

Advantage

Your personal finance edge

July–August | 2020



Best practices for better online events

Retirement planning by the numbers | Pantry-o'-plenty: Your stock-up plan

The best business books of 2020—so far! | From-the-pantry recipes

It's quiz time: Favorite foods of the rich and famous

A time of transition...

During the summer months, typically, we tend to enjoy more time outside, traveling, and gathering with friends and family. This summer will certainly be different as many make the choice to stick a little closer to home and, perhaps, enjoy the simple pleasures of summer. To that end, we would like to wish you a happy and relaxing summer—whether you choose to venture out or plan a fun staycation!

To keep you looking forward financially this summer, we offer you clear tips and tactics for retirement planning in this issue. Be sure to find your “number,” and start your planning!

Because many of us may opt to do the majority of dining at home this summer, we also put together a pantry plan for you. Stock up with the suggested items on our list and then have fun trying a few new from-the-pantry recipes with your family. You can top off a good meal with a great read from our list of the best business books (so far) in 2020 as well.

If you are seeking some additional assistance on how to work remotely or host meetings virtually, we have you covered there, too. Check out a few recommendations from our *Best practices for better online events* article.

Have a warm and wonderful summer!

Your Trusted Advisors

Stock up with the suggested items on our list and then have fun trying a few new from-the-pantry recipes with your family.

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Retirement planning by the numbers...

Saving for retirement requires a good deal of preparation—more so than just about any other area of life. Many people find this to be an overwhelming task, wondering how much to save, when to start and what's a good spending-to-saving balance.



Developing a retirement savings strategy shouldn't be difficult. Typically, the hardest part is getting started! The easiest place to begin is to visualize the kind of retirement you want. Then, choose the date that you want to start living your retirement dream. Selecting a date to retire is key because any pension and Social Security distributions will vary depending on your retirement start date—and healthcare costs will depend on whether you qualify for Medicare. You'll also need to know how many years you have to save in order to meet your goals. To get you started, we offer the following retirement planning tips and tactics for your age group. This will better help you identify where you fall in terms of setting realistic savings goals as you move toward your "golden years."

In your 20s

Save approximately 8 to 12 percent of your salary. Prioritize 401k contributions to reduce your taxable income. In addition, Roth IRAs can be used to diversify investments.

In your 30s

Avoid increasing your cost of living as your salary increases and don't dip into your 401k to buy a home. Aim to hit the maximum contribution in your retirement accounts each year.

In your 40s

Always pay yourself first by continuing to aggressively fund your retirement accounts, even if it means you contribute less to college savings or your kids have to take out a student loan. Continue to be prudent about paring back expenses when you can.

In your 50s

Now is the time to really decrease your expenses and make paying off your mortgage a priority. You likely have enough "stuff," so use any extra funds to shore up your retirement savings by taking advantage of the IRA "catch-up contribution."

In your 60s

If you haven't already, begin estate planning and do everything you can to avoid using your Social Security benefits before age 70 (doing so will significantly increase your benefits). Now is also the time to look at your budget and run a cash flow projection to see how long your current assets will last.

No matter what stage of life you are in, planning and preparing for retirement is always a wise strategy. Your future retired self will certainly thank you for it! If you need assistance with your retirement strategy, please contact our firm. ■

What should you be doing for retirement?





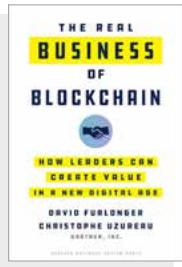
The best business books of 2020— so far!

If you are looking for the next great business book to devour...give our list a thorough review. Straight from Gartner, the world's leading research and advisory company, you can trust that the following represent must-reads for business owners.

The Real Business of Blockchain

By David Furlonger & Christophe Uzureau

This engaging and accessible read is not just for IT leaders but for all business leaders, whatever



their level of experience with blockchain. This practical guide helps executives assess how blockchain will impact their business, understand its value, and make smart near- and mid-term investments.

The Connector Manager: Why Some Leaders Build Exceptional Talent—and Others Don't

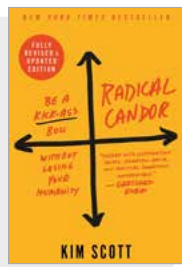
By Jaime Roca & Sari Wilde

This book offers insight into a multi-year study that included thousands of employees, managers and senior leaders from around the world. It explains why Connector Managers prove to be star performers—on average boosting employee performance by 26 percent. Learn what these managers do differently and why the Connector approach has a significant positive impact on employee performance.

