Pine & Gilmore's Top Tens from

The 100 Best Business Books of All Time

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It is indeed an honor to have *The Experience Economy* numbered among Jack Covert and Todd Sattersten's list of 100 best business books of all time. Those who have attended our annual thinkAbout event know of our fondness for "top ten" lists. (For everyone else, we countdown ten experiences that we recommend participants take in during the coming year, culminating with the #1 experience receiving our Experience Stager of the Year, or EXPY, award.) So we just couldn't help but go through this 100 best list from the folks at 800-CEO-Read to select a Top Ten list – this time one from each of us.

We excluded our own book, of course, and refrain from citing any books excluded from the 100 that we thought deserved inclusion; to do that would just open up a whole other can of worms. (We do, however, mention a few additional books written by the authors included in this Top Ten list, as well as books by other authors that invaluably supplement those on this list.) We developed our lists without conferring with each other, so it is worth noting that two books appear on both of our Top Ten lists: *The Innovator's Dilemma* and *Competing for the Future*.

So here we go, with each list in the order they appear in Covert and Sattersten's book. . . .

Joe Pine's Top Ten List of *The 100 Best Business Books of All Time*

[In Search of Excellence](#) by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr.: In many ways, this is the one that started it all. Not the category of business books *per se*, but the phenomenon of business books. It was the first runaway best seller, the first to sell over (*way* over) a million copies. It showed publishers that there was a huge market for business books, if it was the right book that could find its audience. Outside of that the book itself was excellent, increasing the reach of many managers who sought to be excellent, and pointing in the right direction so many times. It further launched the career of Tom Peters, a passionate man with so many wild but great ideas contained in the rest of his books, of which my personal favorite is *[Re-Imagine!](#)*. Read it in concert with *In Search of Excellence* and you will then have a feel for how management has changed over the past 25 years.

[The Innovator's Dilemma](#) by Clayton M. Christensen: This one's a rarity – a highly prescriptive (yet readable) book backed up by real research. Christensen explains clearly why so many innovators eventually lose out to some new entrant, and what companies can do about it. Managers, especially those in technology-based or other fast-moving industries, ignore its lessons at their peril. Follow Christensen's thinking through in the rest of his books, especially *[The Innovator's Solution](#)*.

[Competing for the Future](#) by Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad: After religiously reading these two prolific professors for years in the pages of the *Harvard Business Review*, I remember being amazed when reading this book at how all of their seemingly

disparate thoughts and subjects could be weaved together into one coherent story. It nicely fits the gap in management thought between the two Peters books cited above!

A New Brand World by Scott Bedbury with Stephen Fenichell: I was never a branding guy – didn't understand the concept, didn't understand why it was so important – until I read this book from former Starbucks' exec Bedbury. Drawing from his experience there and at Nike, he captures the zeitgeist of consumers and shows what it takes to create relevant brands today – and not coincidentally points in the direction of authenticity.

Crossing the Chasm by Geoffrey A. Moore: I was shocked when I read here how old this book was – 1991! Its concepts for how to get beyond early adoption to the masses are as fresh today as when Moore first wrote about them (and revised in 1999 and 2002). While written for technology companies, any entrepreneur seeking to grow big should follow its plan.

The Essential Drucker by Peter F. Drucker: Before Peters there was Peter, to whom I had the occasion to listen several times late in his life. Drucker invented the study of management, and excelled at it probably as no one else ever will. This book compiles his lifelong work into the, well, essentials.

The Art of Innovation by Tom Kelley with Jonathan Littman: Every company today should understand the basic precepts of design and how it can be used for competitive advantage – and I can't think of a better place to start than this book, written by the head of the world's premier design firm, Ideo.

The Art of Possibility by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander: The most engaging speech (although that's not quite the right word for it) I've ever seen was

by Benjamin Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic. No one has ever had an audience more engaged than when he had us singing Beethoven's Ode to Joy as one, and especially when he led us in singing Happy Birthday to an audience member whose birthday was that day. He made us do it over and over again until we got it right – and she had tears in her eyes at the beautiful noise made just for her. If the book by Zander and his accomplished wife, a psychotherapist and painter, do not quite live up to that performance, it is not for a lack of effort or ideas; any transcription of words would fail to live up to Zander's live performance. But do read it – and imagine the possibilities.

The Age of Unreason by Charles Handy: Handy's inimitable, folksy style belies a keen mind that sees the big picture better than anyone else. While Drucker chronicled the best of 20th-century management, Handy sees – although still through a lens, darkly – what could be the best of 21st-century management. If you're mystified by such changes, this is the place to start.

Out of Control by Kevin Kelly: But if you're not mystified and just want to get started making new organizations happen, start here. By letting go. For Kelly's message is that no one's in charge anymore, even while we're all steering in the direction we want to go. You must let the paradox that comes with complexity be your friend.

