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Review Briefs: June 2014

Broad introductions to the whole subject of strategy

Playing to WIN: How Strategy really Works, A.G. LADLEY and Roger L. MARTIN, Harvard Business Review Press (2013), 243pp., \$27.00.

Lafley (the former CEO of Procter & Gamble) and Martin (Dean of the Rotman School of Management) present a deceptively simple set of exercises and questions that can guide the decisions in an organization. Key questions include: What is your winning aspiration? Where will you play? How will you win? What capabilities must be in place? What management systems are required? Readable material that should be useful for everyone concerned with improving the quality of their decision-making.

The New Strategic Landscape, Julie VERITY, Cass Business Press/Palgrave (2012), 181pp., £26.00.

A collection of ten 'essays' (involving several other authors) that take strategic theory and practice beyond the traditional focus of economics into behavioural related agendas – badly needed. Essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in strategy, although the core role of values in influencing, if not determining, behaviour could have been given even greater emphasis.

Various concepts of strategic management

Greening Business: Research Theory & Practice, Ian WORTHINGTON, Oxford University Press (2013), 280pp., £24.99.

Examines the major drivers of corporate ecological responsiveness and discusses the nature and range of business responses in both theory and practice. A well presented, valuable, textbook for students of an increasingly important aspect of business.

Analytical methods, tools and approaches

The Architecture of Innovation: the economics of creative organizations, Josh LERNER, Oxford University Press (2012), 206pp., £18.99.

Examines the corporate drivers of innovation with particular reference to two models for encouraging innovation – the corporate research laboratory and the start-up. Combines research results and case studies to provide useful, readable, insights for anyone concerned with trying to integrate creative/innovative ideas and energies into a successful, coherent, strategy – probably the most challenging task facing organisations today. A more general approach to many of these issues is thoroughly covered in **Doing Capitalism in the Innovation Economy: Markets, Speculation and the State**, William H. JANEWAY, Cambridge University Press (2012), 329pp., £22.00.

Social Business By Design, Dion HINCHCLIFF and Peter KIM, Jossey-Bass/Wiley (2012), 240pp., £19.99.

Explores how the social, cultural, and technological trends provoked by the explosion in the social media are transforming every business environment. Well presented material that explains the mechanisms, applications and advantages of the rapidly expanding strategic array of social media, including social product development, crowdsourcing, social supply chains etc. Essential reading for anyone involved in this sector.

Positive Linking: How Networks Can Revolutionise the World, Paul ORMEROD, Faber and Faber (2012), 308pp., £12.99.

Shows that network effects make conventional approaches to policy are much more likely to fail. (Gentleman's clubs?) But, the author argues, as our societies become ever more interconnected the network effects are becoming increasingly important. These are vital issues, but there is scope for greater emphasis on the potentially even more far-reaching impact (both positive and negative) of internet based networks, as well as exploring in greater detail how these developments might 'Revolutionise the World'? Unfortunately written more for the academic, rather than managerial, market. Another (highly mathematical!) approach that shows how research on cities and neighborhoods can explain communities' composition and spatial form, as well as changes in productivity, industrial specialization, urban expansion, and national growth is from

neighborhoods to nations: the economics of social interactions, Yannis M. IOANNIDES, Princeton University Press (2013), 521pp., \$65.00. Argues that quantifying the impact of social interactions in specific contexts is essential for informing policy. For the specialist.

The Pirate Organization: Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism, Rodolphe DURAND and Jean-Philippe VERGNE, Harvard Business Review Press (2012), 191pp., £14.99.

Shows that piracy is not random. In many ways, it is predictable and cannot be separated from the underlying competitive pressures of capitalism, that is the basis of the evolution of the whole system. It isn't easy to say where 'studying the competition' ends and 'becoming a pirate' begins? There is much to be learned from this readable (first published in French) book – and becoming a proxy-pirate?

Leadership, change and implementation

Merchant, Soldier, Sage: A New History of Power by David PRIESTLAND, Allen Lane (2012), 331pp., £20.00.

