

Bookshelf

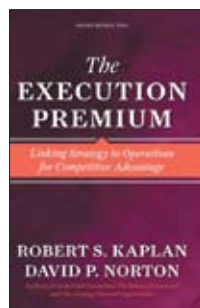
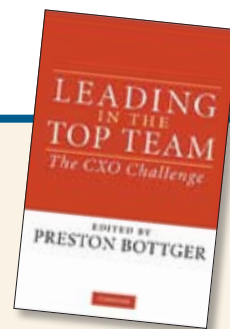


Innovation is very much in vogue in business these days, and Kaihan Krippendorff puts an intriguing spin on the concept, viewing it through the lens of Eastern philosophies.

In *The Way of Innovation*, he brings Chinese and Indian sensibilities to the notion of change, particularly examining how the “immaterial” world of feelings and perceptions influences the “material” world of things that can be touched and seen. He guides readers through the inescapable cycle of change as institutions pass sequentially through states of existence. In the rigid phase of *metal*, discontent causes a shift to *water*, which is full of fluidity and imagination. Water solidifies to *wood*, or the formation of ideas; *fire* results, bringing change with disorder and speed. Eventually the innovation matures into *earth*—until it becomes so rigid it turns back to metal and is ripe for another makeover. There’s something very peaceful about reading a business text founded on ancient principles, despite the fact that Krippendorff is just as urgent about the necessity for innovation as any other business consultant. Yet, presented in this fashion, his advice seems logical, insightful, inevitable, and eminently achievable. (Platinum Press, \$14.95)

Most top executives understand that a business cannot succeed without a well-thought-out strategy, as well as an efficient approach to operations. What many CEOs fail to realize is that the two must be executed together. In *The Execution Premium*, Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton spell out the interdependence of the two management imperatives.

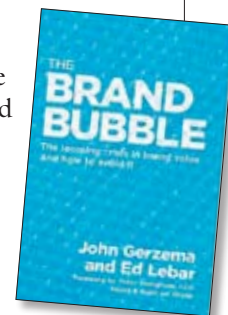
Like many other experts, Preston Bottger believes leadership can be learned—and with *Leading in the Top Team*, he’s put together a painstakingly detailed primer that looks at everything a “CXO” should know. He lays out the many and varied responsibilities of a C-level executive, such as carrying out a business strategy, defining the culture, handling top talent, and generating financial and social wealth. Then he further breaks down each of these tasks into what are practically step-by-step directions for succeeding at each facet of the job. Along the way, he dismisses the modern notion that everyone can be a leader. He writes, “One unproductive idea in contemporary academic discussions is that ‘leaders only have to empower people and then all good things happen.’ This is rather naïve and idealistic.” Bottger, a professor at IMD, has solicited essays from other IMD researchers, who write chapters on very specific CXO roles, including chief marketing officer, chief technology officer, and a host of others. The result is exhaustive and deeply illuminating. (Cambridge University Press, \$70).



“A visionary strategy that is not linked to excellent operational and governance processes cannot be implemented,” note the authors, who also wrote *The Balanced Scorecard*. Conversely, they point out, “A company is not likely to enjoy sustainable success from its operational improvements alone.” It’s their notion that high-performing companies need to create “the office of strategy management (OSM),” a position that aligns strategy and operations throughout the entire enterprise. The book is a pretty dense read, with detailed and subdivided descriptions of the six steps a business must follow to successfully integrate strategy and operations. But the reward is potentially huge for business leaders who implement their recommendations. (Harvard Business Press, \$39.95)

Wall Street places high value on compa-nies with strong brand recognition, but consumers aren’t so impressed,

and that mismatch in attitudes could lead to a painful reordering of the market. That’s the central premise behind *The Brand Bubble* by John Gerzema and Ed Lebar, both of marketing giant Young & Rubicam. Drawing on years’ worth of research, the two authors have determined that customers show much less faith in and fondness for brands than they did in the past—and this despite the fact that companies pour millions into building brand identity. Some branding strategies do work—such as those used by Google, Apple, and Nike—and Gerzema and Lebar offer a new take on why. In their words, these brands have “Energized Differentiation.” They are constantly reinventing themselves, creatively experimenting with new products, and giving the impression that they are already working on the future innovations that customers will prize. “The lesson for today’s brand world is that in order for a brand to sustain consumer interest, it can’t just be different; it has to *keep* being different,” the authors



