

FOUR MUST READ BOOKS 2010

by Verne Harnish “Growth Guy“

www.gazelles.com



FOUR MUST READ BOOKS 2010



As I sit down to write this column post Memorial Day, the fourth Indian Jones sequel has just raked in over \$311 million its debut weekend at the box-office – hitting #1 in 62 countries and giving Steven Spielberg his biggest global opening ever! Here's to the power of sequels.

Similarly, there are some important business book sequels that are worth reading this summer (or winter for my friends down under):

YES!: **50 SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN WAYS TO BE PERSUASIVE**

In the fields of influence and persuasion, Dr. Robert Cialdini is the most cited living social psychologist in the world. His classic book **Influence** has sold over a million copies and is backed by 30 years of research into how to get someone to say “yes.” And he's the finest speaker I've ever heard on a specific topic – his command of the subject, his lucid examples, and his delivery are perfection. In fact, I was so impressed I sent three of my executive team members to participate in his two-day workshop earlier this year.

So I was obviously excited to hear that he was co-authoring a new book – really the first new book from Cialdini in over 20 years.

In fact, I was so impressed I sent three of my executive team members to participate in his two-day workshop earlier this year.

And I love the structure of the new book – fifty short and concise chapters that take one idea, provide the science behind why it works, and gives you an idea how to apply to your business. I've been pushing the importance of marketing and this book will give you plenty of ideas to discuss at your weekly marketing meetings.

WHO'S YOUR CITY: HOW THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IS MAKING WHERE TO LIVE THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

Richard Florida took on Thomas Friedman and challenged his notion that the world is flat – suggesting instead that it is “spiky” by pointing out that the real economic activity happens within cities, not countries (imagine a global map where economic activity is presented by the length of a spike and you get the idea – the world is not flat economically), and that it DOES matter where you live even though technology has seemingly made it easier to do business anywhere.

To support this point he notes that the combined economies of New York City, Boston, Los Angeles, and Chicago are greater than all of China. More importantly, more and more of the world's population are clustering in cities vs. remaining rural, thus increasing the spikiness of the global economy.

Following on his three best-sellers on the Creative Class, he's written a more micro-look at the data he studies everyday and applies it to one of the most important decisions you'll ever make – where to live!! Years ago I was told there are only three questions you need to answer: what kind of people do you enjoy being around; what kind of weather you enjoy; and what are your favorite hobbies – then pick a place on the planet where you can enjoy all three and you'll live a much more fulfilling life! Florida's book

... he's written a more micro-look at the data he studies everyday and applies it to one of the most important decisions you'll ever make – where to live!!

takes this notion to the next level, providing great insights into where you should expand your business or open up an overseas location.

WHAT'S THE SECRET: TO PROVIDING A WORLD-CLASS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

It seems customer service is back as a hot topic among companies, especially since most products or services are easily commoditized in our global marketplace. In many cases, it's a company's level of customer service that is the main (and only) differentiation – and the only thing that makes price irrelevant.

What's the Secret is the sequel to John DiJulius's first book **Secret Service: Hidden Systems that Deliver Unforgettable Customer Service**. It's John's practical and simple approach to providing customers with a custom experience (Jim Gilmore, co-author of **The Experience Economy**, was the first to point out that when you customize a service for the customer it becomes an "experience") that separates his techniques from the dozen other customer service writers.

THE ANSWER: GROW ANY BUSINESS, ACHIEVE FINANCIAL FREEDOM, AND LIVE AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

In a way, this is the business sequel to the hugely popular book, audio, and video called **The Secret**. John Assaraf, co-author of **The Answer**, is one of the featured entrepreneurs in **The Secret** sharing the amazing story of purchasing his family's dream home perched above San Diego and then discovering in storage some five-year-old "visualization boards" that included a brochure for the home they had just purchased!

In many cases, it's a company's level of customer service that is the main (and only) differentiation – and the only thing that makes price irrelevant.

More importantly, he wanted to provide a way for entrepreneurs to prepare themselves mentally to break through the countless barriers that present themselves as they build their companies.

John wanted to understand the neurological reasons behind why this was possible. More importantly, he wanted to provide a way for entrepreneurs to prepare themselves mentally to break through the countless barriers that present themselves as they build their companies. And John should know, having created several successful real estate, technology, and service businesses which he's built, sold, and IPO'd to secure his own financial future.

John's highly enjoyable and positive book has helped me add a few zero's to my thinking and reawakened some of the classic visualization techniques which have proven powerful over the eons. One suggestion – when John moves from the “mentally preparing yourself” side of the business to the “how to” side of identifying your key customer and unique selling proposition (USP), you're better off reading Bob Bloom's latest book **The Inside Advantage**, the finest “how to” book I've found in figuring out your specific strategy. Together, these two books give you the one-two punch you need to drive significant revenue.

TWO GIANTS OF BUSINESS

Let me mention two more must read modern business biographies: Sam Wyly's **1,000 Dollars and an Idea: How an Inspired American Entrepreneur Built a Billion-Dollar Fortune**; and T. Boone Pickens' upcoming book **The First Billion Is the Hardest: Reflections on a Life of Comebacks and America's Energy Future**.

I just finished reading the first and was so impressed I booked Sam to speak at our fall Growth Summit. As *FORTUNE* magazine so appropriately noted years ago, Wyly is “one of the most, if not the most important, entrepreneurs of the century.” I couldn't agree more.

And though T. Boone's book doesn't come out until the fall, I heard him speak a few weeks ago at the Milken Global Conference. How he turned a \$4.6 million investment into over \$5 billion in a few short years; his plan for eliminating the U.S.'s \$600 billion dependency on external energy sources; and his recent purchase of \$2 billion worth of wind turbines from GE to build the largest wind farm to date prove that this 80 year old entrepreneur still has what it takes to be relevant in the 21st century.