Radical Candor: Be a Kick-A** Boss Without Losing Your Humanity (2nd Edition)

By Kim Scott

The title says it all. Author Kim Brown explains



how leaders who adopt the Radical Candor™ management philosophy (caring personally while challenging directly) create a culture of compassionate feedback, build cohesive teams and achieve great results.

The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results

By Gary Keller & Jay Papasan

This book delves into the value of simplifying your workload by focusing on the one most important task in any given project. The authors explain how to master what matters most, whether it's boosting sales, elevating customer service, coaching, etc.

Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation

By Tim Brown

Tim Brown, considered by many to be the father of design thinking, explains how the techniques and strategies of design belong at every level of business. This is not a book by designers for designers, but rather a guide for creative leaders who seek to infuse design thinking into every level of an organization, product or service to drive new alternatives for business.

Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World

By David Epstein

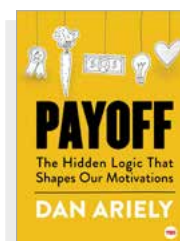
This book challenges the belief that the world's most successful people are specialists in their profession of choice (sports, business, technology, science, the arts) and began their pursuit early in life. It's the generalists who are primed to excel, even those with a late start. The author breaks it all down and shares the stories behind generalist stars such as Duke Ellington, J.K. Rowling and Roger Federer.



Payoff: The Hidden Logic That Shapes Our Motivations

By Dan Ariely

Can giving employees bonuses harm productivity? Why is trust so crucial for successful motivation?



What are our misconceptions about how to value our work? This book explores these questions and more in an attempt to understand what truly motivates us in both our professional and personal lives.

Check out these titles to round out your summer reading list, and be sure to recommend those you found valuable to others. ■

Best practices for better online events



In the past several months, we've witnessed a sudden and swift transition to hosting everything online—from staff meetings and interviews to larger, multi-attendee events. While you may have transitioned to the cloud with relative ease, it's time to start thinking about perfecting your web-based delivery. The following tips, offered by the experts at Zoom, will help you fine-tune your online events:

1 Think about what you want your user experience to look like, and then ask yourself: "What level of interaction do I expect from my attendees?" If attendees are expected to mostly listen, then a webinar format is probably a good fit. For team meetings or interviews where attendees are expected to participate and advance dialogue, a meeting format is a better fit.

2 As an event host, you set the tone for any event. Make sure you practice and prepare beforehand to provide the best and most fluid experience possible.

3 Hardwire your internet connection to avoid any connectivity issues related to an unstable Wi-Fi connection, which can affect your audio quality and the overall attendee experience.

4 Test your audio before your event begins to ensure your speakers and microphone are working.

5 Try to eliminate as much background noise as possible. If you can't host your meeting in a quiet place, use a headset. If you are hosting a webinar, setting up in a quiet location is a must.

6 Dress appropriately. Because you'll be on video, it's best to dress in business attire. Solid, muted colors look better and are less distracting than patterns or flashy prints. Keep your accessories simple and tasteful as well.

7 Be clear about what you are offering and provide an agenda. Create a clear webinar title and description for the content that will be delivered.

8 Be prompt and plan to start your meeting or webinar a few minutes early to allow your attendees to join before the content kicks off. Let everyone know when the event will begin and if the content will be recorded and shared afterward.

9 Enable Q&A if you are hosting a webinar. If you can, designate panelists or other hosts to help answer questions that come in during the event. It's also a good idea to prepare a few questions in advance in case you have a "quiet" audience.

10 Use the polling feature to capture valuable attendee data. Most online meeting platforms support polling, and it's standard to set up three to four questions to launch during an event. Be thoughtful in developing your questions as the goal is to collect useful, helpful intelligence—such as interest level in your product, company rank (to identify decision makers) or the level of understanding of your content.

Implementing just a few of these best practices will help you elevate the attendee experience with your online events! ■



Pantry-o'-plenty: Your 30-day stock-up plan

Social distancing policy has certainly changed our dining behavior—pointing many back to the kitchen table for home-cooked meals. This requires keeping a well-stocked pantry of staple goods. Use our list of pantry must-haves to help you stock up for a month at a time (and avoid frequent trips out to the grocery store). Also, make sure to look up a few of your favorite recipes and add required items to the list.

■ Dried or canned beans

Fill your cart with at least a dozen cans of beans, such as black beans, chickpeas and kidney beans. These items are standard in making bean salads, chili or vegetable quesadillas. Dried beans require only an overnight soak and can be used for everything from puréed dips to soups or stews.

