

# The Master List of 50+ Books Every Growth Hacker Should Read

At RockBoost, reading books and self-development is the highest priority above all else. It's so important we included a question about reading books in our standard recruitment procedure. There's no doubt this is the one thing that helps us deliver stunning results (next to weekly [CXL Institute](#) education sessions :) )

A while ago we thought: "Let's drop a question on social media about the best books anybody has ever read". As genuine bookworms we were super curious about a delivery of fresh new titles. And... Oh boy! The response exceeded our expectations! Within 24 hours we got bombarded with tens of pretty darn good titles!

If you don't believe, have a look at Chris' LinkedIn post [here](#).



And then we thought: "Wait... We can't let them get lost here. Let's combine them into a master list of grand books of all times!"

And we did so. Here's our master list of more than 50 books every growth hacker, product owner and entrepreneur should read. We categorized them in a few groups so you can easily navigate through the list and find what interests you the most.

However, I'd suggest you pick a few books from each group to create a complete "self-development kit". We did our best to collect the titles which will help you improve each level of your work- and personal life. Because in the end, the key to success is in balancing these two.

## Psychology and customer behavior

Psychology is a must-have skill for every growth hacker. It helps you understand your customers, your colleagues, your friends, well just about everyone. These are all books you

get stuck in and read away before you know it. Read these and you'll understand the biases and why we are all so predictably irrational.

1. Our Top Choice: [Influence](#) by Robert Cialdini

Cialdini...

If you haven't heard this name by now then you have a serious gap to fill up. But, hey, that's a good news! You have the opportunity to tremendously improve your persuasion tactics to attract customers like a magnet. *Influence* is the classic book on psychology and consumer behaviour which every marketer, salesperson or business owner should read ASAP. Every page of this book is filled with juicy facts and examples of how persuasion principles can be used in business. At RockBoost, we get back to *Influence* countless times to inform every marketing action we take for our clients.

2. [Thinking, Fast and Slow](#) by Daniel Kahneman
3. [Predictably Irrational](#) by Dan Ariely
4. [Yes!](#) by Noah J. Goldstein, Steve Martin and Robert Cialdini

## Persuasive speaking, crucial conversations & influence

The books below helped us figure out how to deal with all different types of people. The knowledge that comes from these pages is so crucial during important meetings with clients or just casual talks with people who have fixed mindset. Let's get your emotional intelligence to level 2.0!

1. Our top choice: [How to Win Friends & Influence People](#) by Dale Carnegie

Fun fact: Chris says he has read this book 4 times and he borrowed his copy to almost everyone on the RockBoost team. That's how good it is. The main takeaway? Human behaviour is not logical, it's all about emotions. This book teaches you how to use this knowledge to convince people to your own thinking and how to become a leader.

2. [Crucial Conversations](#) by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan & Al Switzler
3. [Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#) by Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves
4. [Mindset: The New Psychology Of Success](#) by Carol Dweck

## Brilliant advertising & sticky products

Books in this group contain golden knowledge on what we all want to know: how to sell and get our customers hooked on our products. Grab one of these books and start earning how to influence your customers' behaviour.

1. Our Top Choice: [Hooked](#) by Nir Eyal

Are you dreaming about releasing a habit-forming product? Are you fantasizing about being referred to as the next Netflix or Spotify? Then you should read this book. Eyal describes his four-fold model which is a recipe for a sticky product:

1. Trigger: What is the itch that the user needs to scratch
2. Action: What is she going to do about it?
3. Variable reward: What is she going to get for it?
4. Investment: The more work and time the user invests, the more she will keep coming back to it.

The book also contains some nuggets about product and habit testing.

2. [Buyology: Truth and Lies About Why We Buy](#) by Martin Lindstrom
3. [100 Ways to Create a Great Ad](#) by Tim Collins
4. [Truth, Lies and Advertising](#) by Jon Steel

## Designing for your customers

Deep knowledge of psychology and advertising is not enough to win hearts of your customers. That's why we chose these 3 books to help you understand what a good customer experience really is. Read them all and learn how to create websites and products so easy to use they can do it with their eyes closed.

