

THE SUNTOP MEDIA THINKERS 50 2007

**Des Dearlove & Stuart Crainer announce the
2007 Thinkers 50, the original global ranking
of business thinkers.**

Who is the world's most influential living management thinker?

That was the simple question that inspired the original Thinkers 50 in 2001. The result was the first ever global ranking of business gurus. The all-new Thinkers 50 2007 (www.thinkers50.com) is the most comprehensive and fascinating ranking yet.

Produced by Suntop Media, in association with Skillssoft, it is the definitive bi-annual guide to which thinkers and ideas are in – and which are past their corporate sell by date.

So what do the 2007 rankings show? Who are the most influential management thinkers in an increasingly global business world? And who, among them, is the number one?

In 2005, Harvard heavyweight Michael Porter inherited the crown from the late great Peter Drucker. But would he keep his place at the top in this year's Thinkers 50? Now we know.

THE GURU AT THE TOP OF THE PYRAMID

The most influential living management guru in the world is CK Prahalad. Prahalad is the first Indian-born thinker to claim the title.

Best known for his work with Gary Hamel (ranked 5th) on resource-based strategy, which gave rise to the term core competences, more recently, Prahalad has turned his attention to the plight of the world's poor. In *The Bottom of the Pyramid*, his 2004 book, he argues that capitalism can be the engine to eradicate poverty.

“If we stop thinking of the poor as victims or as a burden, and start recognizing them as resilient and creative entrepreneurs, a whole new world of opportunity will open up,” he explains.

PEARLY GATES

In second place is another man who wants to change the world -- Microsoft founder Bill Gates. Once vilified by IT purists, Gates' stature as a technology pioneer is enhanced by his philanthropic work. The billions of dollars he has invested to help eradicate malaria and promote education have enabled him to retain the number 2 slot he claimed in 2005.

Third place goes to former head of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, whose book *The Age of Turbulence* strikes a chord with businesspeople around the world. The high priest of turbulence lurches up 32 places.

Meanwhile, Michael Porter, who topped the list in 2005, and is best known for his work on competitive positioning, sees his own competitive advantage eroded as he tumbles to fourth.

STRATEGY RULES

Elsewhere, the strategists are on the rise, with strategy gurus capturing 10 of the top 50 slots and accounting for four of the top 10. Hard on Porter's heels, for example, is another strategy maven, Gary Hamel, whose new book *The Future of Management*, calls for a reinvention of management. Hamel innovates himself up an impressive eight places to number 5.

Cruising up the ranking, too, are INSEAD-based Korean, W. Chan Kim, and American Renée Mauborgne, whose best-selling 2005 book, *Blue Ocean Strategy*, created a swell of support that lifts their boat 9 places to number 6. The strategic iconoclasts are also well represented with Henry Mintzberg at 16 (down from 8), and Richard D'Aveni, the guru of hyper competition, weighing in for the first time at 46.

INDIAN SUMMER

If 2007 is the year of the strategists it also sees the rise of the Indian

thinkers. Although the ranking is still dominated by North Americans (37 of the 50), Professor Prahalad is one of several Indian-born management gurus to make the 2005 ranking. These include CEO coach Ram Charan (22), and Vijay Govindarajan of the Tuck Business School (23); and Harvard's Rakesh Khurana (45).

As yet, no Chinese guru has emerged, but Korean, W. Chan Kim and Japanese guru Kenichi Ohmae remain in the top flight.

GEEKS AND GEEZERS

Former US vice president turned green warrior, Al Gore, adds a Thinkers 50 ranking to his Nobel Laureateship at 41.

Many established gurus also remain influential. The duke of leadership, octogenarian Warren Bennis moves up three places to 24; and is joined by fellow leadership guru and doyen of change John Kotter, who makes an overdue appearance at 30.

Tom Peters, the former McKinsey consultant celebrates the 25th anniversary of the best-selling *In Search of Excellence* at number 7.

Irish-born portfolio career man, Charles Handy downshifts from 10 to 14; while Maltese lateral thinker, Edward de Bono slips back to 40. But there is no place for culture vultures Ed Schein, the father of corporate culture, and diversity expert Geert Hofstede.

PRACTITIONERS PLAYING THE TRUMP CARD

Boosted by his TV ratings, Donald Trump makes the Thinkers 50 for the first time: the Donald is in at 20. Hot air balloonist and Virgin king, Richard Branson also soars to new heights at number 9; but there is no job in the top 50 for Amstrad's Alan Sugar. Former GE boss, Jack Welch falls three places to 8.

But new practitioner heroes include: Welch's successor at GE, Jeff Immelt (31); Bill George, the champion of authentic leadership, in at 35; and Apple's Steve Jobs (29). Casualties include Ricardo Semler, of the Brazilian company Semco; Amazon's Jeff Bezos; and former Intel

boss Andy Grove.

DOWNWARDLY MOBILE

Elsewhere other gurus see their position weaken. Falling back in the ranking is Jim Collins, who goes from great to good by dropping four places to 10. The shaven headed Swedish authors of Funky Business Kjell Nordstrom and Jonas Ridderstrale also drop from 9 to 13.

WOMEN FALL BACK

Business gurudom remains a man's world, with only three women in the top 50 (down from four last time). INSEAD's Renée Mauborgne is the highest placed at 6, a position she shares with male co-author W. Chan Kim. She is followed by London Business School's Lynda Gratton, whose latest book Hot Spots ignites her move up 15 places to 19. Harvard's Rosabeth Moss Kanter drops from 19 to 28. No Logo author Naomi Klein loses her Thinkers 50 label.

SELF-IMPROVERS REINVENT THEMSELVES

On the rise are several champions of self-improvement, with executive coach Marshall Goldsmith making his first appearance at 34; and Marcus Buckingham in at 38. Stephen Covey continues the to show the habit of an effective guru up three places at 15; and Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence takes him to 37. Goleman is joined by fellow psychologist Howard Gardner, originator of multiple intelligence theory, who enters the ranking at 39.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

New to this year's ranking are John Kotter; Thomas Friedman (author of The World is Flat); super-coach Marshall Goldsmith; Marcus Buckingham; Richard D'Aveni; permission marketing doyen Seth Godin; Howard Gardner; and Chris Zook of Bain Consulting.

ONES TO WATCH

Just off the radar, too, are a group of young up-and-coming thinkers who will make their mark in the next few years. Among them: Don Sull of London Business School; David Bach of Spain's Instituto de Empresa; and Tuck's Syd Finkelstein who's new book will surely see him reach the fifty.

OVER AND OUT

Disappearing from the list this year are Russ Ackoff, the veteran systems thinker; intellectual capitalist, Leif Edvinsson; executive psychoanalyst Manfred Kets de Vries; Princeton economist Paul Krugman; digital sages Geoffrey Moore and Patrick Dixon; marketing man Don Peppers; cultural diversity expert Fons Trompenaars; and Naomi Klein

As ever, we hope the new ranking will be of interest and lead to further discussion wherever you are in the world.

Des Dearlove & Stuart Crainer