■ Rice and whole grains

Consider some favorites like quinoa, farro, barley, wheat berries and bulgur. These grains can be cooked in bulk and used throughout the week in salads and soups. Identify two or three varieties that your family likes and purchase in bulk boxes or bags.

■ Garlic and onions

Aromatics like onions, garlic, ginger and chilies add flavor and can last a long time in your fridge or in a cool pantry spot. Do not store these goods in plastic bags or they may get moldy.

■ Root vegetables and other pantry-safe veggies

In addition to buying frozen veggies, stock up on potatoes, carrots, winter squash, heads of cabbage, celery, Brussels sprouts and other sturdy vegetables that keep well. Purchase enough to last you two or three weeks and alternate with frozen veggies to mix things up.

■ **Stocks and broths**

Buy six cans or cartons of broth or buy space-saving bouillon pastes or cubes. Use these items to make soups and stews or as a flavor booster for sauces or when you are cooking grains.

■ **Canned fish and chicken**

Alternative proteins like canned fish and chicken can add variety to sandwich offerings and also be used in dishes when you don't have any fresh meat options. Pick up 6 to 8 cans to keep in stock.

■ **Canned vegetables**

Stock up on canned veggies that are nutritional and provide a vitamin boost, such as corn, peas, green beans, artichokes, beets and tomatoes. Mix and match 12 (or more) of your family's favorites to keep on hand.

■ **Canned soup**

Canned soups are an easy choice for those nights you just don't feel like cooking a bigger meal. Buy a variety of flavors to keep on hand.

■ **Pasta sauce**

A jar of pasta sauce and pasta makes for a yummy and easy meal. You can also add chicken stock and chopped vegetables to make a minestrone or add to cooked rice for a rich side dish.

■ **Crackers**

Keep a few boxes of whole grain crackers on hand to go with soup, cheese or just for a quick snack.

■ **Healthier snack options**

Because there is likely to be higher demand for snacks in your household, make sure you stock up on good-for-you items like pretzels, grain-based crackers and popcorn. If you want sweets, think about purchasing dried fruit, canned fruit and dark chocolate.

■ **Baking supplies**

If you like to bake, make sure you add all-purpose and bread flours, baking powder, baking soda and packaged yeast to your grocery list. And don't forget sugar, dried fruit and chocolate chips in case you want to make muffins or cookies.

■ **Cooking oil and condiments**

If your family likes mayonnaise, mustard, relish, ketchup and other condiments, make sure you stock up on these items—as well as any spices you may need.

■ **Nuts and nut butters**

Having a variety of nuts in your pantry helps add a crunchy twist to your favorite salad, pasta and curry recipes. Plus, they are great for healthy snacking. Peanut butter and other nut butters are great for toast and sandwiches as well.

■ **Boxed milk**

Shelf-stable milk (whether true dairy or plant-based) is a good item to have on hand to replace regular milk altogether or as a substitute in a pinch. You may also want to keep canned evaporated milk on hand.

■ **Coffee and tea**

If you crave a cup (or more) of coffee or tea every day, add these staples in bulk to your pantry stock-up list.

Follow our list and your cart and your pantry will be full of everything you need to make delicious meals at home—and can sustain you for about a month (depending on the size of your household). Add fresh fruits and veggies, bread, meat or meat substitutes, and cheese to further prepare for robust home-cooked meals. ■

From the pantry recipes



Less time at the grocery store leaves more time for family and activities you enjoy—like cooking at home and spending time around the dinner table. If you use our pantry item suggestions from the previous article, it will position you well for maintaining a well-stocked pantry to create many delicious home-cooked meals. We hope you like the recipes we've provided here!

Moroccan Tomato Soup

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 (28 ounce) cans diced fire roasted tomatoes
- 2-3 tablespoons harissa sauce
- 2 teaspoons honey or real maple syrup
- 1 can (14 ounce) full fat coconut milk
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro or basil, chopped

Instructions

- Heat olive oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. When the oil shimmers,

add onion and garlic and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook five minutes or until the onion is fragrant and beginning to caramelize. Add thyme, paprika and cumin; cook another minute. Stir in the tomatoes, harissa and honey. Cook five minutes until bubbling.

- Pour in coconut milk. Transfer soup to a blender and puree until mostly smooth. Return the soup to the pot and place over medium heat. Stir in cilantro and season the soup with more salt and pepper as desired. Thin the soup with more coconut milk if desired. Cook until warmed though, 5 to 10 minutes.
- To serve, ladle the soup into bowls and top with more cilantro. Try serving with a grilled cheese sandwich on the side.

