

# What executives are reading in 2019

Time to restock your shelves? We asked leaders of some of the world's biggest organizations to share the books they look forward to reading or revisiting.



**We have books** on the brain, with the recent release of the *Financial Times*–McKinsey Business Book of the Year long list. (See coverage of last year’s winner, *Bad Blood*, on our blog, and check back December 3, when the 2019 award is given.) There’s inspiration aplenty in the selections, which offer compelling insights on topics crucial to business today. But we also wanted to see what CEOs and other business leaders are keeping on their shelves or tucking into their suitcases—consider it food for thought in picking your next read. Read on for selections from leaders at Novartis, PayPal, Walmart, and more.

**Doug McMillon, CEO, Walmart**

- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*—Michelle Alexander (New Press, 2010, nonfiction)
- *Them: Why We Hate Each Other—and How to Heal*—Ben Sasse (St. Martin’s Press, 2018, nonfiction)
- *The Sixth Man: A Memoir*—Andre Iguodala (Blue Rider Press, June 2019, nonfiction)
- *Become an Accelerator Leader: Accelerate Yourself, Others, and Your Organization to Maximize Impact*—Alvin Rohrs (Gatekeeper Press, May 2019, nonfiction)

**Meg Whitman, CEO, Quibi**

- *Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man’s Fight for Justice*—Bill Browder (Simon & Schuster, 2015, nonfiction)
- *The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West*—David McCullough (Simon & Schuster, May 2019, nonfiction)
- *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*—Melinda Gates (Flatiron Books, April 2019, nonfiction)

**Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, executive chairman, LEGO Brand Group**

- *The End of the End of the Earth*—Jonathan Franzen (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, nonfiction)
- *Let Love Have the Last Word: A Memoir*—Common (Atria Books, May 2019, nonfiction)
- *Men in My Situation*—Per Petterson (Forlaget Oktober, 2018, fiction)
- *Wholehearted Leadership*—Morten Mortensen (MM Holding, April 2019, nonfiction)
- *A Little Book about Love*—Frederik Dessau (Gyldendal Forlag, 1996, nonfiction)

**Salman Khan, founder and CEO, Khan Academy**

- *Breakfast of Champions*—Kurt Vonnegut (Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1973, fiction)
- *The Upanishads*—translated by Eknath Easwaran (Nilgiri Press, second edition, 2007, nonfiction)
- *A Short History of Byzantium*—John Julius Norwich (Vintage, 1998, nonfiction)

**Jacqui Canney, chief people officer, WPP**

- *Becoming*—Michelle Obama (Crown, 2018, nonfiction)
- *Imagine It Forward: Courage, Creativity, and the Power of Change*—Beth Comstock, with Tahl Raz (Currency, 2018, nonfiction)
- *Leaders: Myth and Reality*—Stanley McChrystal, Jeff Eggers, and Jason Mangone (Portfolio Penguin, 2018, nonfiction)

**Andrew Penn, CEO and managing director,  
Telstra Corporation**

- *Architects of Intelligence: The Truth about AI from the People Building It*—Martin Ford (Packt Publishing, 2018, nonfiction)
- *Death of a River Guide*—Richard Flanagan (Grove Press, reprint edition, 2002, fiction)
- *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*—David Mitchell (Random House, 2010, fiction)

**Dan Schulman, president and CEO, PayPal**

- *People, Power, and Profits: Progressive Capitalism for an Age of Discontent*—Joseph E. Stiglitz (W. W. Norton, April 2019, nonfiction)
- *The Accidental Admiral: A Sailor Takes Command at NATO*—James Stavridis (Naval Institute Press, 2014, nonfiction)
- *Lexicon*—Max Barry (Penguin Books, 2013, fiction)
- *The New Rules of War: Victory in the Age of Durable Disorder*—Sean McFate (William Morrow, January 2019, nonfiction)

**Strive Masiyiwa, founder, executive chairman,  
Econet**

- *The Resilience Dividend: Being Strong in a World Where Things Go Wrong*—Judith Rodin (PublicAffairs, 2014, nonfiction)
- *The Other Story: A Fireside Chat with African Achievers*—Judy Dlamini (February 2019, nonfiction)
- *Africa at Work*—Acha Leke et al. (2012, nonfiction)

**Joerg Reinhardt, PhD, chairman, Novartis**

- *Has the West Lost It? A Provocation*—Kishore Mahbubani (Penguin, April 2019, nonfiction)

- *The Icarus Deception: How High Will You Fly?*—Seth Godin (Portfolio Penguin, 2012, nonfiction)

- *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*—Michael Lewis (W. W. Norton, 2010, nonfiction)

**Beth Comstock, former vice chair, General  
Electric; author, *Imagine It Forward: Courage,  
Creativity, and the Power of Change***

- *The Overstory*—Richard Powers (W. W. Norton, 2018, fiction)

- *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from a Secret World*—Peter Wohlleben (Greystone Books, 2016, nonfiction)

- *Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition*—Walt Whitman (Penguin Classics, 1961, nonfiction)

**Jesper Jos Olsson, group CEO and founding  
partner, White Peak Real Estate**

- *Serotonin*—Michel Houellebecq (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, November 2019, fiction)

- *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life after Warming*—David Wallace-Wells (Tim Duggan Books, February 2019, nonfiction)

- *Aniara: An Epic Science Fiction Poem*—Harry Martinson (1956, fiction)

**Richard Plepler, founder, RLP & Company; former  
chairman and CEO, HBO**

- *Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century*—George Packer (Alfred A. Knopf, May 2019, nonfiction)

- *The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal*—William J. Burns (Random House, March 2019, nonfiction)

- *Fleishman is in Trouble*—Taffy Brodesser-Akner (Random House, June 2019, fiction)

**Sarah Friar, CEO, Nextdoor**

- *Upheaval: Turning Points for Nations in Crisis*—Jared Diamond (Little, Brown and Company, May 2019, nonfiction)
- *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*—Jennifer L. Eberhardt (Viking, March 2019, nonfiction)
- *Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster*—Adam Higginbotham (Simon & Schuster, February 2019, nonfiction)
- *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*—Patrick Radden Keefe (Doubleday, February 2019, nonfiction)

**Kevin Sneader, global managing partner,  
McKinsey & Company**

- *The New Silk Roads: The Present and Future of the World*—Peter Frankopan (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018, nonfiction)
- *Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster*—Adam Higginbotham (Simon & Schuster, February 2019, nonfiction)
- *Lords of the Desert: Britain's Struggle with America to Dominate the Middle East*—James Barr (Simon & Schuster UK, 2018, nonfiction)
- *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*—Richard Haass (Penguin Press, 2017, nonfiction)

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