Argues that the nature of our society depends on the interaction three core value systems – the merchant (commercial and competitive); the soldier (aristocratic and militaristic) and the sage (bureaucratic or priestly), alongside the worker (egalitarian and artisanal) in the struggle for power. Interesting ideas, but pity the concept of stakeholder theory, and the role (importance?) of 'leaders' (a word apparently not important enough to be mentioned in the index?) who can facilitate effective communication between the various groups, was not discussed in greater detail. Another well written approach, largely reflecting current global conditions and trends, is provided in **Plutocrats: The Rise of the New Global Super Rich**, Chrystia FREELAND, Allen Lane (2012), 330pp., £25.00. Focuses on the wealthiest 0.1 per cent. But are the trends sustainable, and how can adjustments be made before a 'tipping point' is reached? Many leadership elements are reflected in the revealing, dramatic, real-life story documented in **The Finish: the Killing of Osama bin Laden**, Mark BOWDEM, Atlantic Books (2012), 266pp., £16.99.

The Pause Principle: Step Back to Lead Forward, Kevin CASHMAN, Berrett-Koehler (2012), 162pp., £11.99.

According to Ken Shelton, CEO and Editor, of Leadership Excellence: "Cashman coaches leaders from madness to sanity, then to wisdom, wealth and self-worth – the new triple bottom line." A relevant, perceptive, comment about a well presented, important, badly needed. book that should be essential reading for everyone concerned with leadership – which is, and should, be all of us.

Reaction: Against the modern world, Peter KING, Societas/imprint-academic (2012), 159pp., £8.95.

Reaction is shown to take two distinct forms: first, as a rejection of progress and a defence of traditional culture and values; and second as a general concern with, even distaste for, elites. These are seen as valid responses to the failure of modernity. Surprising that the underlying issues (conflicts?) between commercialism/materialism and religions (of all descriptions) were not given greater emphasis?

Global strategic management

A Confucian Constitutional Order: How China's Ancient Past Can Shape Its Political Future, Jiang QING (Author), Daniel A. BELL (Editor), Ruiping FAN (Editor), Edmund RYDEN (Translator), Princeton University Press (2013), 256pp., £27.95.

Jiang Qing shares a vision for China's politics that provides a fascinating attempt to integrate the inherent patterns of Chinese history and culture with the contemporary challenges that arise from the 21st century need for political legitimacy and action (Part 1). This argument is followed by critical comments by four leading Chinese intellectuals (Joseph Chan, Chenyang Li, Wang Shaoguang, and Bai Tandong) (Part 11); ending with (Part 111) a detailed response by Jiang Qing. Essential reading for anyone involved with understanding, and working with, China today and tomorrow.

The Quest for Prosperity: How Developing Economies Can Take Off, Justin Yifu LIN, Princeton University Press (2012), 322pp., £19.95.

An authoritative (the author is the founding director and professor of the China Centre for Economic Research at Peking University, and ex chief economist and senior vice president of the World Bank) examination of how the countries that have succeeded in developing successfully have actually done it. Shows how economic development is a process of continuous technological innovation, industrial upgrading and structural change driven by how countries manage to combine their land, labour, capital and infrastructure resources to good effect. Essential reading for anyone concerned with developments in this vitally important area, although far from the last word on the subject.

Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia, Donald RAYFIELD, Reaktion Books (2012), 479pp., £35.00.

An impressive study that examines the history of a part of the world which, although small, stands at the crossroads of Russia and the Muslim world, as well as lying between Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It is a dramatic example of a historic culture trying to survive through attempts at state-building, with the context of problematic political struggles.

Strategic Human Resource Management, including values/ethics issues

The Positive Dog: A Story About the Power of Positivity, Jon GORDON, Wiley (2012), 101pp., £11.99.

An inspiring, heart-warming story that combines revealing strategies and benefits of being positive, with insights into essential truths for us all. Incredibly valuable (Commonsense?), especially the nine page (1000 words) action plan 'Feed the

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