



# Broadbranch Business Bookshelf

## Collection 1

### Modern Competitive Analysis

Sharon Oster, 1999

Modern Competitive Analysis offers a timeless framework for growth in the face of change. Oster details how external environmental factors, the organization itself, and rivalry drive the strategic planning process (Figure 1). She expands upon Porter's Five Forces and then weaves in other lessons ranging from managerial best practices to strategic price reactions by incumbent firms. A great read for any manager or strategist helping to guide a firm through rough waters.

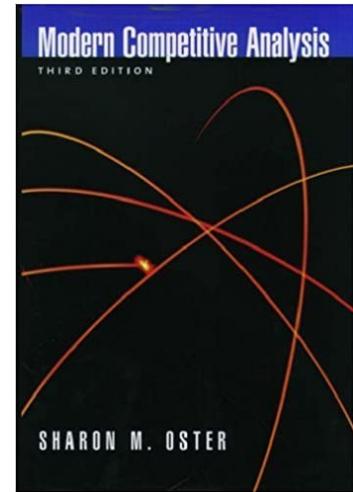
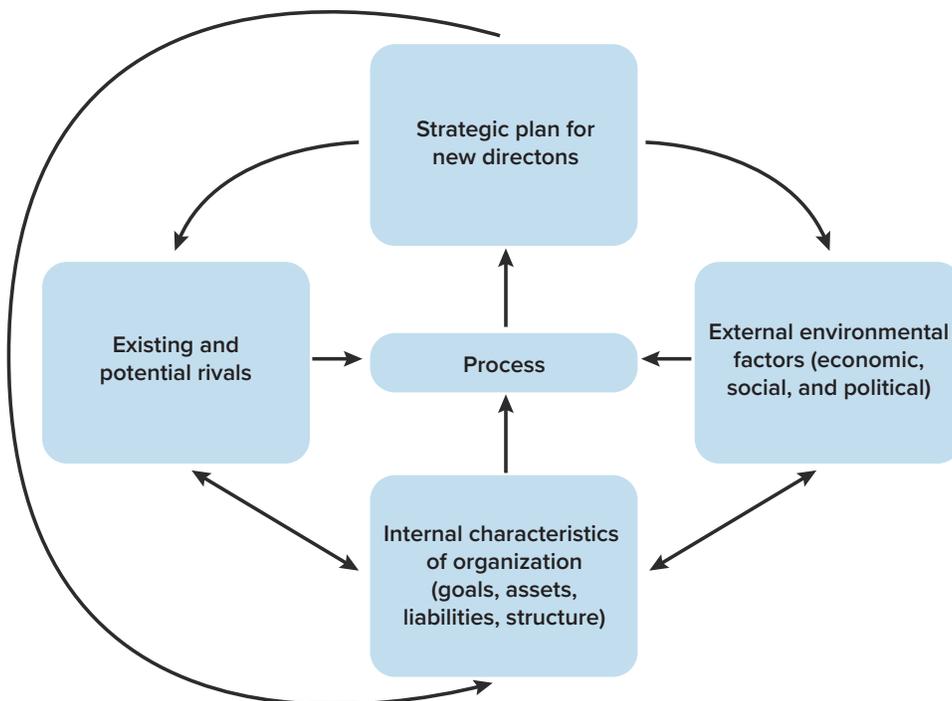


Figure 1



Few authors are as skilled at making complex concepts easy to understand. Oster uses academic theory and detailed frameworks to outline the underpinnings of a recommendation, which she brings to life with real world case studies that illustrate why



particular strategies work in some cases but not others. While it is easy to recognize that strategic thinking is not a one-size-fits-all process, Oster burgeons greater discernment regarding why and when recommendations will work.

– Reviewed by Will Buchanan ([will@brbradv.com](mailto:will@brbradv.com))

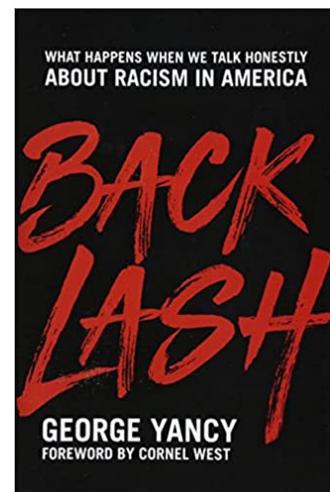
## Backlash: What Happens When We Talk Honestly about Racism in America

George Yancy, 2018

In 2015, George Yancy published an op-ed letter in the New York Times entitled “Dear White America,” in which he declared that racism is inherent to being white. Yancy’s follow-up book, *Backlash* (2018), tells the story of the public response to “Dear White America.” Yancy was pummeled with racist and threatening comments and communications. Readers lashed out from many directions arguing that they were not racist, could not be racist, and that blacks are often offered opportunities not afforded to others. In *Backlash*, Yancy tries to develop a better understanding of the intensity of the public response to his ideas. He builds the case that racism is alive and well in America; that our society is designed to preserve and protect the superior position of white America; and that all white Americans need to own and mitigate their roles in racism. No white person is above the fray.

Yancy builds a skilled argument that white Americans are racist and bear responsibility for the racism in our society that is targeted at blacks. He begins by acknowledging his own sexist ideas. Racism and sexism are serious prejudices, which must come to an end. Such biases offer opportunities for growth that can only be realized with hard work and abiding concern for the wellbeing of ALL others. *Backlash* raises awareness of racism and its impact with the purpose of moving everyone toward the development of more open and honest perspectives.

