

Top 100 Best Books for Managers, Leaders & Humans

Version 1

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Introduction

This article contains a top 100 of the best management, leadership & personal development books. I have created this list using three different criteria:

1. number of Amazon reviews;
2. average Amazon rating;
3. number of Google hits;

Please refer to the second part of this article to find out how the calculations were performed.

Top 100 Best Books for Managers, Leaders & Humans

#	Title / Author(s) / Tags	Year	ISBN13
1	The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be Jack Canfield, Janet Switzer (<i>personal growth, self-help, success, achievement</i>)	2004	978-0060594886
2	The Elements of Style: 50th Anniversary Edition William Strunk, E. B. White (<i>style, writers reference, writing</i>)	1958	978-0205632640
3	How to Win Friends & Influence People Dale Carnegie (<i>personal development, communication skills, self improvement</i>)	1981	978-0671027032
4	Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die Chip Heath, Dan Heath (<i>marketing, communication, ideas, persuasion, business</i>)	2007	978-1400064281
5	Peopleware: Productive Projects and Teams (Second Edition) Tom DeMarco, Timothy Lister (<i>management, software development</i>)	1999	978-0932633439
6	Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion Robert B. Cialdini (<i>persuasion, psychology, influence, marketing, sales</i>)	1998	978-0061241895
7	What Got You Here Won't Get You There Marshall Goldsmith, Mark Reiter (<i>leadership development, executive coaching</i>)	2007	978-1401301309
8	Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies Jim Collins, Jerry I. Porras (<i>business, management, leadership development, leadership</i>)	1994	978-0060566104
9	Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery Garr Reynolds (<i>presentations, communication, public speaking</i>)	2008	978-0321525659
10	Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity David Allen (<i>management, productivity, time management</i>)	2002	978-0142000281
11	The Magic of Thinking Big David Schwartz (<i>positive thinking, personal development, self improvement</i>)	1959	978-0671646783
12	Leading Change John P. Kotter (<i>change management, leadership, organizational behavior</i>)	1996	978-0875847474
13	The Goal: A Process of Ongoing Improvement Eliyahu M. Goldratt, Jeff Cox (<i>theory of constraints, professional development</i>)	1986	978-0884271789
14	Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't Jim Collins (<i>business, leadership, management, success, excellence</i>)	2001	978-0066620992
15	The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable Patrick M. Lencioni (<i>leadership, team building, management, professional development</i>)	2002	978-0787960759
16	The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done Peter F. Drucker (<i>management, leadership, effectiveness, vision</i>)	1967	978-0060833459
17	The Go-Giver: A Little Story About a Powerful Business Idea Bob Burg, John David Mann (<i>self-help, business, success, networking</i>)	2007	978-1591842002
18	The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Stephen R. Covey (<i>personal development, self improvement, leadership</i>)	1989	978-0743269513
19	The Gregg Reference Manual William A. Sabin (<i>grammar, writing, reference, editing, english</i>)	2004	978-0072936537
20	Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss what Matters Most Douglas Stone, etc. (<i>communication skills, negotiation, self improvement</i>)	1999	978-0140288520

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21	First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently Marcus Buckingham, Curt Coffman (<i>management, professional development</i>)	1999	978-0684852867
22	Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High Kerry Patterson, etc. (<i>communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict</i>)	2002	978-0071401944
23	The Toyota Way Jeffrey Liker (<i>lean, business, quality control, toyota production system</i>)	2003	978-0071392310
24	The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail Clayton M. Christensen (<i>innovation, technology, business, marketing</i>)	1997	978-0875845852
25	The SPEED of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything Stephen M.R. Covey (<i>trust, leadership, relationships, business, success</i>)	2006	978-0743297301
26	The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference Malcolm Gladwell (<i>economics, networking effects, sociology, competition</i>)	2000	978-0316316965
27	First Things First Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, Rebecca R. Merrill (<i>time management</i>)	1994	978-0684802039
28	The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization Peter M. Senge (<i>systems thinking, organizational learning, management</i>)	2006	978-0385517829
29	A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age Daniel H. Pink (<i>business, creativity, thinking, cognitive psychology</i>)	2005	978-1573223089
30	Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative-Thinking Techniques - 2nd Edition Michael Michalko (<i>creative thinking, imagination, business, decision-making</i>)	2006	978-1580087735
31	Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us Seth Godin (<i>marketing, leadership, community, motivational, networking</i>)	2008	978-1591842330
32	The Leadership Challenge James M. Kouzes, Barry Z. Posner (<i>leadership, professional development</i>)	2007	978-0787984915
33	Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In Roger Fisher, Bruce M. Patton, William L. Ury (<i>negotiation, business, brainstorm</i>)	1992	978-0395631249
34	Getting Past No William Ury (<i>negotiation, collaboration, conflict resolution, improvement</i>)	1993	978-0553371314
35	Developing the Leader Within You John C. Maxwell (<i>business leadership, self control</i>)	2000	978-0785266662
36	Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay Beverly Kaye, Sharon Jordan-Evans (<i>effective management, employee engagement</i>)	2005	978-1576753279
37	The World Cafe: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter Juanita Brown, etc. (<i>conversation, facilitation, dialogue, team building</i>)	2005	978-1576752586
38	Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes - Revised 25th Anniversary Edition William Bridges (<i>change, transition, personal transformation, leadership</i>)	1980	978-0738209043
39	The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More Chris Anderson (<i>internet marketing, consumer behavior, business</i>)	2006	978-1401309664
40	Gung Ho! Turn On the People in Any Organization Ken Blanchard (<i>business, empowerment, inspirational, leadership</i>)	1997	978-0688154288

