

C. K. Prahalad remains the world's most influential management thinker

Bookshop shelves groan under the weight of management coaching tomes of all styles and sizes. From Peter Drucker's 600-page classic MBA text *Management* to a new paperback *Are you a Badger or a Doormat?* by Rosie Miller, an executive coach, there is no shortage of volunteers ready to teach managers how to lead people, market brands or draw up bottom line-boosting strategies.

But which, if any, of these authors and strategies makes a difference in the real world of business? To answer this question, *The Times* works with Des Dearlove and Stuart Crainer, visiting professors at IE Business School in Madrid and associates at London Business School's Management Innovation Lab, to compile **The Thinkers 50**, a biennial list of the most influential living management thinkers.

And this year, for the second time in a row, C. K. Prahalad, author of *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*, has been voted the most influential living management thinker. "His influence on the business world is immense," Mr Dearlove says.

In 2001, when the list began, Peter Drucker, dubbed "the man who invented management" by *BusinessWeek*, topped the list. After his death in 2005, Michael Porter, the strategist, took pole position, followed by Professor Prahalad in 2007.

Only 19 of the original 2001 Thinkers 50 are in the 2009 list. Paul Krugman and Don Tapscott, who were included in 2001, return after a break.

While Professor Prahalad retains his crown this year, Professor Porter drops to eleventh position. Other management thinkers who retain positions in the top ten are Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne, Bill Gates (who falls from second to seventh place), Sir Richard Branson and Gary Hamel.

Straight in at third and sixth place this year are two Noble Prize-winners: Professor Krugman and Muhammad Yunus, champion of microcredit and founder of Grameen Bank. The presence of professors Prahalad and Yunus underlines the focus during the recession on what is being called caring capitalism, or "creative capitalism" to use the term preferred by Mr Gates.

Professor Prahalad is one of six Indian-born management thinkers to make the 2009 listing. Joining him are Ratan Tata, chief executive of Tata Industries, at No 12; Ram Charan, executive coach, at No 13; S. (Kris) Gopalakrishnan, founder of Infosys, at No 15; Vijay Govindarajan, of Tuck Business School, at No 24; and Rakesh Khurana, of Harvard Business School, at No 44.

Shooting up the charts from eighteenth to second place is Malcolm Gladwell, a Canadian journalist who has dominated newspaper column inches in the past year with his book on clever people, *Outliers*.

Including Mr Gladwell, there are 18 non-Americans in the 2009 ranking. Canada is well represented, with four: Mr Gladwell is joined by Roger Martin (a champion of "integrative thinking"), at No 32; Professor Tapscott, at No 39 and Henry Mintzberg, the anti-MBA strategist, at No 33.

Women are under-represented in management, which goes some way to explain why there are only five female management thinkers in the listing.

More than 3,000 people, including timesonline readers, voted in The Thinkers 50. The top 100 thinkers were then assessed against ten criteria, including originality of ideas, impact, presentation style, research rigour and business sense, with business schools and management experts consulted.

The Thinkers' 50

1. CK Prahalad

Indian-born author of *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*

2. Malcolm Gladwell

Journalist-guru who wrote *Outliers*

3. Paul Krugman

Noble Prize-winning economist

4. Steve Jobs

Apple chief executive

5. W Chan Kim & Renée Mauborgne

Creators of Blue Ocean Strategy

6. Muhammad Yunus

Microcredit guru and bank founder

7. Bill Gates

Microsoft's "creative capitalist"

8. Sir Richard Branson

Virgin entrepreneur

9. Philip Kotler

Marketing managers' favourite

10. Gary Hamel

Creator of Management 2.0

11. Michael Porter

Long-reigning king of strategy

12: Ratan Tata (-)

Cornell-educated, Ratan Tata has been chairman of Indian corporate giant Tata since 1991 - an empire with sales of some \$70 billion.

13: Ram Charan (22)

The coach of choice to some of the world's top chief executives. His message is a worldly combo of tough exec and Indian philosophising.

14: Marshall Goldsmith (34)

This coach's wisdom can appear homespun – saying please and thank you – but he has the happy knack of making the complex world of business feel straightforward. An invite to his client dinner parties is a mark that you have made it.

15: S. (Kris) Gopalakrishnan (-)

In 1981 the Indian company Infosys began life. Its seven founders had \$250. Now, it has revenues of more than \$4 billion and one of the seven founders is its chief executive, Kris Gopalakrishnan.

16: Howard Gardiner (39)

Harvard-based psychologist whose influence and his ideas on multiple intelligences are major league.

17: Jim Collins (10)

Good to Great and *Built to Last* made Jim Collins one of the biggest names in the guru firmament.

18: Lynda Gratton (19)

Her book *Hot Spots* was a breakthrough moment for the London Business School professor. Now, with her new book, *Glow*, the big time beckons.

19: Tom Peters (7)

The co-author of *In Search of Excellence* should be an anachronism by now. Next up is a new book, *The Little Big Things*, promising 179 ways of pursuing excellence.

20: Jack Welch (8)

For the former GE chief retirement means penning bestsellers with his wife, speaking at rock-sized venues and being a columnist and blogger.

21: Eric Schmidt (-)

Chairman and chief executive of Google. And he was until recently on the board of the uber-funky Apple. He also advised and campaigned for Barack Obama.