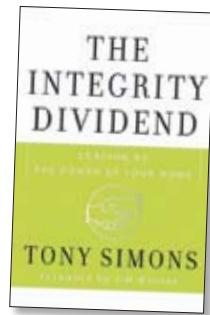
write. As they break down the tactics used by top brands, they offer great suggestions for other companies trying to differentiate themselves—and thrive. (Jossey-Bass, \$27.95)

Geoff Colvin doesn't believe superstar athletes, artists, or CEOs were born any more special than ordinary folks. He makes his bias clear upfront by titling his book *Talent Is Overrated*—and he offers piles of data showing that even so-called prodigies are not gifted with inborn talent or incredible memories that put the rest of us to shame. No, Colvin says, what truly distinguishes wildly successful people in any field is a devotion to what he calls *deliberate practice*. “It is an activity designed specifically to improve performance,

often with a teacher's help; it can be repeated a lot; feedback on results is continuously available; it's highly demanding mentally...and it isn't much fun,” he writes. He makes a persuasive case that even Mozart and Tiger Woods became

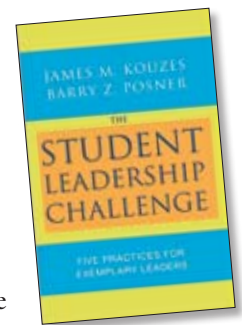
so phenomenally successful because they started training early, under the tutelage of dedicated fathers, and they put in more hours of hard work than any of their peers. Even readers who secretly believe they reached the tops of their games a long time ago will find themselves wondering what they can accomplish if they take Colvin's approach and practice for greatness. (Portfolio, \$24.95)

It turns out you actually can put a dollar value on trust. In *The Integrity Dividend*, Tony Simons offers evidence that managers who demonstrate integrity and keep their promises will run demonstrably more success-



ful companies. Simons, an associate professor at Cornell University, summarizes research he conducted with employees of a large hotel chain. “Where employees reported high integrity on the part of their managers, we saw deeper employee commitment, leading to lower employee turnover and superior customer service, all leading to higher profitability,” he writes. A manager's “behavioral integrity” shapes an organization's internal culture and external perception; it even has an effect on how customers feel about the trustworthiness of the brand. But it pays for managers to be concise and explicit about what they offer and expect. “You need to develop a very few values that you will absolutely live by and then repeat them every chance you get,” writes Simons. He isn't advocating “drafting up a statement of values that sits in a desk drawer,” a practice he considers toxic. He's merely laying out the payoff a manager can get when “your word of steel is as valuable as gold.” (Jossey-Bass, \$27.95)

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner don't consider leadership the prerogative of the charismatic individual—or even simply the adult with a well-paying job. In *Student Leadership Challenge*, they present their leadership lessons in a format designed to appeal to college students, whether they're taking business classes, running a volleyball tournament, or organizing a sorority. The basic formula tallies with the one they have described in their other books on the topic—be a role model, share your vision, challenge the status quo, enable others, and offer encouragement—but packaged for somewhat younger readers struggling with their first challenges as leaders. “Leadership is everyone's business,” they write, and they know that no one is too young to learn it. (Jossey-Bass, \$25)



What do you wish you'd known before you became CEO? Umesh Ramakrishnan has posed a variation of that question to executives in all industries all over the world, and he distills their answers in *There's No Elevator to the Top*. Many of the insights he offers are not particularly new: Have a passion for what you do. Never stop learning. Listen. But these curiously disarming CEOs also talk frankly about the benefits of taking a “zigzag” course to the top office, keeping employees in the loop, and maintaining relationships with friends and family. Even so, no one minimizes the challenge of being a CEO in today's business environment. Ramakrishnan quotes John Kealey of iDirect, who says that a career trajectory used to be like hiking up a mountain, with the summit always in view. Today, says Kealey, “we're rock climbing . . . We're just kind of working our way up the side not quite sure where we're going or where the next turn is.” These CEOs thoughtfully share with others what they've learned about making that uncertain journey. (Portfolio, \$24.95) ■