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41	The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't Robert I. Sutton (<i>management, leadership, workplace, abuse, business</i>)	2007	978-0446526562
42	Leadership and Self Deception: Getting Out of the Box The Arbinger Institute (<i>leadership, self awareness, relationships, management</i>)	2002	978-1427087836
43	The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict The Arbinger Institute (<i>peace, conflict resolution, relationships, leadership</i>)	2006	978-1576753347
44	The Power of Full Engagement Jim Loehr, Tony Schwartz (<i>leadership, personal development, self improvement</i>)	2003	978-0743226745
45	The Fred Factor: How Passion in Your Work and Life Can Turn the Ordinary into the Extraordinary Mark Sanborn (<i>leadership, business, motivational, relationship building</i>)	2004	978-1578568321
46	Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School John Medina (<i>brain science, education, business, success, learning</i>)	2008	978-0979777707
47	Small Is the New Big: and 183 Other Riffs, Rants, and Remarkable Business Ideas Seth Godin (<i>marketing, ideas, business, internet, customer service</i>)	2006	978-1591841265
48	Winning Jack Welch, Suzy Welch (<i>leadership, business, management, success</i>)	2005	978-0060753948
49	The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management Peter F. Drucker (<i>effective management</i>)	2001	978-0066210872
50	The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life Rosamund Stone Zander, Benjamin Zander (<i>leadership, inspiration, innovation</i>)	2002	978-0142001103
51	The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less Barry Schwartz (<i>sociology, consumerism, economics, positive psychology</i>)	2003	978-0060005689
52	Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know Thomas H. Davenport, Laurence Prusak (<i>knowledge management</i>)	1997	978-0875846552
53	Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner (<i>economics, sociology, statistics, business</i>)	2005	978-0060731328
54	Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable Seth Godin (<i>marketing, business, innovation, ideas, advertising</i>)	2003	978-1591840213
55	Toyota Production System: Beyond Large-Scale Production Taiichi Ohno (<i>lean, kanban, toyota production system</i>)	1988	978-0915299140
56	The World Is Flat [Updated and Expanded]: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century Thomas L. Friedman (<i>globalization, economics, business, outsourcing, culture</i>)	2005	978-0312425074
57	The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You John C. Maxwell (<i>leadership, empowerment, influence, self-help</i>)	1998	978-0785289357
58	Awaken the Giant Within: How to Take Immediate Control of Your Mental, Emotional, Physical and Financial Destiny! Anthony Robbins (<i>motivation, success, self-help, nlp, achievement</i>)	1991	978-0671791544
59	Full Steam Ahead!: Unleash the Power of Vision in Your Work and Your Life Ken Blanchard, Jesse Stoner (<i>applied psychology, business, leadership, management</i>)	2003	978-1576752449
60	Eat That Frog!: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time Brian Tracy (<i>time management, self-improvement, personal productivity</i>)	2001	978-1576754221

