

Readings for Singularity University Finance, Entrepreneurship & Economics Track

The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More

by Chris Anderson

One of the seminal books about business in the 21st century, that has become a critical base for any discussion of the future of retailing (and just about everything else). If we were assigning mandatory reading, this would have been one of the books on the list.

FREE: The Future of A Radical Price

by Chris Anderson

It's not that Chris Anderson is the source of all brilliance about the new economy, but he has a definite knack for identifying critical, disruptive market trends, and then writing about them directly, cogently and with humor. This book was controversial when it came out a year ago, but from my perspective in the early stage marketplace, I can tell you that his projections are much more right than they are wrong. This is stuff you NEED to understand to make sense of new business models.

Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies

by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff

The social-enabled Web 2.0 is morphing so quickly in an age of exponentially developing technologies that virtually everything written about it is out of date before publication. This is a readable and useful introduction to the state of the world as of 2008 and will help quickly get you up to speed and put many other things in perspective.

Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations

by Clay Shirky

Crowdsourcing, networking and online groups are fundamentally re-organizing the social order, and the effects are far-reaching in all spheres, including business. This readable work synthesizes much of the current thinking on the subject, and is a good accompaniment to *Groundswell*, *FREE*, and *The Long Tail*.

The Wealth of Networks

by Yochai Benkler

Written by a Yale law professor and published in 2007, this definitive (for its time...it was written pre-Twitter) tome is a quite comprehensive assessment of all of the Web 2.0 technologies, and the way in which the 'networked information economy' relates profit-focused businesses and socially-derived projects in a changing society. A long book (500+ pages) but a good job at bring the various strands together.

The Great Stagnation: How America Ate All The Low-Hanging Fruit of Modern History, Got Sick, and Will (Eventually) Feel Better

by Tyler Cowen

As David Brooks writes in a [review of Cowen's book in the New York Times](#), "...It could be that the nature of technological change isn't causing the [economic] slowdown but a shift in values. It could be that in an industrial economy people develop a materialist mind-set and believe that improving their income is the same thing as improving their quality of life. But in an affluent information-driven world, people embrace the postmaterialist mind-set. They realize they can improve their quality of life without actually producing more wealth." Fascinating and thought-provoking reading as we consider the concept of a 'post-sufficiency' society with engagement as the new currency and experience as the new wealth.

The Post-American World

by Fareed Zakaria

There are several solid books on globalization and the truly extraordinary changes that it has meant for business in this century. It is simply not possible any longer to function effectively in designing, operating or investing in commercial enterprises unless you have a very good grounding in the seismic re-ordering of the world over the past few decades. This is my first choice, but an equally readable, and also recommended, introduction is **Thomas Friedman's [The World is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century](#)**.

The 21st Century Economy—A Beginner's Guide

by Randy Charles Epping

Short and readable, this very basic semi-economics introduction ties together themes from the books above, to bring you up to speed on the concepts and terminology that will be useful in understanding the changes in the world of finance occasioned by such developments as the Long Tail, Web 2.0 and Globalization.

The E-Myth Revisited

by Michael E. Gerber

For anyone considering starting his or her own business, this classic is an absolute must-read before you do anything. It lays out in explicitly stark terms the difference between "small business ownership" and "entrepreneurship"; between being a baker and running a bakery. After you finish this, you should have a pretty good feel for whether you have what it takes (in mindset, not just skill) to create a high-growth business.

Lucky Or Smart?: Fifty Pages for the First-Time Entrepreneur

by Bo Peabody

Once you've read Gerber and decided that you really are an entrepreneur, next on your list should be Bo Peabody's marvelous little book about the real world, and how not to confuse luck with smarts. I only wish that most of my CEOs had read this one.

Three Moves Ahead: What Chess Can Teach You About Business

by Bob Rice

Aside from being extremely well written (something that one can rarely say about business books), the central thesis here is that in a rapidly changing business environment it is no longer sufficient to give 'cookbook' answers to solving problems. Instead, by apply chess theories (NOT 'rules'), *Three Moves Ahead* gives business executives (and particularly entrepreneurs with early stage companies) a framework for developing their overall business strategies in a world that is morphing faster than we can understand it. The concepts are rock solid, the 21st century examples to which they are applied are brilliant, and the result is a gem of a book that has the potential to reframe the entire discussion of success factors in business.