Jim Gilmore's Top Ten List of _The 100 Best Business Books of All Time_

Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Csikszentmihalyi's "Flow" model is one of the most elegantly simple and powerfully insightful models I've ever encountered. In any experience, if challenge exceeds skill, Anxiety emerges; if skill exceeds challenge, Boredom results. Flow is when skill matches challenge. I've long thought that this concept of "Flow" directly corresponds to our own concept of hitting the "Sweet Spot" in our 4E model (Entertainment, Educational, Escapist, Esthetic) outlining the fours realms that make for a compelling experience, especially if one considers the sweet spot over the duration time in the experience. In addition to _Flow_, interested readers would be wise to also read _Finding Flow_. Of note, in Figure 1 of that book, Csikszentmihalyi expands the Flow model to include Arousal, Worry, Control, Apathy, Relaxation, and Control, in addition to Anxiety and Boredom, as different qualities that may define an experience. There is a Ph.D. dissertation here for some enterprising student willing to study the correlation of the flow and sweet spot in experiences.

The Innovator's Dilemma by Clayton M. Christensen: In distinguishing two different types of innovation, Christiansen does much to explain why disruptive changes usually come from players other than market leaders. A great book to read in parallel to _The Innovator's Dilemma_ is Peter Drucker's _Innovation and Entrepreneurship_ for the distinction between invention and innovation. Together the two books do a great job of framing the subject of innovation.

Competing for the Future, by Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad: This book contains one of my all-time favorite 2x2's. In Figure 4-1, Hamel & Prahalad pit Needs

(Articulated and Unarticulated) against Customer Types (Served and Unserved). "Unexploited Opportunities" abound in all areas other than Articulated Need-Served Customers, and yet so many enterprises focus almost all their attention and resources only on this service-saturated space.

Why We Buy by Paco Underhill: When it comes to looking at retail experiences, this book is must reading. Beyond the specific prescriptions that Underhill advances (which are many), I think the book also serves a very useful role in helping managers *in any industry* (not just retailing) to stop and look at the experiences they offer at the ground level. In fact, practicing experiential audits of retail outlets is a great way to develop the skills needed to examine experiences in myriad non-retail industries.

Reengineering the Corporation by Michael Hammer and James Champy: Reengineering gets a bad rap, largely because of (mostly technology) practitioners who grabbed the term and slapped it on their work without actually doing what Hammer and Champy actually outlined in their best-selling book. This is not dissimilar from (mostly marketing) practitioners who took the word "experience" from our work without doing what we actually outlined. (Can you say "experiential marketing"?) While reengineering evolved into downsizing, Hammer and Champy's main point remains valid: when investing in technology, companies should *simultaneously rethink* technology and business processes.

Six Thinking Hats by Edward de Bono: Speaking of thinking and rethinking, I am of course a big devotee of Edward de Bono. He is my favorite creativity expert, largely because of his cognitive tools orientation. His *Six Thinking Hats* is easily read and the Six Hat tool for deliberately and systematically thinking in six thinking modes

can be readily embraced in most any organization. I know a few clients still using the tool after my formal instruction as a certified de Bono trainer well over a decade ago. I highly recommend looking for an opportunity to see de Bono present in person before reading his other books; his tools are best experienced in person, for de Bono writes like he thinks. For those eager for more, I highly recommend starting with *Lateral Thinking*, followed by *Serious Creativity*.

A Whack on the Side of the Head by Roger Van Oech: I discovered Van Oech before de Bono, and while I'm sure de Bono considers Van Oech derivative (at best), I do think *A Whack on the Side of the Head* does a wonderful job of promoting a *creative spirit*.

The Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida: Along with Rolf Jensen's *The Dream Society* (and even Jeremy Rifkin's *The Age of Access*), Florida's book greatly compliments *The Experience Economy*. Read too the Julian Barnes novel, *England, England*.

To Engineer is Human by Henry Petroski: I really enjoy Petroski's work, beginning with *The Evolution of Useful Things*. *To Engineer is Human* emphasizes the same insightful and contrarian point: Form does not follow function; form follows failure.

Up the Organization by Robert Townsend: I read *Up the Organization* in my early days at Procter & Gamble, having purchases a paperback copy in a used book store for a mere sixty cents. As someone just starting a career in business, I found the book full of practical, straightforward, and concise advice on myriad subjects. After all these years later, I decided to dust off the old yellowed copy stacked on the back of one shelf. Ironically (given Joe and I have never had aspirations to scale our firm), I found

this gem of a quote concerning Management Consultants: "The effective ones are the one-man shows. The institutional ones are disastrous." Even better are two collaborating one-man shows. Right, Joe?