

The best business books

The Financial Times newspaper has shortlisted six books in its annual 'Best business book of the year' competition.

1 Which of the following business topics would you most like to read about? Compare your answer with a partner.

Globalisation	Technology	Economics	Strategy
A company history	Crime	Design	Business cases studies

2 Match the book titles (a) – (f) to the book reviews (1) – (6).

Answers: (a) ____, (b) ____, (c) ____, (d) ____, (e) ____, (f) ____

(a)	The Search How Google and its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business John Battelle
(b)	Freakonomics Steve Levitt and Stephen Dubner
(c)	The Travels of a T-shirt Pietra Rivoli

(d)	Fast Second How Smart Companies Bypass Radical Innovation to Enter and Dominate New Markets Constantinos Markides, Paul Geroski
(e)	The World is Flat Thomas Friedman
(f)	DisneyWar James Stewart

(1)	Levitt is not a typical economist. His book looks at crime, morality and the hidden side of doing business. He looks at 'freakish' things and in doing so, he invents a new term: 'freakonomics'. Full of fascinating stories, this is a business book which looks at the darker side of the business world – a business book with a difference!
(2)	It was a war! A war between Roy Disney who resigned in 2003 and the chairman and CEO of the famous studios, Michael Eisner. This book successfully digs deep into the entertainment world, and the fascinating boardroom battles which rocked the world of Disney. It tells a story, a story of power and control in the media world.
(3)	Google offered a radical new approach to searching; they survived the dotcom crash; they launched one of the most exciting public share offerings in history. This book is more than a history of just one company; it looks at the past, the present and the future of search technology.

(4)	A strange title! 'Fast seconds' offers advice to large companies, suggesting that instead of developing their own breakthroughs, they should let start-ups such as universities and venture capitalists do the job. They would then step in after a market has agreed on the dominant design. A book on strategy with interesting case studies.
(5)	An incredible around-the-world journey is described – this is the life story of a simple T-shirt. The story includes a visit to a cotton field in Texas, a factory in China, and informs us about politics, economics and ethics. Entertaining, this book presents a balanced view of the issues of globalisation.
(6)	Friedman is an award-winning New York Times columnist. His book looks at what he calls 'flattening of the globe' – by which he means globalisation. He describes the rise of China and India. His book is subtitled 'A brief history of the twenty-first century' and is a must-read for anyone interested in politics and economics.

3 Read the reviews. Would you like to read any of the books on the shortlist?

4 Complete the missing vowels in these adjectives. Use some of them to describe a book you have read recently.

f_sc_n_t_ng _xc_t_ng _nt_r_st_ng _ncr_d_bl_ str_ng_ _nt_rt_n_ng

5 You are the judging panel for 'Best business book of the year'. In small groups, decide:

- which one of the six shortlisted books above you would vote for.
- the title of a new business book which you would like to see published in 2006.