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61	The Three Signs of a Miserable Job: A Fable for Managers (And Their Employees) Patrick M. Lencioni (<i>management, leadership, team building, employee engagement</i>)	2007	978-0787995317
62	The Halo Effect: ... and the Eight Other Business Delusions That Deceive Managers Phil Rosenzweig (<i>management, strategy, decision making, business</i>)	2007	978-0743291255
63	Crossing the Chasm Geoffrey A. Moore (<i>marketing, technology, business strategy, management</i>)	2002	978-0060517120
64	True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership Bill George, Peter Sims (<i>leadership, executive coaching, business, enlightenment</i>)	2007	978-0787987510
65	The Power of Positive Thinking Norman Vincent Peale (<i>motivational, positive thinking, inspirational, self improvement</i>)	2003	978-1416560616
66	The Innovator's Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth Clayton M. Christensen, Michael E. Raynor (<i>innovation, business leadership</i>)	2003	978-1578518524
67	The One Minute Manager Kenneth H. Blanchard, Spencer Johnson (<i>management, leadership, business</i>)	1982	978-0688014292
68	The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable Nassim Nicholas Taleb (<i>decision making, risk, complexity, knowledge</i>)	2007	978-1400063512
69	Now, Discover Your Strengths Marcus Buckingham, Donald O. Clifton (<i>strengths, personal development, leadership</i>)	2001	978-0743201148
70	The Black Book of Outsourcing: How to Manage the Changes, Challenges, and Opportunities Douglas Brown, Scott Wilson (<i>globalization, outsourcing, economics, business</i>)	2005	978-0471718895
71	Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts Carol Tavris, Elliot Aronson (<i>cognitive dissonance, social psychology, reasoning</i>)	2007	978-0156033909
72	QBQ! The Question Behind the Question John G. Miller (<i>personal accountability, leadership, business, responsibility</i>)	2001	978-0399152337
73	Fooled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in Life and in the Markets Nassim Nicholas Taleb (<i>complexity, decision making</i>)	2005	978-1400067930
74	Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking Malcolm Gladwell (<i>intuition, decision making, psychology, business</i>)	2005	978-0316172325
75	Never Eat Alone: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time Keith Ferrazzi, Tahl Raz (<i>networking, success, business, relationships</i>)	2005	978-0385512053
76	Who Moved My Cheese?: An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life Spencer Johnson (<i>self improvement, leadership, change, business, success</i>)	1998	978-0399144462
77	The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures Dan Roam (<i>presentation, communication, problem solving, business</i>)	2008	978-1594201752
78	Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions John Kotter, etc. (<i>change management, leadership, innovation</i>)	2006	978-0312361983
79	Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change William Bridges (<i>transitions, change management</i>)	2003	978-0738208244
80	The Wisdom of Crowds James Surowiecki (<i>sociology, marketing, behavior, business, management</i>)	2004	978-0385721707

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81	Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul, John Christensen (<i>motivation, leadership</i>)	2000	978-0786888825
82	Prisoners of Our Thoughts: Viktor Frankl's Principles for Discovering Meaning in Life and Work Alex Pattakos (<i>workplace, positive thinking, self improvement</i>)	2004	978-1576752883
83	Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations Thomas A. Stewart (<i>wealth, knowledge, economic, strategy</i>)	1997	978-0385483810
84	It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy Michael Abrashoff (<i>leadership, management, decision-making, business</i>)	2002	978-0446529112
85	The Myths of Innovation Scott Berkun (<i>innovation, creativity, software development, business</i>)	2007	978-0596527051
86	Bargaining for Advantage: Negotiation Strategies for Reasonable People G. Richard Shell (<i>negotiation, persuasion</i>)	2006	978-0143036975
87	The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels Michael Watkins (<i>professional development, leadership, effective management</i>)	2003	978-1591391104
88	Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ (10th Anniversary Edition) Daniel Goleman (<i>self improvement, psychology, relationships</i>)	1996	978-0553804911
89	Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story Jerry Weissman (<i>presentation, improvement, inspirational</i>)	2003	978-0130464132
90	Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations Clay Shirky (<i>collaboration, social media, organizing, groups</i>)	2008	978-1594201530
91	Bit Literacy: Productivity in the Age of Information and E-mail Overload Mark Hurst (<i>productivity, email, organization, business, to-do</i>)	2007	978-0979368103
92	Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything Don Tapscott, Anthony D. Williams (<i>collaboration, business, internet, community</i>)	2006	978-1591841388
93	Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk Peter L. Bernstein (<i>risk, decision making, uncertainty, statistics</i>)	1996	978-0471121046
94	The Ten Faces of Innovation Thomas Kelley, Jonathan Littman (<i>innovation, creativity, design, business, marketing</i>)	2005	978-0385512077
95	Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times Donald T. Phillips (<i>leadership, business</i>)	1993	978-0446394598
96	Primal Leadership - Realizing The Power Of Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman, Annie McKee, Richard E. Boyatzis (<i>leadership, human resources</i>)	2002	978-1578514861
97	The 29% Solution: 52 Weekly Networking Success Strategies Ivan Misner, Michelle R. Donovan (<i>networking, marketing, business, self-improvement</i>)	2008	978-1929774548
98	The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader John C. Maxwell (<i>leadership, professional development, self-improvement</i>)	1999	978-0785289043
99	Co-Active Coaching, 2nd Edition: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and, Life Laura Whitworth, etc. (<i>coaching, leadership, motivation, empowerment</i>)	1998	978-0891061984
100	The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action Robert S. Kaplan, David P. Norton (<i>strategy, balanced scorecard, metrics</i>)	1996	978-0875846514

