

Five business books worth reading



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LOVE READING IN just about any genre, but I don't love reading books about business. The writing is often dry, the information sometimes unhelpful, and the tone often a little too boastful for my taste.

That said, the right book can make a significant impact on work habits, creativity, and overall outlook. Here are five of the best business books I've read recently, none of which made me want to tear my hair out:

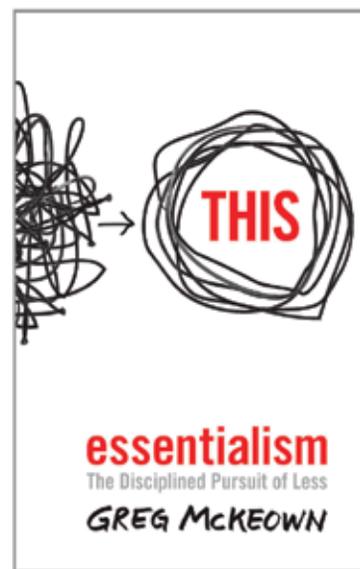
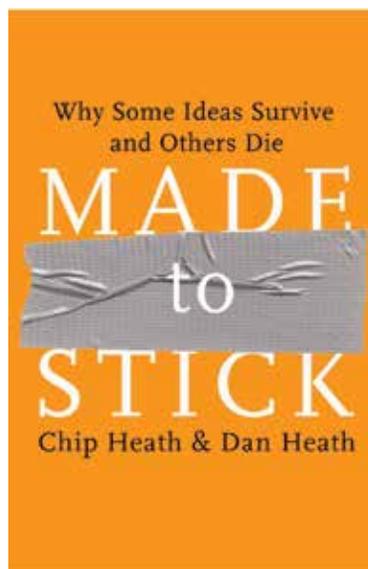
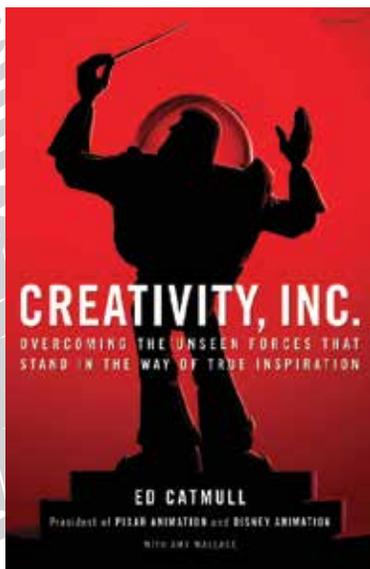
1. *Creativity, Inc.*, by Ed Catmull and Amy Wallace. Ed Catmull was a cofounder of Pixar, the movie company that created fun, heartwarming animated movies like *Toy Story* and *Inside Out*. *Creativity, Inc.* not only tells the story of Pixar, but also offers an in-depth look at how Pixar created its unique culture. The book offers practical tips about being creative at work and offers vital words about the importance of candor in the workplace. It's my favorite book on this list (other than #5).

2. *Made to Stick*, by Chip Heath and Dan Heath. What makes some ideas work and other ideas fail? *Made to Stick* is, arguably, the most directly applicable book on this list for people in marketing. The six chapters of this helpful book — “Simple,” “Unexpected,” “Concrete,” “Credible,” “Emotional,” and “Stories” — offer some of the most important ways to get ideas across and make them stick in the minds of your audience. It's a quick book, and extremely useful. If you could only read one of the books on this list, I would recommend this one.

3. *Essentialism*, by Greg McKeown. How do you focus on the right things without feeling like you have to focus on everything? Greg McKeown makes the argument that too many of us split our focus and, as a result, don't accomplish the things that are truly important to us. *Essentialism* is a helpful guide to saying yes and no to the right things. He even includes advice on how to say no without

feeling guilty and guidelines for saying no with grace. If you are looking for a book equally important for business and personal use, it's this one.

4. *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell. Occasionally, someone comes along with a book that has such interesting insights, you need to read it a few times to make sure it all soaks in. *The Tipping Point* is the oldest book on this list, and I could just as easily recommend Gladwell's books *Blink* and *Outliers*. In *The Tipping Point*, Gladwell looks at the different factors that make things go viral (though he didn't have that term when the book was published in 2002). One of the biggest lessons I took >>>





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from *The Tipping Point* is Gladwell's three personas: connectors, mavens, and salesmen. Those people are often invaluable to marketing efforts.

5. *Le Ton Beau de Marot*, by Douglas Hofstadter. Remember the *Sesame Street* song "One of These Things [Is Not Like the Others]"? This is the one on the list that's not like the others. Douglas Hofstadter is a professor of computer science and best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning 1979 book *Gödel, Escher, Bach*. Hofstadter is also a lover of language, and one of the smartest people whose ideas I've ever had the pleasure of reading. If you are looking for writing inspiration and want to read some fascinating ideas about the creative process, *Le Ton Beau de Marot* is the book for you. It is long — probably as long as any of the other three on the list combined — but it is fun.

Happy reading! These books will help inspire fresh thinking about marketing, about creativity, and, yes, about life in general. In the meantime, they won't put you to sleep with business speak or turn you off books forever. If you pick one up and read it, drop a line — I'd love to know what you think! ☺

