



PRESS RELEASE

THINKERS50 RANKING OF MANAGEMENT THINKERS ANNOUNCED

Embargoed until 10.30 pm GMT November 09 2015

HARVARD CHAMPION OF SHARED VALUE TOPS THINKERS50 NEW GENERATION OF THINKERS MAKES DEBUT

Who is the most influential living management thinker? The Thinkers50 2015 global ranking provides the answer. Published every two years, it is the essential guide to which business thinkers and ideas are in – and which have been consigned to business history. The 2015 Thinkers50 ranking was unveiled tonight at the “Oscars of Management Thinking” awards at Drapers’ Hall in the City of London.

No. 1. May the Forces Be With You: According to Thinkers50 the most influential management thinker in the world is the internationally renowned strategy and competitiveness expert Professor Michael Porter of Harvard Business School. Regarded as the father of modern business strategy, Porter, who has consulted to dozens of corporations and a number of national governments including the UK, returns to the No. 1 slot after previously topping the list in 2007.

Porter’s influence on business strategy has been immense. His Five Forces Framework was the definitive approach for decades and is still taught in every business school in the world. Since the financial crisis of 2008, too, Porter’s theory of Shared Value has led the way in a re-evaluation of the role and expectations of capitalism.

Most recently, Porter has applied his ideas to show how smart, connected products (those containing embedded sensors, processors and software to create connectivity) are creating a technological revolution that will transform competition and have profound implications for society.

“I am so honored to lead the Thinkers50 ranking this year. I am in wonderful company with the likes of Peter Drucker, CK Prahalad and Clay Christensen,” said Porter, in his acceptance speech on 09 November.

“Management thinking and a new conception of how corporations relate to society is one of the most powerful tools we have in addressing society’s pressing challenges. Through creating Shared Value – which Mark Kramer and I have written about – I think we can create solutions to problems like healthcare, nutrition, the environment

education, and housing. Ideas truly do change the world, and management thinking unlocks value in every field, not just business.”

No. 2. The Disruptive Guru: At No. 2 in the 2015 Thinkers50 ranking is Clayton Christensen, who topped the ranking in 2011 and 2013. Christensen is the author of several best-selling books including his classic *The Innovator’s Dilemma*. The book introduced the idea of disruptive innovation to a generation of managers and explained why the management practices that have allowed them to become industry leaders also make it hard for companies to develop the disruptive technologies that others may use to steal away their markets.

No. 3. Blue Ocean Thinkers: In third position are the INSEAD professors W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne. Kim and Mauborgne, Korean and American respectively, are the authors of *Blue Ocean Strategy* and a string of highly influential HBR articles. *Blue Ocean Strategy* has sold over two million copies, and has been embraced by companies, not-for-profits and national governments around the world, including Malaysia, which has a National Blue Ocean Strategy.

No. 4. Wiki-thinker: Making the top five for the second time running is the Canadian technology guru Don Tapscott. Tapscott is probably best known for his 2006 book *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* co-authored with Anthony Williams. His latest research explores how a new breed of global network enabled by the internet and other technologies, offer an alternative to traditional approaches, such as the United Nations or national governments, to address global problems.

No. 5. Trigger-happy Supercoach: Marshall Goldsmith, the world-renowned executive coach, completes the top five. An adjunct professor at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, Goldsmith also picked up the Thinkers50 Distinguished Achievement Award for Leadership with his latest best-selling book – *Triggers: Creating Behavior that Lasts; Becoming the Person You Want to Be*.

Other stories to come out of the new 2015 ranking:

Rise of a new generation of thinkers: The new ranking signals a passing of the baton to a new generation of gurus: a record 14 newcomers make this year’s ranking.

“We are delighted to see so many new faces in the Thinkers50 ranking,” said Stuart Crainer, who created the ranking with Des Dearlove in 2001. “The guru industry used to be pale, male and stale but that is no longer the case. Today it’s eclectic, didactic and hectic. There are a lot of great new ideas and thinkers coming through. As boundaries between disciplines blur, it’s also getting harder to pigeon-hole them into traditional disciplines like strategy, marketing or innovation.”

Among the newcomers is Zhang Ruimin, the CEO of the Chinese white goods giant Haier. At number 38, Ruimin is the highest-ever ranked Chinese thinker (and the third Chinese thinker ever to make the top 50). Haier and Ruimin also picked up the Thinkers50 Award for Ideas into Practice, for applying a distinctively Chinese and progressive business philosophy.