Scope of this List

For this Top 100 list I have included only books covering subjects that might be of interest to (middle) managers, team members and employees interested in personal development, in any kind of organization. My main criterion for each book was: might this book help me and some of my subordinates to improve ourselves? (And would it help my managers solving their problems themselves instead of bugging me...)

This means that I have left out books with primary topics such as business strategy, investment, marketing, entrepreneurship, and the art of flower arrangement. These topics, though very interesting, won't be helpful in enabling the average *Joe the Programmer* to develop himself into *Joe the Leader* or *Joe the Communicator*. (The other reason is that I had to limit the scope, or I would never be able to finish the bloody thing.)

Finding the Books

To find all these potentially timeless classics, I checked the best-selling books in these Amazon categories:

[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Decision-Making & Problem Solving](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Leadership](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Management](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Management Science](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Motivational](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Production & Operations](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Quality Control](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Systems & Planning](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Management & Leadership](#) > [Teams](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Organizational Behavior](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Organizational Behavior](#) > [Organizational Change](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Organizational Behavior](#) > [Organizational Learning](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Organizational Behavior](#) > [Workplace](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Skills](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Skills](#) > [Communications](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Skills](#) > [Running Meetings & Presentations](#)
[Books](#) > [Business & Investing](#) > [Skills](#) > [Time Management](#)

After I found all best-selling books, I subsequently found many other books through the "Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought" cross-reference thingy. That's how I finally ended up with a list of 400 books, and a pair of eyes with the color of Sarah Palin's dress.

Note: in case of multiple editions of the same book, only the most recent edition is listed on the chart, though reviews and ratings were combined for all available editions.

Doing the Calculations

Then it was time to do the calculations. I checked the number of customer reviews on Amazon, and I ranked the books according to these numbers (= a measure of quantity). I also calculated the average Amazon ratings, and I ranked the books according to these ratings (= a measure of quality). I then checked the number of Google hits for each of the books, and I ranked them accordingly (= a measure of popularity). Finally, I took the three rankings, and then re-calculated it into a final ranking. This resulted in the list you now have before you.

Note: this little project was performed in the first week of November, 2008. Current Amazon reviews and ratings might have changed since then.

I can guarantee that the system I used is *scientifically ridiculous*. Nevertheless, the results are quite interesting, and I'm sure this list can be of great help if you want to improve your skills as a manager, a leader, or as a human being who just wants to become a more interesting colleague. I suggest you start with number 1, and then slowly work your way down. However, you might want to start with [Breakthrough Rapid Reading](#) (by Peter Kump) and [How to Read a Book](#) (by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren). These might help getting you through the list somewhat faster...

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Profile

Jurgen Appelo is Chief Information Officer at ISM eCompany (www.ism.nl), recently rated as the #1 fastest growing technology company in The Netherlands. He leads a horde of 50 software developers, development managers, project managers, consultants, quality assurance managers, service managers and kangaroos, some of which he hired accidentally.



Jurgen is primarily interested in software engineering, quality improvement and complexity theory, from a manager's perspective. He is trying to write a book about this, and he keeps track of it on his blog (www.noop.nl). However, sometimes he puts it all aside to do some intensive programming himself, or to spend some time on his ever-growing collection of science fiction and fantasy literature.

Jurgen lives in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) -- and sometimes in Brussels (Belgium) -- with his partner Raoul. He has two kids, and an imaginary hamster called George.