1. Our top choice: [Don't make me think](#) by Steve Krug

This book is basically about how users can take mindless choices towards the goals on your website.

One of our colleagues admits: "After reading this book 'don't make me think' principle is the first thing on my mind while doing CRO and UX analysis. I also relentlessly repeat that during meetings with clients to get them to look at everything they do from their customers' perspective. And it works!"

He also says his copy of this book is totally worn out because he borrowed it to nearly 20 people. *Don't make me think* is one of those books which every page is an injection of pure concentrated knowledge, with no redundant chunks of text. You can read it in one evening and have a feeling you've just had an intense course on user experience.

2. [UX Strategy: How to Devise Innovative Digital Products that People Want](#) by Jamie Levy
3. [Rocket Surgery Made Easy](#) by Steve Krug

## Thought Provoking Titles

Admit it, the titles below make you want to read them all. Don't know where to start? Well, we suggest starting from the top of the list. The order here is not random... These books have little to do with advertising (some of them more than the others) but they make you look at the world around you from a totally new perspective. And, oh boy... these make your life so much easier!

1. Our top choice: [The Subtle Art Of Not Giving A Fuck](#) by Mark Manson

Ok, we know it. Every bookstore display in 2018 is filled with this flashy orange cover and anyone you ask for a book recommendation will shout out these few words: "The Subtle Art Of Not Giving A Fuck"! What made this book go viral? Probably the title in combination with brutal honesty punching you right in the face. It's a nice and easy read for all those who always give too many f\*cks. After reading this book your life should become a bit easier. Deadlines won't stress the hell out of you, your neighbour's new car won't hurt your eyes that much anymore and your everyday problems suddenly will become smaller or will even disappear because you'll simply learn how to care less.

2. [How Will You Measure Your Life](#) by Clayton M. Christensen, James Allworth & Karen Dillon
3. [Whatever You Think, Think The Opposite](#) by Paul Arden
4. [Trust Me, I'm Lying](#) by Ryan Holiday
5. [Think Like A Lawyer, Don't Act Like One](#) by Aernoud Bourdreuz

## Launching and growing a startup

Filled with inspiration, quotes and creative ideas, this short list will get you pumped to launch and grow your own startup.

1. Our top choice: [Anything You Want](#) by Derek Silvers

Derek Sivers is the founder of CD Baby, a business that he later sold for \$22 million. This should be already a nudge for you to go ahead and read this book. It's filled with priceless knowledge on how to be successful by simply following your passion and dreams. As the title suggests, you can have *Anything You Want*, and this book shows you it's possible. The best part? Transparency. Derek is not focusing on delivering colourful success stories, he's not ashamed to show the backstage where all the failures took place.

2. [The Entrepreneur's Bible](#) by Michael Holtby

3. [The Creative Curve](#) by Allen Gannett
4. [The 4-Hour Workweek](#) by Tim Ferris

## Lessons corporates can learn from startups

Any entrepreneur, successful or unsuccessful will tell you just how much they have learnt from their startups. These are the precious lessons any big company should learn. The pages of these books are filled with practical advice and insightful case studies.

1. Our top choice: [The Innovator's Dilemma](#) by Clayton Christensen

"... Christensen was one of the world's most insightful business analysts, and Jobs was deeply influenced by his book *The Innovator's Dilemma*." That's what you can read in the book *Great Innovators* by Walter Isaacson. I think it's already a good reason to read it. Anyway, what's this book about? In a nutshell, it tells the difference between sustaining innovation and disruptive innovation and that you shouldn't blindly follow your customers' wishlist. It's a classic business book and some might say it's a bit outdated but after reading it you'll know all the learnings from it are still applicable.