22: Joseph Stiglitz (-)

Heavyweight American economist, Stiglitz won the Nobel Prize in 2001 for his work on information asymmetry, with George A. Akerlof and A. Michael Spence. A professor at Columbia University and former chief economist at the World Bank.

23: Kjell Nordstrom & Jonas Ridderstralle (13)

The Scandinavian funksters leapt to prominence thanks to their 1999 bestseller *Funky Business*. They have spent the years since refining their funky gospel in *Karaoke Capitalism* and taking their message to the world.

24: Vijay Govindarajan (23)

Now working as a special adviser on innovation to GE, the Tuck Business School professor is an astute networker. His latest work looks at GE's take on Globalization 2.0.

25: Marcus Buckingham (38)

Armed with a master's degree in social and political science from Cambridge University, Marcus Buckingham has sold nearly 4 million copies of his books including *First, Break All the Rules*, *The One Thing You Need to Know* and *The Truth About You*.

26: Richard D'Aveni (46)

Tuck Business School's professor of strategic management is on the rise thanks to his 1990s bestseller, *Hypercompetition*. His new book, *Beating the Commodity Trap*, tackles one of the biggest business issues of our time.

27: Rosabeth Moss Kanter (28)

An outstanding intellect with a series of bestsellers behind her, the Harvard Business School professor has taken a more populist route with her last book *Confidence*.

28: Clayton Christensen (25)

In his most recent books, *Disrupting Class* and *The Innovator's Prescription*, the Harvard professor and author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*, turns his disruptive attention to education and healthcare.

29: Stephen Covey (15)

Seven Habits of Effective People has become a cottage industry and Stephen Covey a modern-day Dale Carnegie.

30: Thomas Friedman (26)

The *New York Times* columnist has hardly put a foot wrong in the last decade. First was *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, then *Longitudes and Attitudes*, *The World is Flat* and most recently *Hot, Flat and Crowded*.

31: David Ulrich (42)

Doyen of HR David Ulrich is a professor at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and co-founder and partner of The RBL Group, a human resources and leadership consultancy.

32: Roger Martin (-)

Champion and cheerleader of integrative thinking. Dean of the Rotman School of Management his 2007 book *The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win Through Integrative Thinking* brought a fresh perspective to bear on leadership.

33: Henry Mintzberg (16)

The Canadian strategist has always been an engagingly smart and opinionated figure in the business firmament. His next book is a magnum opus, *Managing*, which attempts to turn Mintzberg into Drucker-like older statesman.

34: Daniel Goleman (37)

The bearded psychologist and former *New York Times* journalist has spread the gospel of emotional intelligence -- and more recently social intelligence -- to a largely grateful business world.

35: Chris Anderson (-)

Only time will tell whether the author of *The Long Tail* will have a prolonged thought leadership shelf life. Editor-in-chief of *Wired* and formerly with the *Economist*, has followed up his bestseller with *Free*.

36: Warren Bennis (24)

Virtually single-handed, the University of Southern California professor invented the modern study of leadership.

37: Robert Kaplan & David Norton (12)

The creators of the balanced scorecard retain huge influence on the actual practice of management.

38: Jeff Immelt (31)

There is something strange going on when the current CEO of one of the world's biggest and most admired companies lags behind his predecessor. But, GE chief executive Immelt has grown used to living in Jack Welch's shadow.

39: Don Tapscott (-)

The Canadian Tapscott dropped out of the Thinkers 50 after the dot-com implosion. But, over the last two years he has charged back to the forefront of thinking thanks largely to his latest book *Grown Up Digital*.

40: Nassim Nicholas Taleb (-)

Lebanese-born Taleb is best known for his 2007 book, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*.

41: John Kotter (30)

One of the world's foremost authorities on change and leadership. In his classic work, *Leading Change*, Kotter cites eight steps that are essential for leading successful change.

42: Niall Ferguson (-)

Ferguson's bestselling book and TV series *The Ascent of Money* also elevated his reputation as a business thinker. Unusually for an historian, Ferguson teaches at both Harvard University and Harvard Business School.

43: Charles Handy (14):

While other business gurus shout their message with ever-increasing stridency, this British management expert personifies the softly, softly approach.

44: Rakesh Khurana (45)

The Harvard professor is a thoroughly modern business school academic complete with website, blog and media friendliness.

45: Manfred Kets de Vries (-)

The Dutch leadership and organisational behaviour expert Manfred Kets de Vries straddles the two worlds of management and psychoanalysis. Now based at INSEAD, he is best known for his work exploring the darker side of organisational life.

46: Tammy Erickson (-)

Describing herself as "fundamentally optimistic" the preside of the nGenera Innovation Network's books include *What's Next*, *Gen X?*, *Plugged In: The Generation Y Guide to Thriving at Work* and *Retire Retirement*.

47: Costas Markides (44)

The tennis-playing, Manchester United supporting London Business School management professor is one of the true stars of the executive education classroom. He can work an audience, but he also possesses a sharp mind.

48: Barbara Kellerman (-)

For the professor of leadership at the John F Kennedy School of Government, an interest in leadership is part of the human condition. Her recent book is *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders*.

49: Rob Goffee & Gareth Jones (32)

Best known for their work on authentic leadership, the London Business School professors' latest book is called *Clever!*

50: Jimmy Wales (-)

Wales is the new Jeff Bezos - the co-founder and promoter of Wikipedia. He previously worked in finance.

