

THINKERS50 EUROPEAN BUSINESS FORUM 2018

26-27 September, Odense, Denmark

The European Business Forum is the premier event for business leaders in Europe. It brings together the continent's top business people with the world's leading management gurus in "the Davos of business thinking".

The forum is hosted by Thinkers50, the world's leading network of business thinkers, and located in Odense, Denmark. The home of Hans Christian Andersen, and now one of Europe's leading robotics hub, is the perfect place to write the story of the future.

"Making better choices" is the theme of this year's forum.

Business leaders face more choices than ever before – there are few limits to the ways a business can grow – any geographical market, any industrial sector, any business model – enabled by technology, partners, people and investment. In fact, in a world of infinite possibilities, the hardest part is often deciding what not to do – to make choices.

In the "fourth industrial revolution" it is the new generation of technologies – from digital networks and blockchain, to robotics and artificial intelligence, 3d printing and biotechnologies – that challenge business leaders to rethink what matters, how to embrace the new capabilities, and what creates sustained economic value.

Yet another challenge – how the business exists within society, and the value it adds to people, local communities and social progress – might have just as much impact on a business' future success. What is fair, what is good, what is progress, have become huge questions – particularly for business leaders.

At the previous forum, Europe's business leaders said "Fast change has left business out of touch with people. Leaders are complacent, and innovation is wasted." Collectively we asked ourselves how can European business rediscover its place in the world. There was a strong and overwhelming message from participants: "Business should be a force for positive progress." This year we build on your agenda.

"Making Better Choices" is about connecting these challenges and new opportunities – exploring how business leaders can most effectively apply these new technologies for more impact, for both people and profit.

Day 1

0900 – 1015 ... **Technologies that will change our world**

The "Odense Moonshot" explores the incredible potential of new technologies to transform every market. Whilst Bitcoin has grabbed headlines, the underlying blockchain technologies could transform the way every market works, and not just in financial services. It could transform business models and supply chains, whilst reinventing the ways in which consumers engage, and their trust in brands. This will be enhanced by other technologies, adding intelligence, speed and efficiency. Which technologies matter most to your future, and how will you embrace their potential?

- **Don Tapscott** is often known as *Mr Wikinomics*, and is #2 in the Thinkers50 global ranking of business gurus. He has become the spokesperson of the network age – explaining the exponential potential of networks when you make them work for you (like Wikipedia, but equally by turning your customer base into a vibrant community). Now he turns his attention to Blockchain, one of the many new technologies that fascinate and baffle most business leaders. His new book is *Blockchain Revolution. How will distributed, network-based transaction systems transform the way money works, and almost every other industry too?*

1045 – 1200 ... **Social Issues that will change our world**

Dramatic change brings new tensions, not least in how business progress is challenging our ways of life, our society and environment. Global and local, rich and poor, fake and authentic, climate and ecology, fairness and ethics. What is the impact of your business on our world, in your local community and far across continents? At the same time, social issues provide new opportunities for business to do good. How could you innovate your business activities in a way that does more for society, engaging people more deeply and maybe even more profitable too? This is no longer about CSR, but has profound implications for every part of business.

1230 – 1330 ... **Big Talk: Defining the Choices**

What are the biggest challenges for us all, as business leaders? The forum works together in roundtables, speakers and participants, to explore the questions, tensions and dilemmas we face in business - the role of technology in driving progress, and the impact financially and socially which they can have. Together we will create an “agenda” for European business, considering which factors are most significant together and individually. By learning from each other, we may uncover choices we didn’t even realise we had, and new opportunities to innovate and grow.

1430 – 1515 ... **Rethinking Purpose**

Entrepreneurs have a clarity of purpose when they set out, which is often lost or confused as their businesses grow and evolve. Finding a purpose beyond profit has become the guiding path of most enlightened businesses today, rethinking “why” the business exists before “what and how” to do. Purpose gives you a north star, and source of enduring difference. By rediscovering the mindset of your founder, businesses can often rekindle their creativity, reenergise their people, and refocus their priorities. This often involves applying innovation to every aspect of the business, and its wider impact.

