READER: John Davis, 47, director of Singapore Management University’s Centre for Marketing Excellence.

He spoke at MotorsportsAsia: The Grand Prix For Marketeers, billed as Asia’s first motor sports forum. It was held at the Pan Pacific hotel last week.

He is the founder and chairman of Brand New View, a business consulting and training firm based in Sacramento, California. An expert on brand strategy and management, he has also written three business books in the past two years, most recently Magic Numbers For Sales Management, published by John Wiley and Sons in January.

Before joining SMU in 2004, he taught at the University of California at Davis and at the University of Washington from 2000 to 2003, and worked in various marketing positions with software and lifestyle companies in the 1990s.

The graduate of Stanford University and Columbia Business School is married with three children.

What are you reading now?

I’m reading Made To Stick by Chip Heath and Dan Heath, one of the best business books I have read in the last five years.

About the factors that influence whether a business idea succeeds or fails, one of the examples they cite is how televising sports events has affected the sports business dramatically over the past 40 years.

Decades ago, fans followed their local clubs or athletes, with little interest in teams or leagues from other regions or countries.

Today, TV has made athletes and their sports appealing and accessible to all corners of the globe. For example, Manchester United Football Club has fans all over Asia, yet far less than 1 per cent of these fans have ever been to a Man U game.

When they watch a game on TV, they are treated to a pre-game show, colourful live commentary during the game, and a post-game show, as well as profiles of the players and frequent shots of fans at the event.

Showing viewers the expanded context brings the sport to life for fans in other parts of the world, creating an emotional connection and making the sport “stick.”

The same is true for Formula One racing, hence the excitement over the possibility of it coming to Singapore.

If your house was burning down, which book would you save? The one book I would save -- other than the three I have written -- would be The Pillars Of The Earth by Ken Follett.

I have always been fascinated with England and its history. While Follett’s book is a work of fiction, it brings the past to life in a very personal way.

The book is set in England in the 12th century and it concerns the building of a cathedral in a village in southern England.

The story covers 50 years, following the many characters through the trials and tribulations of a chaotic period of time for the church in England and the throne of England.

An assortment of diseases, disasters and ongoing social upheaval also add to the hardships of life.

Though my description does not sound very uplifting, it is really a great story about the triumph of the human spirit.

Made To Stick ($44.17) and The Pillars Of The Earth ($18.85) are available from Books Kinokuniya. Prices include GST.