

# Profit-First Building, Maintenance Thinking, and an ASML Primer

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Today's highest-signal recommendations centered on resources that either changed how founders operate or sharpened how they understand complex systems. The standout picks cover profit-first company building, maintenance in the AI era, ASML's role in semiconductor manufacturing, positional scarcity, and trial communications.

### What stood out

The strongest recommendations today split cleanly between resources that changed behavior and resources that sharpen a model of how something works—profit-first company building, maintenance in the AI era, semiconductor manufacturing, scarcity, and trial communications [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

### Start here

#### *Rework*

- **Content type:** Book [1]
- **Author/creator:** Jason Fried [1]
- **Link/URL:** No direct book URL was provided; source context: Andrew Wilkinson's Quiet Blueprint: From Barista to a Billionaire Empire | Make it Click [1]
- **Who recommended it:** Andrew Wilkinson [1]
- **Key takeaway:** Wilkinson said the book's anti-VC, profit-first stance fit the reality of starting a business in Victoria, where venture capital was scarce, and reinforced building profitably rather than raising money [1]

- **Why it matters:** This was the most compelling recommendation in today’s set because Wilkinson tied it to an actual operating choice, not just a general idea [1]

“They were kind of the contrarian anti VCs. They were all about profit.” [1]

## Resources that sharpen operating models

### *Maintenance*

- **Content type:** Book [2]
- **Author/creator:** Stewart Brand [2]
- **Link/URL:** No direct book URL was provided; source context: The Collison Brothers LIVE on TBPB [2]
- **Who recommended it:** John Collison [2]
- **Key takeaway:** Collison centered the book’s thesis that maintenance is what keeps everything going, then connected Brand’s tools-focused worldview to AI, tinkering, and individual empowerment [2]
- **Why it matters:** It was one of the few recommendations today that directly connected an older idea about tools and upkeep to the current AI moment [2]

### *The World’s Most Important Machine*

- **Content type:** Video [3]
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the source materials
- **Link/URL:** <https://youtu.be/MiUHjLxm3V0?si=MTokhq4Yw9FJ2Zd2> [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Andrew Chen [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Chen called it a useful video on ASML’s role in semiconductor manufacturing and specifically highlighted the history and diagrams [3]
- **Why it matters:** If you want a recommended explainer on ASML’s role in semiconductor manufacturing, this was the clearest save-worthy pointer in the set; Chen said it was worth bookmarking [3]

### *Positional Scarcity*

- **Content type:** Essay [4]
- **Author/creator:** Alex Danco [4]
- **Link/URL:** <https://alexdanco.com/2019/09/07/positional-scarcity/> [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Packy McCormick [4]
- **Key takeaway:** McCormick called it one of his favorite essays and singled out Danco’s formulation that, in abundance, relative position matters a great deal [4]

- **Why it matters:** It gives a concise frame for understanding why relative position becomes more important when basic abundance is no longer the main constraint [4]

“In conditions of abundance, relative position matters a great deal.”  
[4]

## One recommendation with obvious personal stakes

### *Triumphs of Experience*

- **Content type:** Book [1]
- **Author/creator:** George Vaillant [1]
- **Link/URL:** No direct book URL was provided; source context: Andrew Wilkinson’s Quiet Blueprint: From Barista to a Billionaire Empire | Make it Click [1]
- **Who recommended it:** Andrew Wilkinson [1]
- **Key takeaway:** Wilkinson said the book’s discussion of the Harvard Grant Study—especially alcoholism as a major long-term predictor of misery—pushed him to stop heavy drinking after about 10 years [1]
- **Why it matters:** This was the clearest example today of a recommendation that changed a personal decision, not just an intellectual framework [1]

## Context reads for tech history and public narratives

### *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*

- **Content type:** Book [2]
- **Author/creator:** Tom Wolfe [2]
- **Link/URL:** No direct book URL was provided; source context: The Collison Brothers LIVE on TBPB [2]
- **Who recommended it:** John Collison [2]
- **Key takeaway:** Collison recommended it to understand Stewart Brand’s role in the Bay Area’s early LSD-era culture and his place in early Silicon Valley history [2]
- **Why it matters:** It is a context-setting recommendation for readers who want to understand why Brand keeps reappearing across technology history [2]

### *Fifteen observations on the trial comms war so far*

- **Content type:** X thread [5]
- **Author/creator:** Jim Prosser [5]
- **Link/URL:** <https://x.com/jimprosser/status/2049944365012025417> [6, 5]
- **Who recommended it:** Chamath Palihapitiya [6]

- **Key takeaway:** The thread applies Prosser's experience running communications for Google during Oracle v. Google to the current Musk v. Altman fight [5]
- **Why it matters:** It was the most time-sensitive recommendation in today's set, and it comes from someone with firsthand experience in a comparable tech trial [5]

## Bottom line

If you only save one item, save *Rework* for the clearest example of a resource shaping how a founder actually built a business [1]. After that, *Maintenance* and the ASML video are the best picks for upgrading your model of how modern technical systems get built and sustained [2, 3].

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## Sources

1. Andrew Wilkinson's Quiet Blueprint: From Barista to a Billionaire Empire | Make it Click
2. The Collison Brothers LIVE on TBP
3. X post by @andrewchen
4. Scarce Assets
5. X post by @jimprosser
6. X post by @chamath