The Innovator's Dilemma

by Clayton M. Christensen

Written by a Harvard Business School professor, this provocative best-seller addresses some of the most crucial strategic issues that technology companies have to face, providing concrete examples of Schumpeter's theory of 'creative destruction'.

Technology Ventures: From Idea to Enterprise

by Richard C. Dorf and Thomas H. Byers

This is the definitive textbook on technology entrepreneurship, by one of the FEE Track Advisors (Byers). It integrates entrepreneurship and technology management with current examples of new technologies and an extensive suite of media resources, and details the critical differences between scientific ideas and true business opportunities.

Reality Check: the Irreverent Guide to Outsmarting, Outmanaging and Outmarketing your Competition by Guy Kawasaki

A highly informative, readable and entertaining collection of notes on entrepreneurship, business strategy, marketing, high-tech, and start-ups from one of the long-time pundits of Silicon Valley.

Raising Venture Capital for the Serious Entrepreneur

by Dermot Berkery

While there are dozen books on the equity fundraising process, this one is hands-down the best. It is comprehensive, accurate and appropriately balanced between optimism and realism. If you are serious about getting VC funding for your enterprise, this will provide you with the distilled background knowledge to ensure that you come across as an informed entrepreneur and not a clueless wannabe. A good companion book that approaches the subject from a slightly different perspective is **Jeffrey Bussgang's "Mastering the VC Game"**. And for those who realistically understand that while they might not be quite ready for venture funding yet, angel investors may offer a viable alternative, **Bill Payne's "Definitive Guide to Raising Money from Angels"** stands head and shoulders above everything else in print on this subject.

Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery

by Garr Reynolds

There's a reason that none of the country's best presentation coaches and presenters want you to purchase this book: that's because it will put the former out of business, and make you as good as the latter. Seriously! Garr Reynolds has done what everyone else (at least among the presentation cognoscente) has been talking about for years. He has created what is truly THE book that is an absolute, positive must-read for everyone who is even thinking about presenting. I coach hundreds of entrepreneurs and CEOs each year for their fundraising road shows, and Garr has written and illustrated with stunning clarity the essence of what I and others have been preaching for years: visual clarity, simplicity, presence, planning and more. If you are even *thinking* about buying a book on presentation skills, this is it. After you devour it cover to cover, you can then go on to the two other presentation books on the list. But start here, heed the lessons in this instant classic, and your audiences will be guaranteed to be putty in your hands.

Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story

by Jerry Weissman

Unlike *Presentation Zen*, which is focused primarily on the design and delivery of PowerPoint presentations, Weissman's *Presenting to Win* is aimed directly at the CEO developing a fundraising pitch for a VC or angel road show. The book is very, very thorough, and is a superb, logical, step-by-step guide to how you should sequence a pitch presentation. Use Jerry for content, and Garr for design. This book is just about letter perfect, and has comprehensive discussions of things like opening dramatic statements, types of flow, etc. Highly recommended for pitch presentations! [The single

caveat is that Jerry suggests starting off with an agenda and overview of what you're going to discuss, which is simply WRONG in the context of this kind of pitch. Listen to me on this one, and Don't Do It.]

The Visual Display of Quantitative Information, 2nd edition

by Edward R. Tufte

The world is divided into those who have somehow never heard of this book, and everyone else for whom it has achieved cult status. If you ever HAVE done, ARE doing, or WILL be doing any kind of chart, graph, or visual presentation of numbers, you MUST read this book. It is the classic in the field, and you are simply not qualified to talk about business presentations until you have read this book (after which you will immediately (a) re-read it, and then (b) run out and get the three following books Tufte wrote.)

