

# Wealth of Nations and Apple Source Material Lead Today's Resource Picks

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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*By Recommended Reading from Tech Founders • April 3, 2026*

Roelof Botha's recommendation of *Wealth of Nations* stands out because it comes with a clear framework for AI-era organization. Apple-related recommendations then cluster around original materials: Don Valentine's 1977 memo, the *Think Different* manifesto, and Steve Jobs' Stanford speech, with Sam Altman's TBPN endorsement as a lighter signal.

### Most compelling recommendation

The clearest learning resource in today's set is *Wealth of Nations*. Roelof Botha does not just praise it; he extracts an operating principle from it: with the right signals, many small, self-interested actors can still produce optimal outcomes. He maps that idea onto AI-era company design [1].

#### *Wealth of Nations*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Adam Smith
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** Roelof Botha
- **Key takeaway:** Botha called it one of his favorite pieces of writing ever because it explains how the right signals can let decentralized participants coordinate toward good outcomes; he connected that logic to AI-driven, hierarchy-light companies [1]
- **Why it matters:** This is the strongest recommendation today because it comes with a concrete framework readers can apply immediately, not just general admiration [1]

“One of my favorite pieces of writing ever is Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations. And this idea that if you have the right signals, you can rely on the self interested behavior of many small participants in the system to actually lead to optimal outcomes.” [1]



*Jack Dorsey: Every Company Can Now Be a Mini-AGI (19:39)*

## Apple study pack

Apple’s 50th anniversary surfaced a useful cluster of source material: one historical venture memo, one brand text, and one speech that a former Apple executive says helps explain the company [2, 3].

### Don Valentine’s 1977 Apple investment memo

- **Content type:** Historical memo / archival document
- **Author/creator:** Don Valentine
- **Link/URL:** Sequoia post with the memo image [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Marc Andreessen
- **Key takeaway:** Andreessen endorsed Valentine’s original assessment of the Apple deal, including the line, “\$600K buys 10%. Very rich deal. Management questionable.” [4]
- **Why it matters:** It gives readers a primary-source view of how the Apple investment was framed at the time, including explicit concern about price and management [2, 4]

“\$600K buys 10%. Very rich deal. Management questionable.”  
“10/10 no notes” [4]

### *Think Different* manifesto

- **Content type:** Manifesto / brand text
- **Author/creator:** Lee Clow, reviewed by Steve Jobs
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** Pascal Cagny
- **Key takeaway:** Cagny said it is essential reading for understanding Apple’s culture [3]
- **Why it matters:** It is a direct pointer from a former Apple Europe VP to the text he thinks best captures the company from the inside [3]

### Steve Jobs’ 2005 Stanford speech

- **Content type:** Video / speech
- **Author/creator:** Steve Jobs
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** Pascal Cagny
- **Key takeaway:** Cagny said the speech, together with the *Think Different* manifesto, “says much about the company” [3]
- **Why it matters:** It pairs Apple’s cultural text with Jobs’ own public framing for readers trying to understand the company more directly [3]

### One lighter media signal

#### TBPN

- **Content type:** Tech show
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the source material
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** Sam Altman
- **Key takeaway:** Altman called TBPN his favorite tech show and said he wants them to keep doing what they do well [5]
- **Why it matters:** This is a straightforward endorsement rather than a lesson-rich recommendation, but it still identifies one show Altman rates above peers [5]

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### Sources

1. Jack Dorsey: Every Company Can Now Be a Mini-AGI
2. X post by @sequoia
3. 1976 - 2026 : Apple, du garage au titan de la technologie - Tech&Co la quotidienne du 01/04/2026
4. X post by @pmarca
5. X post by @sama