

Year-End Book Recommendations

By [LawVision](#) on December 18, 2014

As we head into the holiday season and prepare for the New Year, I'd like to offer some quick summaries of books I found helpful this year. Use them as last minute stocking stuffers, to help you with your new year's resolutions or send one to a client or prospect as a way to stay in touch.

Happy reading and Happy New Year!

Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Chip Heath and his brother Dan draw on their experiences as educators (Chip as a professor of Organizational Behavior at Stanford's business school, Dan as a consultant to the policy programs of the Aspen Institute) to ask the following questions: Why do some ideas thrive while others die? And how can we improve the chances of worthy ideas? The authors offer a good framework to use as a template or measuring stick for your own ideas in terms of how to best make them "sticky." Six themes emerge across the great anecdotes, stories, and data in each section of the book: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions, and stories. This book is highly applicable to marketing efforts in and for law firms. Use it when preparing for your next pitch or prospect meeting.

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain

Some lawyers think they can't succeed at business development because they are not the glad-handing, back-slapping, scotch-swilling, golfing types that enjoy a good round of networking over drinks. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many successful law firm rainmakers consider themselves natural introverts. In fact, with a plan that properly fits one's personality and practice, anyone can bring in new business. A former lawyer, Susan Cain explores our history of extroversion before celebrating the virtues of introversion. Thoroughly researched (she's an introvert!) and well written, *Quiet* gives introverts their due and helps us all to see the value of the quiet, reflective listener. A must for anyone tasked with engaging lawyers in business development.

Power Questions: Build Relationships, Win New Business, and Influence Others by Andrew Sobel and Jerold Panas

Andrew Sobel and Jerold Panas use short stories to illustrate the power of asking good questions. Using real-life scenarios, the authors suggest modern day power-questions to apply in different settings. Quick, easy, and practical, with this book, you'll be armed and ready for your next interview, networking event, or pitch.

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics by Daniel James Brown

Do you like a good story? Were you taken by Krakauer's "Into thin Air" or Hillenbrand's "Seabiscuit" or "Unbroken." If so, this might be the book for you. Daniel James Brown's *Boys in the Boat* tells the story of how a ragtag team of working-class boys from logging camps, shipyards, dairy farms, and dusty small towns of the great Northwest challenged their west coast rowing rivals, the great ivy league clubs of the East coast, before defeating the best crews in the world at the 1936 Olympics. Determination, hard work, and overcoming obstacles of the depression era are here described as coalescing into what rowing teams call "swing," the moment "...when all eight oarsmen are rowing in such perfect unison

that no single action by any one is out of synch with those of all the others . . . If all you want is a good story, *The Boys in the Boat* definitely delivers, though it also might help you get your own team rowing in the same direction. Be forewarned, you'll be inspired.

To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others by Daniel Pink

In excellent prose, Daniel Pink critiques what he believes is an outmoded view of sales:

"To the smart set, sales is an endeavor that requires little intellectual throw weight – a task for slick glad-handers who skate through life on a shoeshine and a smile. To others, it's the province of dodgy characters doing slippery things – a realm where trickery and deceit get the speaking parts while honesty and fairness watch mutely from the rafters. Still others view it as the white collar equivalent of cleaning toilets – necessary perhaps, but unpleasant and even a bit unclean. "

Pink argues that we've gotten it wrong, that sales has evolved over the last decade to the point where just about everybody is involved in a sales function of some kind. After laying out his case for why this has happened, Pink follows-up with specific advice for what to do about it. This is a great book for lawyers with an outdated perception of business development.

The Upside of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic by Dan Ariely

Famous Behavioral Economist Dan Ariely adds to the dogpile on rational choice theorists, drawing the reader into real-life experiments that highlight our irrationality. Ariely draws on stories from all facets of life, from the office, to romance, to the purpose of life itself, to answer questions such as "Why can large bonuses make CEOs less productive?", "How can confusing directions actually help us?", "Why is revenge so important to us?", and "Why is there such a big difference between what we think will make us happy and what really does make us happy?"

David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants by Malcom Gladwell

In the tradition of *The Tipping Point*, *Blink*, *Outliers*, and *What the Dog Saw*, Gladwell continues to do his thing In *David and Goliath*, using research, pop psychology, and great stories to reshape our views of how the world works. *David and Goliath* is a treatise on underdogs and how they win. Gladwell offers a new look of what it means to endure a monumental challenge, how people overcome challenges, and how doing so affects their lives for the better.

The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Doris Kearns Goodwin, famed presidential historian (Lincoln, Johnson, Kennedy, and Roosevelt) is a master of compiling letters, articles, and news stories into "fly on the wall" narratives of U.S. history. Weaving together stories of the brash young president, Teddy Roosevelt, his well-liked successor William Taft, and the muckraking staff of McClure's magazine, Goodwin paints a vivid picture of the personalities of men and women of the era and the interplay between politicians and the press. With a riveting story, the book offers a great lesson in decision-making and standing for principle. Unless you have it on Kindle, this is not one for the plane. At over 900 pages, you'll pull a shoulder muscle just heaving it onto the TSA scanner. You can finish it when you get back home.