2. [How to Go Big. Create Wealth and Impact the World](#) by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler
3. [The Startup Way](#) by Eric Ries
4. [Good to Great](#) by Jim Collins

## Inspiring success stories

Let's be honest, everyone loves to listen to stories of successful entrepreneurs and to imagine themselves in this glorious scenario. Here you go! Below, you'll find hundreds of pages filled with juicy stories to get you inspired.

1. Our top choice: [Shoe Dog](#) by Phil Knight

We strongly advise you: Just do it! Just read this book!

As you've probably figured out, it's a book about Nike - the ultimate American dream. It's probably not the story you expect. Never-ending stream of challenges and battles intertwined with personal emotional struggles described in this book will make you look at Nike from a different perspective.

While it's not a typical business book it will teach you a great deal about how to face all the issues of an entrepreneur and carve your way up to a phenomenal success.

2. [Losing my Virginity](#) by Richard Branson
3. [Open](#) by Andre Agassi
4. [The Real Deal](#) by James Caan
5. [Above the Line](#) by Urban Meyer
6. [My Struggle: Book 1](#) by Karl Ove Knausgaard

## Leadership

*“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.” - John C. Maxwell*

These recommendations are not only for those who are leaders already. Even if you're not one it's handy to read them to understand leaders, their struggles and how they make decisions. It's seriously useful in everyday life.

1. Our top choice: [The Hard Thing About Hard Things](#) by Ben Horowitz

Are you familiar with any of these super difficult situations in your life?:

- How to handle the mental load of the whole company relying on you?
- Should you hire friends?
- How to fire them if they're underperforming?
- Is it ok to hire people from your friend's company?
- You have to make a complex strategic decision with very limited information.
- What if your genius employee is a horrible teammate?

We all know these hard things that don't let us sleep at night, right? What to do? How to handle that? If every solution you come up with seems wrong this book is for you. You'll learn how to make hard decisions and accept the consequences like a true veteran entrepreneur.

2. [Turn the Ship Around](#) by L. David Marquet
3. [Conscious Business: How to Build Values through Values](#) by L. David Marquet
4. [Start with Why](#) by Simon Sinek
5. [Power Cues](#) by Nick Morgan

## Food for thought

The way you think and interpret the world around you has such an impact on what direction your life takes. We choose the best books to give you the inspiration to think big and turn your life into what you want it to be.

1. Our top choice: [The Ten Types of Human](#) by Dexter Dias

This book is a collection of true stories of real people which Dexter Dias uses to create profiles of ten types of humans. He flawlessly blends in scientific research, neuroscience and psychological experiments to explain why people behave the way they do. We must admit, it's not a fun read filled with humour and joy. However, it is a book everyone should read to be able to understand why some reckless decisions are made, horrible things are done and what makes us help each other. Equipped with such knowledge we can look critically at ourselves to see how to prevent this destructive behaviour.

2. [Jonathan Livingston Seagull](#) by Richard Bach
3. [The Alchemist](#) by Paulo Coelho
4. [Code of the Extraordinary Mind](#) by Vishen Lakhiani
5. [Think and Grow Rich](#) by Napoleon Hill, Ben Holden-Crowther
6. [Awareness](#) by Anthony de Mello

## Classic Fiction

Reading fiction is just as important as reading nonfiction. It gets your creative juices flowing and makes you look at things from a totally different, unknown to you, perspective. Grab one and take it with you on your next holiday!

1. Our top choice: [1984](#) by George Orwell

We're probably not very original in our choice here but that's fine because *1984* is a book you should really read. In fact, you should read it more than once to really grasp the image of the world created by Orwell in this book. While some might think it's not a very great novel we think the ideas and thoughts behind it are brilliant.

2. [Prayer for Owen Meany](#) by John Irving
3. [The Great Gatsby](#) by F. Scott Fitzgerald
4. [The Book Thief](#) by Markus Zusaf
5. [What makes Sammy Run](#) by Budd Schulberg
6. [Ask The Dust](#) by John Fante