Recognized Expert -
The Companion Curriculum
Dorie Clark’s Best Business Book Recommendations

Reading business books was crucial in accelerating my learning, and helping me become a better entrepreneur. These are the books I consider to be foundational, and which I refer to again and again. Hope you enjoy.

*How to Fail at Almost Everything and Still Win Big by Scott Adams.* A charming, contrarian, and fascinating success 'how to' (or 'how not to') memoir by the creator of Dilbert. This is one of the best books of business stories I've read. His periodic allusions to "hitting the diversity ceiling" in corporate America make him sound like a whiner, but beyond that, the book is a gem.

*Choose Yourself* by James Altucher. This isn't a business advice book, per se, but more an engaging memoir of business ups-and-downs. Altucher is a beautiful copywriter (study his writing style – you can't put it down) and disarmingly honest about his life and struggles, which has served him very well in business.

*Influence* by Robert Cialdini. This is the classic on persuasion – beautifully written and chock full of blow-your-mind facts. Everyone needs to read it.

*Pre-Suasion* by Robert Cialdini. This is a companion volume to Influence, and a substantial contribution to understanding how to make influence work for you in the moments before you make the ask.

*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. This is a classic for good reason. You'll learn important and perennially useful concepts like “start with the end in mind” and the importance of “sharpening the saw.”
Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think. by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler. A fascinating look at future trends and why they're so hard to spot. This has philosophical implications for all of our business ventures, as well.

Sell Your Book Like Wildfire by Rob Eagar. If you're marketing a book, Rob's advice is spot on, and smarter than what most in-house marketers at publishing houses will tell you.


The E-Myth Revisited by Michael Gerber. The classic small business book, providing the useful concept of “working on” your business (i.e., systematizing), rather than “working in” your business (i.e., doing all the stuff yourself and getting overloaded so you can't grow). I learned a lot from this book.

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell. This is the book that popularized Anders Ericsson's famous “10,000 Hour Rule” of expertise. It's referred to so often in business circles, you ought to read it.

The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell. Same goes for this one. It's part of the cultural fabric now.

Made to Stick by Dan and Chip Heath. Consider this a follow-on or companion volume to The Tipping Point. The Heath brothers take Gladwell's 30,000 foot perspective and try to make it actionable for business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Getting to Plan B by Randy Komisar and John Mullins. A look at how startups pivot by a well known Silicon Valley VC and a British professor. Chock full of interesting case studies you can learn from, both regarding your business and your overall professional life.

Ask by Ryan Levesque. A deep dive on survey methodology. That may sound dry, but it's an essential skill when it comes to understanding your customers.

11 Rules for Creating Value in the Social Era by Nilofer Merchant. This short book is a great primer on the future of the economy and important trends like the sharing economy, crowdfunding, etc. It will make you look at your business, and your business model, in new ways.

Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don’t by Jeffrey Pfeffer. Pfeffer is Stanford business school professor who provides a clear and smart roadmap for how to win at office politics and successfully navigate other people's pettiness.
The Lean Startup by Eric Ries. This book is read by every startup aspirant these days, and with good reason. His concepts, such as the ‘minimum viable product,’ have become a very useful framework in how to launch a product quickly and cheaply to establish demand, before you go all in. A nice companion to Peter Sims’ book below.

Just Start by Leonard Schlesinger, Charles Kiefer, and Paul Brown. A great entrepreneurship primer for when you’re overthinking things. They remind you that taking action of some kind, no matter how small, is the necessary ingredient.

Little Bets by Peter Sims. A look at how to experiment in small and strategic ways, without putting yourself or your company at too much risk.

The Education of a Value Investor by Guy Spier. It’s nominally a book about investing, but it’s actually about business ethics and what careers and lives should be made of.

Launch by Jeff Walker. If you plan to do internet marketing, Jeff Walker sets the standard. Many people have copied him, with greater or lesser success, but it’s worth consulting the original and determining which pieces to keep or reject.

Bonus: More Great Books by Our Course Guest Experts

David Burkus – The Myths of Creativity and Under New Management

Shama Hyder – The Zen of Social Media Marketing and Momentum

Laura Vanderkam – What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast, 168 Hours, and I Know How She Does It

And of course you’ve read Reinventing You, Stand Out, and Stand Out Networking, right?