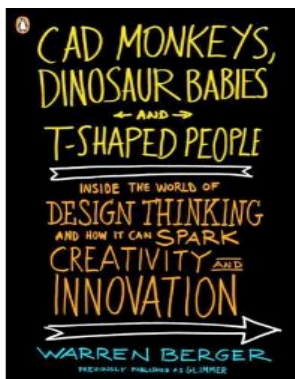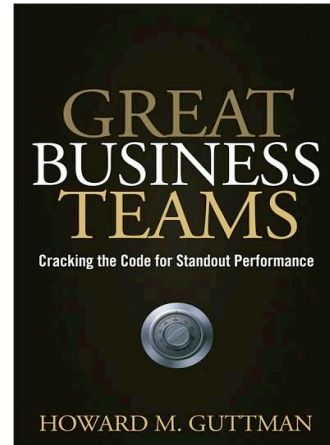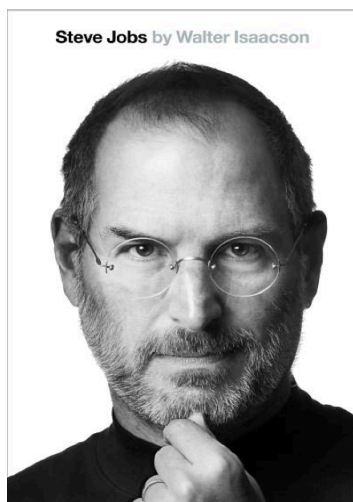## Claros
GROUP

Three Great Books

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"Life transforming ideas have always come to me through books."
--Bell Hooks

**Cad Monkeys, Dinosaur Babies
and T-Shaped People**
By: Warren Berger

**Great Business Teams
Cracking the Code for Standout
Performance**
By: Howard M. Guttman

Steve Jobs
By: Walter Isaacson

Great Business Teams, Cracking the Code for Standout Performance
By Howard M. Guttman

THE BIG IDEA

Team leaders have an important role in developing high performance teams. Their actions and behaviors will be closely observed and people will modify their own behaviors based on those of their leaders. Leaders must model the behaviors they expect of others. Two key areas to focus on are leader behavior and building team alignment.

In addition to the leader, team members have a critical role in developing high performance teams. In addition to specific competencies needed, outstanding teams have an agreed upon "code of conduct" which guides interactions.

HIGHLIGHTS

·   There is no single leadership style that fits every situation. Successful leadership involves analyzing two primary factors:

- **Engagement**, an individual's commitment to being a team player, coupled with his or her willingness to take ownership and be held accountable for the team's success.

- **Skills**, the knowledge and tools an individual brings to a goal or task (education, experience) coupled with the ability to apply that understanding interpersonally, and strategically to meet performance goals.

·   This book recommends matching these four leadership behaviors with employee engagement and skill set:
   Prescribe/Direct: Low level of engagement and/or skill set
   Coach/Instruct: Moderately low level of engagement and/or skill set
   Collaborate/Partner: Moderately high level of engagement and/or skill set
   Inspire/Empower: High level of engagement and/or skill set

·   Guttman notes that great teams meet regularly, and are aligned in six key areas: organizational prioritites; department goals; roles and responsibilities; protocols and work requirements; decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution; and group ground-rules. This book outlines specific questions in each area to build this alignment.

WHY I LIKE THIS BOOK

·   Guttman doesn't pretend that a single magic bullet will transform a team. Rather, he describes how leaders must lead and how team members must function to <u>sustain</u> high team performance.

·   This book is a treasure trove of information based on twenty-five years of research tracking team performance. It is a practical guide that is full of specific techniques, illustrative stories, and hard won wisdom, woven together to create and maintain outstanding teams.

Claros Group Book Review by Gail Ginder

Steve Jobs

By Walter Isaacson

THE BIG IDEA

Many of you are probably familiar with Amazon's best-selling book of 2011. Below are some quotes from the book that describe the philosophy, beliefs, and approach that made Steve jobs so, "insanely-great."

HIGHLIGHTS

· On Motivation:
"You should never start a company with the goal of getting rich. Your goal should be making something you believe in and making a company that will last."

· On Problems:
"If something isn't right, you can't just ignore it and say you'll fix it later...That's what other companies do."

· On Creativity:
"There's a temptation in our networked age to think that ideas can be developed by email and iChat," he said. "That's crazy. Creativity comes from spontaneous meetings, from random discussions. You run into someone, you ask what they're doing, you say 'Wow,' and soon you're cooking up all sorts of ideas."

· On Focus:
"Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do," he said, "That's true for companies, and it's true for products."

· On Hiring Great People:
"I've learned over the years that when you have really good people, you don't have to baby them...By expecting them to do great things, you can get them to do great things."

How Jobs persuaded a talented person (Bill Atkinson) to join Apple: "Think about surfing on the front edge of a wave. It's really exhilarating. Now think about dog-paddling at the tail end of that wave. It wouldn't be nearly as much fun. Come down here and make a dent in the universe."

· On living creatively:
"If you want to live your life in a creative way, as an artist, you have to not look back too much. You have to be willing to take whatever you've done and whoever you were and throw them away."

· His design philosophy:
"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

WHY I LIKE THIS BOOK

· Steve Jobs was one of the greatest innovators of all time. We can all learn from his creativity, his focus and his one consistent message: "Find the best people, then convince them to join you."

· The book tells the story of a person who truly "made a dent in the universe."

Claros Group Book Review by Laura Peck
Cad Monkeys, Dinosaur Babies, and T-Shaped People
Inside the world of Design Thinking and How it Can Spark Creativity and Innovation
By Warren Berger

THE BIG IDEA
Design thinking—specifically its application to the world of organizations that are looking to be faster, more innovative and more collaborative. The book is chock-full of big ideas, useful methods, and strategies from creative thinkers who have much to offer.

HIGHLIGHTS
· Design is about looking at the world with an eye toward changing it. Seeing what is, and what could be, taking a glimmer of possibility and making it real and visible to others.

· Design is the human capacity to plan and produce desired outcomes.

· Design requires humility and collaboration—being willing to step back and ask stupid questions, challenge assumptions about the way things have always been done, observe, learn, prototype, get feedback, and refine.

· This book is organized around ten principles, divided into four categories: Universal, Social, Business and Personal. It illuminates these principles with stories about the work of many designers from around the world. In the back of the book, an annotated list of designers introduces you to over fifty individuals, their contributions and their organizations. Here are three principles that struck me as applicable to leadership and organizational development:

    o **Ask Stupid Questions.** It takes discipline and practice "to see with new eyes." The starting point for OXO Good Grips kitchen tools had its origin in someone wondering why a common device couldn't be a little bit easier to use for people with arthritis.

    o **Make Hope Visible.** Drawing a simple schematic on the back of a napkin in order to capture an insight or emerging pattern, helps! The practice of sketching lends itself to collaboration and experimentation. Looking together at a picture can help to garner support or clarify vision.

    o **Embrace Constraints.** Design that does "more with less" is needed more than ever in today's world. Clarify parameters that will concentrate attention and effort.

WHY I LIKE THIS BOOK
· This book is lively, accessible, full of great stories and great characters. It clearly illuminates four main principles with stories about the work of many designers from around the world (and it's fun to read).

· Final Incentive... Look up the definitions for CAD Monkey, Dinosaur Baby, and T-Shirt People.