Steve...I'd lose).

The Entrepreneur's Guide to Customer Development (Cooper & Vlaskovits) - I love this book too...I think of it as the 'Cliff's Notes' version of Blank's The Four Steps to the Epiphany.

Business Model Generation (Osterwalder) - A must-read for any entrepreneur starting a business. This breakthrough way of thinking about business models helps us be much more thorough in the construction of the business model.

The Hard Things About Hard Things (Horowitz) - Horowitz captures the zeitgeist of his blog posts about the stark realities of growing and running businesses.

Get Backed (Baehr & Loomis) - A very good primer on putting together a fundraising pitch for your business. I like how they break down the pitch deck and their emphasis - of course - on 'story.'

Competing Against Luck (Christensen) - Any list of entrepreneurship books must have at least one book from Clay Christiansen. This is my favorite, because Clay gets to the heart of innovation...figure out the root cause of why customers are "hiring" your product...don't just keep trying to make the product better.

Little Bets (Sims) - This little book puts another angle on lean, the four steps to the epiphany, jobs-to-be-done and customer development. Sims asks us how might we run little experiments (“little bets”) to test and refine our approaches. What I love about this book is that it applies as much to careers as it does to entrepreneurship.

Venture Deals (Feld & Mendelson) - This is THE go-to book for learning how to raise venture funding.

Measure What Matters (Doerr) - This book will help you think through goal setting using the methodology now in place at Google...the “OKR,” Objectives & Key Results. A little too much history of OKRs, but otherwise helpful.

Traction (Wickman) - Not sure I understand the cult-like following this book has, but lots of great process recommendations in here.

Steve Jobs (Isaacson) - The biography, of course, of one of the greatest of all time. The man who changed or hatched seven industries.

Startup Way (Ries) - Ries again. This is a follow-on to his breakout “The Lean Startup,” and a fantastic resource for larger companies trying to be more innovative.

POWER & INFLUENCE

Influence (Cialdini) - A bit academic, but full of great stories that lay the foundation for how and why we have influence over others. You need to know these six principles.

Thinking Fast & Slow (Kahneman) - This book is a twofer. A book about how our brains process information that influences how we make decisions, AND a book about why stories are so powerful.

Undoing Project (Lewis) - A tale about Daniel Kahneman’s work and life and why he and Amos Tversky taught us all to think differently.

Superfans (Flynn) – learn how to turn customers and followers into “superfans” that connect your community and ensure you continue to expand your business at the lowest possible cost.

DELIBERATE PRACTICE/HABIT DEVELOPMENT

PEAK: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise (Ericsson/Pool) - From the father of deliberate practice, the things that have to be true to become the best of the best.

The Power of Habit (Duhigg) - A quick, easy look at how habits are made (and unmade). Will get

you working on better habits.

Outliers (Gladwell) – Practice, practice, practice. This is how we become great. Gladwell tells the compelling stories about how those we often deem as “naturals” actually just practiced constantly.

The 11th Habit (Sykes) - A master of habit development. What I love about Andrew Sykes’ approach is how he prioritizes the habit of self-care, reminding us that we need to take care of ourselves FIRST, so we can be great for others.

The Obstacle is the Way (Holiday) - Transform problems into opportunities, based on stoic philosophy applied to the modern world.

MINDSET

The Happiness Hypothesis (Haidt) - This book offers some fresh and interesting looks at ways we create meaning and happiness.

Limitless: Upgrade Your Brain, Learn Anything Faster, and Unlock Your Exceptional Life (Kwik)
- Gives people the ability to accomplish more by changing their Mindset, Motivation, and Methods.

So Good They Can't Ignore You (Newport) - Newport helps us unpack the disciplines needed to view work with a ‘craftsman’s’ mindset and create rare and valuable skills. He calls these rare and valuable skills “career capital.”

The Power of Now (Tolle) - Learn how to live in the moment. If you really dig into this book, it will change your life.

Mindset (Dweck) - A dive into two different mindsets that we routinely adopt. This book provides a great overview of how those two mindsets affect many different situations in which we find ourselves.

Upstream (Heath) - looks at the root cause of things and how the mindset of “going up stream” can radically alter how you solve problems.

STORY

Story (McKee) - Start here. McKee captures the essence of great stories in a way that will help you craft them.

Made To Stick (Heath) - A more functional book that will help you both appreciate stories and

shape them in ways that make you more memorable.

The Story Factor (Simmons) - I love Simmons's "the six stories you need to know how to tell." Know them. Tell them.

Six Word Memoirs (Smith & Fershleiser) - Clever, fun and surprisingly insightful. Shows how much you can do if you are concise.

The Hero With A Thousand Faces (Campbell) - Very dense, but spells out the Hero's Journey. This book will change the way you watch movies and read novels...you will 'see' the 12 step hero's journey as it unfurls.

The Writer's Journey (Vogler) - This is as much a book about how to tell a story as it is about writing. You get a twofer here.

Metaphors We Live By (Lakoff) - Dense and academic, but helps you understand both the frequency and power of metaphor. You will start seeing them everywhere.

DO/STORY: How to tell your story so the world listens (Buster) - A great primer on the 'how' to tell great stories. I love that Bobette Buster breaks down the process of telling great stories and makes it accessible.

What's Your Story? (Wortmann) - Capture, distill and tell the right stories at the right time for the right reasons.

CONVERSATIONS

Crucial Conversations (Patterson et al) - The definitive work on how to handle tough conversations does you as much good at home as it does at work.