Outliers: The Story of Success

by Malcolm Gladwell

I believe that Gladwell's *Outliers* (the follow-up to his previous bestsellers *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*) may be the most important, seminal book I've read in years. In concise, clearly-written prose, he analyzes, and makes brilliantly clear, what stands behind the extraordinary success of people such as Bill Gates, Mozart and the Beatles, who have achieved things well outside the norm of typical accomplishment. Gladwell's point is that on closer examination, they are not such outliers after all. He maintains that their successes can be explained by provable combinations of natural (but not extraordinary) gifts, cultural programming, individual opportunity, and an enormous amount of hard work. I have given copies of this book to every member of my family, and if there's one thing you are going to read this year, *Outliers* should be it.

Parkinson's Law: And Other Studies in Administration

by C. Northcote Parkinson

OK, so this was written before I was even born, and has nothing whatsoever to do with The Singularity or exponentially accelerating technologies. But it is one of the more seminal business books ever written, and once you read it you will NEVER again look at time management, the British Admiralty, a board meeting or a cocktail party in the same way. "Work expands to fill the time allotted to its completion" is the first and most famous rule, but the others (and the stories that illustrate them) are just as hilarious and dead on. Run, don't walk, to get this book, and you will be quoting and remembering it for the rest of your life. And thanking Singularity U's *Finance, Entrepreneurship & Economics Track* for having introduced you to it. So there.

Online Readings

Slow Tuesday Night

by R. A. Lafferty

The one [required reading](#) for Singularity University's FEE Track, this short story by the extraordinarily under-appreciated science fiction writer R. A. Lafferty distills to its essence the future world of commerce.

What Is Web 2.0? Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software

by Tim O'Reilly

This is the seminal article from half a decade ago that gave the name to the new world of the Internet. Read this, and you, too, will **really** know what people are talking about when they start throwing around tech terms.

The Rise of Generation C

by Roman Friedrich, Michael Peterson, and Alex Koster

Subtitled "*How to prepare for the Connected Generation's transformation of the consumer and business landscape*", this article by Booz & Company discusses in detail the rise of the 'digital native' generation, and the kinds of changes that companies will need to undergo in order to remain relevant. The concepts they discuss are absolutely on-target...but they may be greatly underestimating the speed at which this will happen. (*Note: the article is free to download, but registration is required.*)

The Effect on Business of Accelerating Technologies

Anderson, **The Long Tail**
Anderson, **FREE**
Li & Bernoff, **Groundswell**
Shirky, **Here Comes Everybody**
Benkler, **The Wealth of Networks**

Globalization & Economics

Cowen, **The Great Stagnation**
Zakaria, **The Post American World**
Friedman, **The World Is Flat**
Epping, **The 21st Century Economy**

Entrepreneurship

Gerber, **The E-Myth Revisited**
Peabody, **Lucky or Smart**
Rice, **Three Moves Ahead**
Christensen, **The Innovator's Dilemma**
Dorf & Byers, **Technology Ventures**
Kawasaki, **Reality Check**
Berkery, **Raising Venture Capital**
Bussgang, **Mastering the VC Game**
Payne, **The Definitive Guide**

Presentation Skills

Reynolds, **Presentation Zen**
Weissman, **Presenting to Win**
Tufte, **Visual Display of Quantitative Info**

Books You Just Have To Read

Gladwell, **Outliers**
Parkinson, **Parkinson's Law**

Articles/Stories

Lafferty, **Slow Tuesday Night**
O'Reilly, **What Is Web 2.0?**
Friedrich et al, **The Rise of Generation C**

Assuming You Have a Life and Just Don't Have Time To Read Two Dozen Books, REALLY Try To Read These, in This Order:

1. Lafferty, **Slow Tuesday Night** *mandatory!*
2. O'Reilly, **What Is Web 2.0?** *short!*
3. Friedrich et al, **The Rise of Generation C** *short!*
4. Anderson, **The Long Tail**
5. Zakaria, **The Post American World**
6. Cowen, **The Great Stagnation**
7. Rice, **Three Moves Ahead**
8. Reynolds, **Presentation Zen**
9. Payne, **The Definitive Guide**

Note: All titles are hyper-linked to Amazon or their online locations for easy acquisition...