

The 2017 Reading List for Real Estate Pros

I am often asked what characteristics I have seen in top brokers in our commercial real estate market. One of the most underrated is continual self-improvement. And one way of constantly attaining new knowledge and perspective is through reading.

I have tried to follow in the footsteps of some of the most successful brokers I carefully watched in the early stages of my career, and right up to today. I would talk to them about what they were reading. I have since become a voracious reader myself and advise people starting out in our industry to read as much as they can.

When I make that suggestion to them, they will typically ask me what some of my favorite books are. So I thought today I would share with you some of my favorite books and what they can teach us. As you will see, the main themes of these books revolve around people skills, negotiating, psychology and selling. Each of these is a key ingredient in the make up of top salespeople in our business. Here are my favorite books in no particular order:

Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity by David Allen. Allen theorizes

that only when our minds are clear and our thoughts are organized, can we achieve effective results and unleash our creative potential. A powerful book on organization, efficiency and results at work and in life.

The Power of Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent Peale. No doubt, you've heard of this one before. Peale demonstrates the power of faith in action. With practical techniques outlined in the book, you can energize your life and give yourself the initiative needed to carry out your ambitions and hopes to achieve your business and personal goals.

Never Eat Alone: Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time by Keith Ferrazzi. A step-by-step guide to

building relationships (the most important ingredient in real estate brokerage), with clever anecdotes and advice.

Two books from one of my Wharton professors, G. Richard Shell. The first is *Bargaining for Advantage: Negotiation Strategies for Reasonable People*. This book provides the tools you need to negotiate effectively in every part of your life. Shell's negotiation IQ test, as well as best practices from top dealmakers, helps unveil your strength as a top negotiator.



Robert Knakal

The second is *The Art of Woo: Using Strategic Persuasion to Sell Your Ideas* which presents a systematic approach to winning over even the toughest bosses, clients and most skeptical colleagues.

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't, by Jim Collins. Collins uses a flywheel and hedgehog to illustrate how good companies, mediocre companies and even bad companies can achieve enduring greatness. This book is a must read for anyone who owns, or manages, a brokerage company and even anyone who runs their own brokerage team.

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion by Robert Cialdini. Cialdini is perhaps the world's leading authority on influence and persuasion. This book explains the psychology of why people say "yes," how they change their minds and how to apply these understandings to real world situations.

The Power of a Positive No: Save the Deal, Save the Relationship—and Still Say No by William Ury. This book provides a simple three step method for saying a "Positive No" as well as how to resist opposition and manipulation. It offers concrete advice and powerful examples.

How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie. Another classic in which you

will learn simple ways to make a great impression, how to criticize and not be hated for it, become a good conversationalist and what to do when nothing else works.

Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive: Outsell, Outmanage, Outmotivate and Outnegotiate Your Competition by Harvey B. Mackay. This book is a comprehensive guide to getting appointments, arming yourself with information, using insights to help you know when to smile and when to say no.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change by Stephen R. Covey. This timeless best seller is a must read, which has transformed the lives of presidents, CEOs, educators, parents, business people and millions of people of all ages and occupations. Reading this book will certainly increase your productivity.

The Art of War by Sun Tzu. "No Student of Influence Should Be Without This Historic Philosophy Book on Leadership," says the readout on my edition. Amen! Topics include five essentials for victory, tactical dispositions and maneuvering.

There are important lessons to be learned from each of these great books. Any of them would be a key ingredient on the road to self-improvement.