

Seven Recommended Reads for Business Leaders

To BCG's network around the world,

In my last email to you before I take a two-week summer break, I wanted to share a few book recommendations from some BCG leaders I greatly respect in the hopes that you too might have time in the coming weeks to take a step back and dig deeper into topics and trends shaping our world. I'm half-way through the first one and enjoying learning more about CRISPR and Jennifer Doudna's remarkable story.

- [***The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race***](#), by Walter Isaacson

"This gripping and timely biography about Jennifer Doudna, who, along with Emmanuelle Charpentier, shared the 2020 Chemistry Nobel Prize for their work in CRISPR gene editing, dives into some of the most pressing scientific and ethical challenges of our time. It's also a story about successful collaboration and teaming and how building on shared interests, camaraderie, and competition enabled tremendous breakthroughs to occur."

—Allison Bailey, Global Leader, People & Organization Practice

- [***Competing in the Age of AI: Strategy and Leadership When Algorithms and Networks Run the World***](#) by Marco Iansiti and Karim R. Lakhani

"We know that AI is changing processes and replacing some human activities. But this book also focuses on the 'collisions' between AI and traditional operations, which are creating opportunities for entirely new operating models. The ideas connect with some of what we've been talking about at BCG about the power of [*bionic companies*](#)."

— Lionel Aré, Managing Director & Senior Partner, Climate Finance Leader

- ***How the US Pandemic Response Went Wrong—and What Went Right—During a Year of COVID*** by Tanya Lewis

“I recommend this COVID year in review from Scientific American for a clear look at how the pandemic was managed in the US, where there have been more than 39 million cases to date. It does a well-researched, mostly nonpartisan job of laying out the mistakes the US made, the successes that occurred, and the important questions that remain.”

— Marin Gjaja, Managing Director & Senior Partner, Covid-19 Response Leader

- ***What We Know About Climate Change*** by Kerry Emanuel

“Written by an award-winning atmospheric scientist, What We Know About Climate Change is a scientific, yet accessible, book about climate change. In just over 100 pages, Kerry Emanuel explains what science knows and does not know, how we can determine humanity’s influence on climate change, and what the solutions are.”

— Charlotte Degot, Managing Director & Partner, BCG GAMMA

- ***The Climate Casino: Risk, Uncertainty, and Economics for a Warming World*** by William D. Nordhaus

“In Climate Casino, Nobel prize-winning economist William Nordhaus takes an objective and fact-based view of the costs and benefits of fighting climate change. A perfect book for both climate advocates but also those who are skeptical, Nordhaus does a good job of calling out fallacies on both ends of the spectrum. I have used the book as a pre-read for management teams and boards of my clients and have always gotten great feedback.”

—Tom Baker, Managing Director & Partner, North America Energy Transition Leader

And though I’ve mentioned them before, I’m convinced these two books are must reads for leaders today:

- ***Beyond Great: Nine Strategies for Thriving in an Era of Social Tension, Economic Nationalism, and Technological Revolution***.

This book, written by three BCG senior partners, came out in the middle of the pandemic, but its themes, as well as the rich examples it provides, have proven to be highly pertinent for our new post-COVID reality.

- [Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success](#), by Adam Grant, isn't new, but I think should be on recommended reading lists every year. It came out when I began my tenure as CEO and has had a major impact on my thinking. The book challenges some of our most established assumptions about the types of giving qualities that make people successful, and how leaders build organizations that help those individuals thrive.

You can find a longer list of books recommended by leaders at BCG below, as well as other recent content.

I'm taking a couple weeks to recharge, as I hope many of you are, so I'll be back in your inbox again in mid-August.



Rich Lesser
Chief Executive Officer

Further Reading



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No one can afford to sit on the sidelines as this transformative technology accelerates toward several critical milestones. It's time to plan when and where to place your bets.

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