

## StreetSavvy Marketer

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Like you, I read. A lot. On trains, planes, in cabs, on subway platforms, between tees, in the barber shop, etc. I read "must-read" reports, white papers, business e-mails of dubious business value, a handful of daily newspapers, newsletters, mainstream business and trade pubs, and a never ending flood of information that crosses the screen of my BlackBerry until my eyes cross and my vision blurs. So as thoughts turn to summer vacation, I look forward to setting aside some of the more "required" business reading and catching up with books of a decidedly more eclectic appeal - sometimes mindless pulp fiction, other times old business or literary favorites, and sometimes simply new fiction releases.

Here's a selection of titles on my A-List. A few of the books, recently released, are creating a buzz. Others are timeless classics. Some may help you build a better mousetrap. Others again, are admittedly, pure escapism. Enjoy. First, the classics. If I had to pick out two books that I find nearly as intriguing today as I did when I first read them, they would be *Ogilvy on Advertising and Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*.

**David Ogilvy** set up shop on Madison Avenue in 1949 and grew his boutique firm into one of the biggest advertising agencies on the globe. In his book, published in 1983 and most recently updated in 2000, he is absolutely on point when he says: "When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative.' I want you to find it so interesting that you buy the product." Read it and you'll know why that half million dollar advertising program you launched last year went nowhere.

**Al Ries** and **Jack Trout**, with *Positioning*, offer keen insight into why "positioning" a product in a prospect's mind is not just an important step in building a defensible market beachhead, but critical in building mindshare. In their 20th Anniversary Edition of the original 1981 text, the authors give interesting 20-year updates on some of the data and fresh commentary on why the strategy still prevails.

For some lighter fare, *Devil May Care*, the newest installment in the **James** "Shaken, not stirred" **Bond** series was just released and is set in the Cold War. Martini, anyone? And if Bond is not to your liking, there is always Grisham, Patterson, Koontz, Child and Coben.

For a more literary bent, I recommend **Sara Gruen's** *Water for Elephants* and **Erik Larson's** *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America*.

As it happens, we have circus roustabouts in my family background which is one of the reasons I enjoyed *Water for Elephants*. It's the story of a young man's life with a down-on-its-luck circus in Depression-era America. The book has unforgettable characters that are precisely crafted. *Water for Elephants* also deals with aging in a way that is poignant, yet still as real as it gets.

I bought Larson's book on impulse recently. Larson is an extraordinary historian whose works read like fiction. This book, about the events surrounding the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, still appears on bestseller lists five years after its publication, which speaks volumes about its popularity quotient.

I also heartily recommend, *Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History*, again by **Erik Larson**. A riveting account of how **Isaac Cline** and the nascent National Weather Service sparred with a hurricane in September of 1900. Before it was over, it had devastated Galveston, at the time, one of the wealthiest cities in the nation.

Now, back to business.

The business bestseller lists at the moment are filled with a particularly robust offering of new releases. Tops on my "to read" list:

*The Post-American World*, written by Newsweek's International Editor, **Fareed Zakaria**, looks at global growth and what he calls "the rise of the rest;"

*Total Leadership: Be a Better Leader, Have a Richer Life*, Wharton School's Leadership Program director **Stew Friedman**'s prescription for being a successful leader not just in business, but in your home, your community and your private self;

*Big Ideas to Big Results*, a book by **Michael Kanazawa** and **Robert Miles** that suggests it takes more than a vision to launch a successful corporate strategy. Rather, they say, it takes employee buy-in. Without it, they assert, a lot of corporate initiatives fail. They'll also help you create that "big result."

And lastly, investing. If your vacation is more of a "staycation," or if you just can't bear the thought of sitting on a beach and reading something unrelated to the markets or financial services, here are four more books for your consideration:

*Full of Bull: Do What Wall Street Does, Not What it Says, To Make Money in the Market*. The title says it all, and no one knows more about how Wall Street rocks and rolls than Stephen T. McClellan, an analyst for better than 30 years at places like Merrill Lynch and Salomon Brothers. Check out EMM's interview with McClellan in last month's issue if you haven't already.

**Gene Marcial's 7 Commandments of Stock Investing**. A former *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Marcial has been writing the "Inside Wall Street" column at BusinessWeek for nearly 30 years. As Marcial puts it in a note to the reader: "Knowing how to use the fear-and-greed factor is the first step to making money on Wall Street. But it is only the first step. A careful reading of this book provides the investor with the know-how to beat the market."

*The Journal of Financial Advertising & Marketing*. Published quarterly, JFAM is a quick read that's rich in information and articles you can use on topics ranging from branding and advertising to marketing and positioning. If you'd like a free sample, shoot me an email with your contact information and Samantha Wreaks, the publisher of JFAM, will forward you a complimentary copy. (Supplies are limited).

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