1545 – 1700 ... **Rethinking Organisations**

Disruptive technologies are unlikely to thrive in traditional organisations built around hierarchies of people and products. Creativity and agility comes from new ways of working together, more flexibly and collaboratively, building new types of partnerships with new capabilities. Organisations need in many ways to mirror the new market models, speed and agility, but also human and responsible. They need to harness their connected intelligence, whilst maintain emotional agility to sustain the delivery of projects and results. How can you build the right organisation for the future? What are the big choices, and best solutions?

Day 2

0900 – 1015 ... **Innovation Accelerator**

Innovation drives business progress. It has become core to what the organisation does, and all embracing in its scope, rethinking everything from business models to customer experiences. At the same time, the process of innovation has become smarter, faster, more collaborative and more creative. From design thinking to lean implementation, organisations seek to bring an entrepreneurial mindset to the development process. At the heart of all of this sits the business model. And often one that can be expressed on a one page canvas. So how can you develop a better business model, and in particular, one that embraces the potential of technologies for both people and profit?

- *Alex Osterwalder is popular for his Business Model Canvas, a one-page framework in which you map and then creatively explore the opportunities for rethinking every aspect of your business. With post-it notes, and a blank canvas you can play with your future business model, including how to achieve those new choices. Together with Yves Pigneur, and 470 co-creators, the Swiss innovation guru has authored three books, and is now #7 on the Thinkers50 global ranking.*

1045 – 1200 ... **Rethinking Networks**

Networks are the drivers of exponential growth – social media, distribution partners, licensing models, business ecosystems, media networks. Every additional member creates a multiplying effect through its added connections. As a result, customers trust customers, businesses work together to share capabilities, and reaching across markets is fast and easy. What are the best ways to make networks work? How can you engage business partners more effectively, and more consumers faster and more authentically?

1230 – 1330 ... **Big Talk: Making Better Choices**

So how can we, as business leaders, make better choices? The forum works together in roundtables, speakers and participants, to address the core theme, building on the ideas of previous sessions, and the experiences of all of us. How can the new technologies help us to make better choices, in a way that delivers success for society, and profitable growth too? What are the new choices? How do we choose? What difference will it make?

1430 – 1515 ... **Rethinking Leadership**

Leaders are the ultimate decision makers. How has decision-making changed in today's world? With ever greater complexity and relentless change, multiple cultures and dispersed working, how do you make better choices? Information is ubiquitous, analytics are rampant, yet making the right choices requires more than lots of data. It is about understanding the choices – what options are available; and then the impacts – the consequences of decisions. Do you have what it takes to rethink your role as leader, maybe even to disrupt yourself, and to rethink how you think, decide and lead?

1545 – 1700 ... **European Business Lecture 2018**

The European Business Lecture defines the agenda for business across the continent in the year ahead, a seminal moment in the European business calendar. What are the



priorities for business, for governments, and others? How will Europe win in a fast and dynamic world? How can smarter choices enable leaders to see their future differently, to focus on new priorities and practices, and to have more impact? Good judgement is a rare but crucial quality in today's business leaders. Winners, particularly in a world of new technologies and new priorities, are the ones who make great choices.

- **Roger Martin** is the world's #1 business thinker, and tops the 2017 Thinkers50 ranking of global management gurus. He is a Canadian strategist, formerly Dean of the Rotman School of Management. He is perhaps most famous for his "Playing to Win" collaboration with P&G's former CEO AG Lafley, which defined the key choices to make in developing a great strategy. He has almost dedicated much of his time to social entrepreneurship, and has a new book just out called *Creating Great Choices*, which explores how "integrative thinking" can lead to solutions which are not trade-offs or compromises, but adopt a better way.

The full list of speakers, leading thinkers and practitioners – male and female – from across Europe and the world, will be announced very soon. The program is subject to amendment if required.

Tickets will be available from europe/thinkers50.com