

The 100 Best Business Books of All Time

What They Say, Why They Matter,
and How They Can Help You

JACK COVERT AND TODD SATTERSTEN

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LEADERSHIP

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- Control You
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STRATEGY

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- Execution

SALES & MARKETING

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- Positioning
- A New Brand World
- Selling the Invisible
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- Crossing the Chasm
- Secrets of Closing the Sale
- How to Become a Rainmaker

- Why We B
- Purple Cow
- The Tipping Point

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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- The Republic of Tea
- Guerilla Marketing
- The Monk and the Riddle

NARRATIVES

- McDonald's: Behind the Arches
- American Steel
- The Force

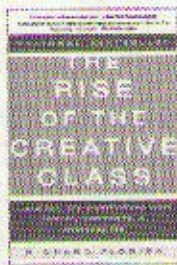
ADVANCE UNCORRECTED PROOFS—NOT FOR SALE

- When Genius Failed
- Moneyball

The Rise of the Creative Class

RICHARD FLORIDA

Reviewed by Todd



If you are reading our book, there is a good chance you are a member of Richard Florida's Creative Class. Engineers, writers, actresses, and architects make up the core of this new economic segment, and it expands further when you include occupations like lawyers, accountants, and managers, who all use creativity to solve problems. *The Rise of the Creative Class* is as much about finding out who we are as it is about hearing Florida's intriguing theories on creativity's role in economic development.

Florida's research shows that roughly 30 percent of America's workforce falls squarely in the Creative Class, rising from 20 million people in 1980 to over 38 million in 1999. The average salary of a Creative Class member is \$48,750, roughly double that of those working in manufacturing or service industries, and that sum accounts for one-half of all salary and wage income in United States. But the differences appear in more than just numbers.

Florida tells us that the Creative Class shuns conformity and prefers to express its individuality. During interviews, the Creative Class will ask potential employers about same-sex partner benefits, independent of their own orientation, to test a company's openness to diversity. This bohemian mind-set is not new for artisans, but these values have now been adopted by a much wider group. And yet the Creative Class believes in the rewards earned through hard work, with goal-setting and achievement among their criteria for success, which sets this group apart from the bohemian. The adoption of these values by the Creative Class explains a variety of worldwide trends, ranging from casual Fridays to corporate interest in employees' personal fitness and health.

The social contract between the Creative Class and its employers has changed as well. Workers expect to be treated like individuals, demanding flexible work schedules and even more flexible dress code. Managers are left to customize their approach to each employee, but companies

have also gained in this changed relationship. Because the Creative Class is intrinsically motivated by challenge, companies hook their employees with a cadence of new products and demanding release schedules, and in turn get a high level of devotion. In this arrangement, the compensation is not in dollars but recognition from peers and industry leaders.

“The best cities, like the best companies, do many things well, offering something for everybody.”

If the Creative Class expects different rules in the workplace, it is because members live by different ones in their personal pursuits. “Creative work is largely intellectual and sedentary; thus Creative Class people seek to recharge through physical activity.” Florida believes the meteoric rise in health-club memberships and the upswing in adventure sports, from rock climbing to snowshoeing, reveals a group of people pursuing a creative, active lifestyle. He further emphasizes that their activities come in the form of individual sports like running, biking, and swimming, pursuits that again match personal interests and flexible work schedules. This lifestyle trend drives to the core of Florida’s research and conclusions.

In the past, access to water or other natural resources determined the economic potential of a region. But Florida believes that the Creative Class is the new resource for economic growth. When choosing where to live, the Creative Class looks for “thick labor markets” that allow for easy horizontal moves from one company to another. Some choose cities with easy access to outdoor recreation, allowing daily engagement to match unpredictable work schedules. As a result of Florida’s conclusions and with the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, regional economic development has been turned as its ear. Spending by state and city governments to attract corporations or finance professional sports arenas was proved useless by Florida’s research. Instead, his 3T’s—technology, talent, and tolerance—are the new blueprint many areas are using to grow creative capital.

Florida says that there is much for the Creative Class to do. To begin, its members must recognize their common values of individuality and meritocracy and shed their dated differences of artist versus engineer or

liberal versus conservative. The next is to take a leadership role in growing creative capital through investing in research and development, both public and private, and supporting multidimensional and varied business and local culture.

The regional economic issues for business leaders make the book alone worth reading, but it is Florida's naming of a new tribe that many readers will identify with and find most encouraging: Who does not want to be part of the Creative Class? 13

The Rise of the Creative Class. And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life. Basic Books, Paperback 2004, ISBN 9780465024773

WHERE TO NEXT? « Page TK for the tension between creativity and organizations » Page TK for the connection between management and innovation » Page TK for innovation and creativity | EVEN MORE: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs *The World Is Flat* by Thomas L. Friedman *Restless Alone* by Robert D. Putnam