– Reviewed by John Hedden ([john@brbradv.com](mailto:john@brbradv.com))





## The Sumo Advantage

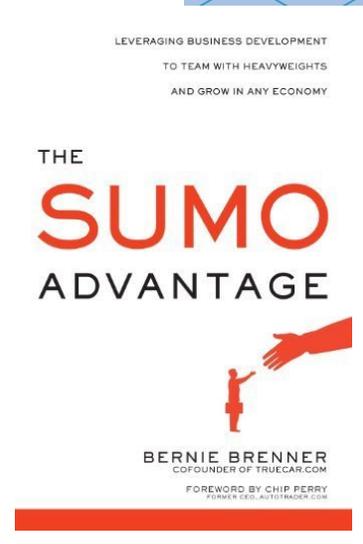
Bernie Brenner, 2014

The Sumo Advantage explores the world of Business Development (BD) and its critical nature for the long-term success of any company. Bernie Brenner discusses the juxtaposition of traditional sales and business development. Sales, he says, are purely transactional and involve hitting revenue targets. Business development, on the other hand, is a long-term play that may not provide immediate revenue.

By no means does Brenner call for the eradication of sales teams. Instead, he urges the reader to start thinking about and treating the two areas differently. A milestone of any BD strategy is partnering with what Brenner dubs a “sumo” company like Apple, Disney, Amazon, etc. He outlines the process of identifying, courting, and closing with one of these business giants. Readers are sure to appreciate the real-world examples, practical advice, and cold hard truths offered to help them create sumo partnerships with long-term value. Every business development professional should have a copy of The Sumo Advantage.

Brenner crystalizes the important role business development plays in maintaining a long-term competitive position, and the conversational tone of his writing helps readers absorb significant information without getting caught up in complex jargon. Real-world examples help readers understand how business development differs from sales and how to find the right sumo-firm partner. In some ways, The Sumo Advantage reads like a written version of an effective and compelling TED Talk. Brenner proposes a call to action, and the reader will finish his book with a game plan for identifying that “sumo advantage”.

– Reviewed by Louis Margules ([louis@brbradv.com](mailto:louis@brbradv.com))





## Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World

David Epstein, 2019

In *Range*, David Epstein extols the virtues of well-roundedness by examining the circuitous paths that many prominent people followed to greatness. Covering a broad set of topics that stretches from the value of grit to the risks associated with trusting expert opinions, *Range* validates nontraditional career progression and argues against the narrow specializations often taken by those in academia. *Range* is an important read for hiring managers, human resource professionals, and anyone else interested in helping their organizations recognize and recruit top talent.

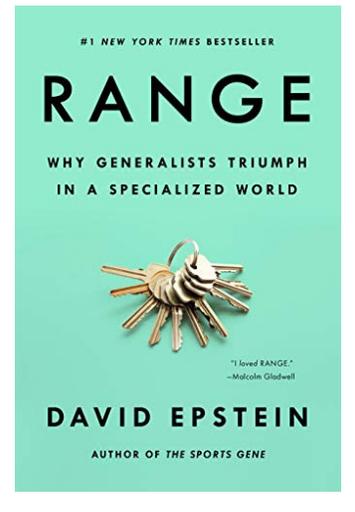
*Range* provides support for some career changers because it lays out the benefits of diverse experiences. Epstein highlights the value of pattern recognition and analogical thinking; these two skills are developed through non-linear career paths and apply directly to the world of strategy consulting. His insights regarding the ways in which successful individuals think, learn, and communicate can promote more deliberate approaches to skills development and remind the reader that solutions for the toughest problems can come from the unlikeliest of places.

– Reviewed by Nate Stratton ([nate@brbradv.com](mailto:nate@brbradv.com))

## Blue Ocean Strategy

W. Chan Kim & Renée Mauborgne, 2004

A “blue ocean” is an untapped market, in stark contrast to the bloody competition of a “red ocean.” Businesses generate long-term value when they successfully create “blue ocean” markets. Kim and Mauborgne argue that competition can be rendered irrelevant by stripping away outdated and unprofitable aspects of an offering and focusing on the most salient and desirable elements. For example, Cirque du Soleil disrupted the circus industry by dropping animal performances and shifting attention

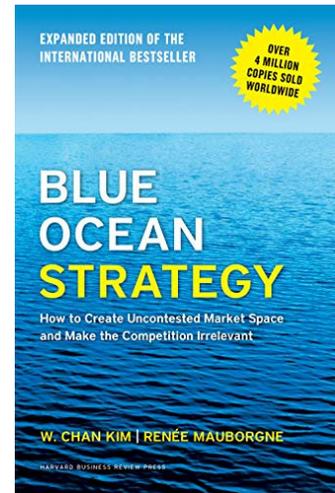




to gymnastics, music, and audience engagement. Blue Ocean Strategy is a great read for entrepreneurs looking for the next big idea or business executives striving to disrupt an industry or diversify their offerings.

Initiating brand-new markets can lead to creative quagmires. Blue Ocean Strategy provides the necessary analytical tools to approach such a task while bringing the journey to life through real-world examples. Reading about this type of successful risk-taking should serve as inspiration for those who seek to identify “blue ocean” opportunities in industries within their spheres of expertise.

– Reviewed by James O’Donnell ([james@brbradv.com](mailto:james@brbradv.com))



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