“Management thinking is no longer the preserve of the West. The last few rankings saw an Asian invasion with the emergence of the Indian thinkers. In 2015, we are seeing the arrival of Chinese management thinkers on the world stage,” says Thinkers50 co-founder Des Dearlove.

Thinkers50 Femmes: It is the best ever showing for women thinkers – with women capturing 14 places out of the top 50 (up from 13 in 2013, 11 in 2011, and just five in 2009). Women thinkers claim no fewer than four of the top 10 places in the new ranking (equalling their 2013 tally), their joint best ever showing. (This compares with only one female thinker in the top 10 in 2011.)

At No. 3 in the ranking (with writing partner Chan Kim) INSEAD’s Renée Mauborgne is the highest placed woman. Also in the top ten are: Harvard professor Linda Hill (6); Cuban-born INSEAD professor Herminia Ibarra (8); and Rita McGrath from Columbia Business School (9). Ten more women make the top 50: Amy Edmondson (16); Teresa Amabile (20); Lynda Gratton of London Business School (31); Sylvia-Ann Hewlett (32); Tammy Erickson (35); Stanford’s Jennifer Aaker (36); Liz Wiseman (43); Nilofer Merchant (48); Whitney Johnson (49) and Amy Cuddy (50).

In addition, Rachel Botsman picks up the Thinkers50 Breakthrough Idea Award for her championing of the idea of Collaborative Consumption and the Sharing Economy, which includes exciting new business models such as AirBnB. The Future Thinker Award, now renamed Radar Award, also went to a woman for the third consecutive time, with Erin Meyer the winner.

“When you consider that women constitute half the world’s population, they are still under represented in the Thinkers50,” says Thinkers50 co-creator Des Dearlove, “but they are making impressive progress. It’s great to see them coming through now with some of the most exciting new ideas. What is particularly interesting is that many of the up-and-coming women thinkers are championing ideas that involve collaboration rather than old-fashioned competition.”

THINKERS50 DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

As well as the ranking itself, 11 Distinguished Achievement Awards – known as the “Oscars of Management Thinking” – were presented at the awards ceremony. The complete list of Thinkers50 winners is:

No. 1 Ranked Management Thinker: Michael Porter
Lifetime Achievement Award: Henry Mintzberg
Radar Thinker: Erin Meyer
Talent: Stew Friedman
Innovation: Linda Hill
Strategy: Alex Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur
Social Enterprise: Roger Martin & Sally Osberg
Digital Thinking: Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee
Ideas into Practice: Zhang Ruimin & Haier
Leadership: Marshall Goldsmith
Breakthrough Idea: Rachel Botsman

Global Footprint: Thinkers50 has developed a truly global footprint, the theme of this year's gala event. No fewer than 10 different nationalities are featured in the top 50 – including thinkers from the US, Canada, Bangladesh, Denmark, Holland, Korea, China, the UK, India, and Cuba. Nearly 30 countries on 4 continents are represented by Thinkers, Affiliates and partners who contribute to scanning, ranking and sharing the best management ideas globally.

Thinkers50 Hall of Fame: 2015 also sees six new inductees into the Thinkers50 Hall of Fame. Those promoted to the upper house after years of top rankings include Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Ed Lawler, Ed Schein, Ram Charan, Andrew Kakabadse, and Richard Rumelt.

Lifetime Achievement: The Canadian contrarian Henry Mintzberg is honoured with a Thinkers50 Lifetime Achievement Award, becoming only the third person after Charles Handy and the Japanese thinker Ikujiro Nonaka to receive the accolade.

“Interesting times yield interesting ideas,” say Thinkers50 founders Stuart Crainer and Des Dearlove. “How we view business and how business is practiced is changing. The ideas of the people featured in the Thinkers50 ranking make a difference on the factory floor and in the boardrooms of the world. In business today, ideas matter because they can be the difference between success and failure.”

About Thinkers50

Thinkers50 scans, ranks and shares the very best in management ideas. Its definitive global ranking of management thinkers is published every two years. Previous winners include Professor Clayton Christensen of Harvard Business School (2013 and 2011); CK Prahalad (2009 and 2007); Michael Porter (2005) and Peter Drucker (2001 and 2003).

For Thinkers50 2015, more than 20,000 people named their favourite thinker at the Thinkers50 website and 1,200 people nominated thinkers for specific Distinguished Achievement Awards.

About Stuart Crainer and Des Dearlove

Des Dearlove and Stuart Crainer are the founders and directors of Thinkers50. They are the authors of more than 15 books available in 20 languages. Former columnists to *The (London) Times*, they are editors of the *Financial Times Handbook of Management*. They advise thinkers and organizations worldwide.

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