MAGIC compiles Worth Mentioning from a variety of literary sources. The staff recognizes, though, that the list is not inclusive. If you have read a noteworthy book, we invite you to submit the title to magic2@pwcgov.org.

Management/Leadership

The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building a Business When There Are No Easy Answers by Ben Horowitz, 2014

Business schools do not always teach how to navigate some of the toughest problems executives face. Using his own trials, Horowitz analyzes issues such as firing a loyal friend, managing smart people who are ineffective employees, hiring people from a friend’s company, handling promotions, and leading even when you are not sure where you are going. Using anecdotes from his own rise in business and lyrics to some of his favorite rap songs, Horowitz may not have all the answers to the hard questions but he certainly gives you much to consider as you ponder your own hard issues.

Business/Entrepreneurship

Business Adventures: Twelve Classic Tales from the World of Wall Street by John Brooks, 2014

John Brooks was a financial writer for the New Yorker and this book is a collection of 12 of his essays on iconic companies that were defined by a particular moment of fame or notoriety. Ford Motor Company’s Edsel, scandals at General Electric, the Xerox company’s 42 ½ point drop in stock price in 1966, and the collapse of a brokerage firm are just a few of the stories that will have us thinking once again that history does indeed repeat itself.

Google: How Google Works by Eric Schmidt and Jonathan Rosenberg, 2014

When Eric Schmidt and Jonathan Rosenberg came to Google they had already been running successful technology companies. However they soon realized that they would need to relearn everything they thought they knew about management and business. This book contains the lessons they learned as they helped Google transition into the 21st century. They contend that consumers, not companies, now have the balance of power and that businesses have to create superior products and hire the best employees in order to remain competitive. Chapters include Culture, Strategy, Talent, Decisions, Communications, and Innovation. If you are curious about Google’s corporate philosophy, this will be an interesting informative read.


Intel, the inventor of the microprocessor, today builds the tiny “engines” that power many of our electronic devices. Malone takes an unflinching look at the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three founding members of Intel. He describes how the perfect balance of this triumvirate brought Intel to its current level of success. The author also discusses the challenges that are ahead for Intel as the company seeks to maintain its dominance and its legacy.

Weinfurter has a rigorous straightforward method for making any start-up into a robust mature enterprise. Discussions include locating new capital sources, hiring smart, creating new ways to sell, improving customer experiences and being an effective leader. This book is devoted to helping you maximize your company’s potential.

Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future by Peter Thiel with Blake Masters, 2014

This is a book about how to build companies that create new things. As one of the originators of PayPal, Thiel has also served as a director of Facebook and a provider of early funding for LinkedIn and Yelp, just to name a few. Using his experiences with these and other companies, Thiel contends that if American businesses are to succeed in the future, they must invest in the difficult task of creating new things. Fortunately we as humans are good at using technology to do just that. By looking at the recent history of successful inventive companies we can learn how companies can become more creative rather than merely maintain a status quo.

Self-Enhancement

How We Learn: The Surprising Truth About When, Where, and Why It Happens by Benedict Carey, 2014

Carey shows us how to flex our neural muscles so that deep learning can take place. Using his science reporter skills, Carey sifted through educational research and studies to uncover how our brain absorbs and retains information. Some of the techniques that he roadtested and describes in this book will be counterintuitive. As eccentric learning machines, our quirky brains can be exploited to our advantage. Even if you don’t have time to read the entire book, just reading the Appendix: Eleven Essential Questions will give you insight into learning such as: Is routine important for learning? How does sleep affect learning? Is cramming a bad idea? Is there an effective strategy for improving performance on long term creative projects?

The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload by Daniel J. Levitin, 2014

We are constantly being bombarded with information. If you ever have felt overwhelmed by the amount of information coming toward you, this is a book for you. Levitin takes us from too much information and too many decisions to ways to combat information fatigue at home, at work, and in our social lives. Levitin even includes a chapter on teaching our children to have organized minds.

Supersurvivors: the Surprising link between Suffering and Success by David Feldman, 2014

Many of us suffer traumas in our lives. While some of us experience serious psychological consequences from these traumas, others of us are able to not only move on but also overcome the effects of the trauma. Even rarer are those people who have reassessed their priorities, redirected their focus and accomplished extraordinary feats. This book is the story of these individuals who accomplished extra ordinary things in spite of their traumas. Feldman uses the latest clinical data along with these inspiring stories to offer hope that tragedy does not preclude us from living full productive lives.
Career Enhancement

*Act Like A Success, Think Like a Success: Discovering Your Gift and the Way to Life’s Riches* by Steve Harvey, 2014

Each one of us is endowed with gifts—being able to connect with people or solve problems or organize or be creative. This book is a road map for identifying your gifts and then discovering how to utilize those gifts in your work, with your family and in the community. Harvey will inspire and motivate you to identify your gifts, evaluate your life goals and determine the means for achieving those goals.

*Style Bible: What to Wear to Work* by Lauren A. Rothman, 2014

“Dressing for work is less formulaic today, and there is more room for employees to express their individuality” says Rothman. This means that we need to better define and understand dress codes. This book will help you review the basics of fashion so that your own sense of style can be expressed while staying within your workplace dress code. Rothman has an interesting chapter on defining dress codes and even discusses regional differences in dress codes.

Body Politic

*A Deadly Wandering: A Tale of Tragedy and Redemption in the Age of Attention* by Matt Richtel, 2014

Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* journalist Matt Richtel interweaves a tragic car accident and the subsequent trial with some of the hard questions of our time—What is technology doing to us? Can our minds keep up with the pace of the change? How can we find balance? This is the story of one young man’s journey to becoming an advocate to discourage distracted driving. Richtel includes scientific findings regarding human attention and the impact of technology on our brains as he tells the riveting story of a young man who fatally struck two rocket scientists while texting and driving.

*The Impulse Society: America in the Age of Instant Gratification* by Paul Roberts, 2014

The pursuit of short-term self-gratification, once viewed as a weakness has now become the default principle of individuals and society, Roberts maintains. Using scientific studies and surveys, Roberts walks us through the changes in public perception and governmental policies that have affected and to some extent enabled our society’s path toward quick efficient rewards without regard to long-term costs to ourselves or society as a whole. Yet, Roberts sees some signs of change—individuals who are trying to step off the treadmill and restore some balance to society. Since anxiety seems to be on the rise in society, this rebalancing may help alleviate some of society’s unease.

*What I Know For Sure* by Oprah Winfrey, 2014

For over fourteen years, Oprah Winfrey has written a column called “What I Know For Sure” for *O Magazine*. This book is a collection of those columns divided into chapters on Joy, Resilience, Connection, Gratitude, Possibility, Awe, Clarity, and Power.