Crock Pot Spaghetti (serves 8-10)

Ingredients

- 1/2 onion, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 26-ounce jars pasta sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 lb. spaghetti noodles
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

Instructions

- Pour one jar of pasta sauce and one cup of water in the bottom of a slow cooker.
- Break spaghetti noodles in half and place them on top of the sauce.
- Sprinkle with the cheese and cover noodles with second jar of pasta sauce.
- Cover crock pot and cook on high for 2 to 2 1/2 hours or low for 6 hours.
- Remove lid, stir to combine and mix all ingredients together.

Note: You can add 1 to 1.5 lbs. of ground beef to this recipe if desired. Simply brown the meat and drain before you add to the recipe during step 4.

Kitchen Cupboard Brownies

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup neutral oil, such as canola or peanut
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup natural cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips or chopped chocolate (optional)

Instructions

- Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 350°F. Pour oil into an 8x8-inch metal baking pan and gently swirl the oil around the pan and up the sides.

- Add sugar, flour, cocoa powder, and salt to the baking pan.
- Crack eggs directly into the baking pan and add water. Use a sturdy spatula or wooden spoon to first puncture the yolks and then mix batter until completely wet (about 1 1/2 minutes of stirring). Stir in chocolate chips (save a few to sprinkle on top) if using. Use spatula to spread batter in an even layer, being sure to work it into the corners of the pan.
- Bake until a knife inserted in the center comes out mostly clean, 25 to 28 minutes. Cool brownies on a cooling rack for 15 minutes before cutting into squares for serving.

Storage: Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to four days.

Mexican Tortilla Pizza (serves 2)

Ingredients

- 4 whole wheat tortillas
- 1 cup refried beans*
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1/2 cup shredded Mexican blend cheese
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup diced green onions

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Place tortillas on a baking sheet.
- Spread 1/4 of refried beans across the surface of each tortilla, leaving a small border around the edge.
- Top with 1/4 of the salsa and cheese and bake for 15 minutes until cheese is melted and tortillas are crisp.
- Top with sour cream and green onions.

**Note: You can substitute refried beans with mashed white, pinto or black beans.*

Enjoy these meals—and the extra time you save making them! ■

Quiz! Favorite foods of the rich and famous



Do you think Hollywood's elite live on wheatgrass smoothies and water? Think again! Take this quiz to see if you can guess which foods these A-List celebrities consume to fuel their bodies and indulge their cravings.

- ① **Can you guess which singer's favorite indulgence is the double-double burger from In-N-Out Burger?**
 - ② **This world-class pop star loves Popeye's fried chicken and biscuits so much she has a lifetime membership to the chain.**
 - ③ **This reality show celebrity and model loves candied yams so much that she featured them in the first episode of her cooking show.**
 - ④ **This former boy band singer is a foodie who owns a barbecue restaurant in New York.**
 - ⑤ **Although this singer is Canadian, his favorite food, spaghetti Bolognese, originated in Italy.**
 - ⑥ **On weekends, this megastar treats herself to comfort foods like pizza, hot dogs and her favorite Starbucks coffee.**
 - ⑦ **This actress loves snacks so much that she even brought a purse full of them to the Oscars! Her favorite munchie is a bag of Cool Ranch Doritos.**
 - ⑧ **A study in contrasts, this actress loves Brussels sprouts and French fries...and sometimes she'll eat them together!**
 - ⑨ **This Major League Baseball player's daily diet consists of fish and plain steamed vegetables, but he and his music star fiancé also enjoy sushi, seafood and pasta.**
 - ⑩ **This athlete's favorite celebration food is her mom's chicken with rice and gravy, served with biscuits.**
 - ⑪ **This celebrity's favorite snack is Garrett's Popcorn.**
 - ⑫ **This star isn't particular about any food except pickles, and always orders them deep fried at restaurants.**
-

Answers

1. Katy Perry 2. Beyoncé 3. Kylie Jenner 4. Justin Timberlake 5. Justin Bieber 6. Taylor Swift 7. Jennifer Lawrence 8. Emma Stone 9. Alex Rodriguez 10. Serena Williams 11. Oprah 12. Selena Gomez



LEIF E. PETERSON, CPA



Trust has to be earned

When it comes to your financial strategies and well-being, you can count on us to help your business reach new heights. From your monthly financial management, to your tax strategies and planning, we have the knowledge and commitment to keep you growing safe and sound.

Turn to us as your **trusted advisor**.