A More Beautiful Question (Berger) - This will help you build this most important skill/discipline; the ability to ask better, more powerful questions.

Weekend Language (Craig) - A powerful reminder that we must strive to find the signal within the noise of our communications.

Language and the Pursuit of Happiness (Chalmers brothers) - Understand language and conversations (including those you have with yourself!) rooted in a powerful, practical basis for real change and lasting improvements - at home, at work and everywhere in between.

WRITING

Writing That Works (Roman & Raphaelson) - A little dated (especially in the latter chapters), but

timeless advice on how to write for clarity and impact

Writing Down The Bones (Goldberg) - A philosophical look at writing that sneaks up on you (in a good way). Can be powerfully read in 5 minute snippets.

On Writing (King) - A master storyteller talking about the craft of writing, and who isn't afraid to kick your ass.

I Never Metaphor I Didn't Like (Grohe) - A giant list of metaphors that will make your writing and speaking more memorable.

The Elements of Style (Strunk & White) - A must. If you write in the English language, you need to read this foundational book.

The Idea Writers (Iezzi) - A writer who understands sales. Full of great context about how writing is changing (and not changing).

PRODUCTIVITY

The Checklist Manifesto (Gawande) - A surgeon who writes a classic about how to get stuff done well (and ranked one of The Economist's great business books of the year). Who knew?

Getting Things Done (Allen) - Recognized as the classic in this space. Tips and techniques for making yourself more efficient and effective.

The First 90 Days (Watkins) - Classic work on how to ramp up into a company and become quickly indispensable.

How to Read a Book (Adler) - A living classic.

CONFLICT

The Trusted Advisor (Maister) - Another classic work that shows how strong relationships are built. If you are going into consulting (or life), this should be in your hands or on your ears at all times.

Emotional Intelligence 2.0 (Bradberry) - This will help you understand how to be more aware of your emotions and not let them get the best of you.

Crucial Conversations (Patterson et al) - The definitive work on how to handle tough conversations does you as much good at home as it does at work.

NETWORKING

Give and Take (Grant) - Grant's recent classic on how we must look for ways to go above and beyond. Really, a book about networking hiding in a book about social science research.

Never Eat Alone (Ferrazzi) - Just a simple push to be more disciplined in how we think about spending our time.

Modern Etiquette for a Better Life (Gottzman) - Like Strunk & White's "The Elements of Style" but for your life.

Moonwalking With Einstein (Foer) - Funny and well-written, this book is about memory, and exerting discipline to train your brain to remember large amounts of information.

PRESENTING

Five Stars (Gallo) - A build on Talk Like TED, but with more granular (and helpful) communications disciplines and skills.

Talk Like TED (Gallo) - Unlocks the skills and disciplines of the most popular speakers and presentations.

Resonate (Duarte) - Let's us in on some of the secrets to some of the best stories we know.

Slideology (Duarte) - A set of helpful guidelines on how to create better visuals.

Presence (Cuddy) - This book does a great job putting concrete-ness around something that is often hard to define.

Compelling People (Neffinger & Kohut) - A great, easy way to think about how you are 'showing up' and 'standing out' in any room you are in.

Just Listen (Dressen) - Shares simple, effective techniques to break through to anyone. From making a good first impression or positively navigating an angry interaction, this book had been a game-changer.

BRAND YOU

#AskGaryVee (VayNerChuk) - Crazy book from a crazy guy, but packed full of insights into the dos and don'ts of social.

This I Believe (Gediman & Allison) - Helps you understand you, in a way that you should take into all of the ways you show up in the world.

The Road to Recognition: The A-to-Z Guide to Personal Branding (Feldman & Price) - This is a great resource for getting off your butt and showing up (online and off). Use this book this way: grab one thing at a time and execute on it. Come back. Do it again.

SELLING

To Sell Is Human (Pink) - We are all selling more than we think we are. In this book, Pink looks at what makes people magnetic and resilient. He offers some great ways of thinking about selling and how we "show up" in many situations.

The Power of Moments (Heath) - How to create special moments to go above and beyond for everyone in your life.

The Sales Acceleration Formula (Roberge) - Mark offers a set of very valuable lessons in transitioning from what I call "Entrepreneurial Selling" to professional selling, especially as it relates to the role of sales leader.

Thinking In Bets (Duke) - A bestseller for a reason. A poker champion shares what tools to use when you have to make decisions when you don't have all the answers.

NEGOTIATING

Never Split the Difference (Voss/Raz) - A look at the subtle disciplines and skills of expert negotiators.

COACHING

Trillion Dollar Coach (Schmidt/Rosenberg/Eagle) - How coaching relationships are established and what must be true to call yourself a coach.

DECISION-MAKING

Thinking In Bets (Duke) - A bestseller for a reason. A poker champion shares what tools to use when you have to make decisions when you don't have all the answers.

Decisive (Heath Brothers) - Lays out a clear process for decision making that works against our emotional and/or non-rational biases.

Never Split the Difference (Voss/Raz) - A look at the ever-so-subtle-but-powerful disciplines and skills of expert negotiators.

Predictably Irrational (Ariely) - Breaks down the science behind the choices we make.

Farsighted (Johnson) - Amazing science writer, Steven Johnson, is back with a book that will help us all be better decision-makers.

Thinking Fast & Slow (Kahneman) - This book is a twofer. A book about how our brains process information that influences how we make decisions, AND a book about why stories are so powerful.