

CLEVER

Leading Your Smartest, Most Creative People

By Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones

Harvard Business Press, \$27.95

How should you make employees more valuable to your company? It's a natural question to ask, particularly in these times. It's also the wrong question. Instead, argue London Business School professors Goffee and Jones, you should be asking: How can we increase the value of our organization to our cleverest workers?

In *Clever*, the authors explain that in order for your company to thrive, you'll have to better manage your firm's "clever people," those who generate disproportionate quantities of value. The problem is, clever people don't want to be managed. So the key to supervising these workers is to appear as though you're not managing them at all. "Measure your success by your ability to remain on the fringes of their radar," instruct the authors. "You know you're a success when you hear them say you're not getting in their way too much."

This guide to managing without managing goes beyond the individual level by addressing how to form clever teams and, eventually, clever organizations. Using examples of companies from various fields—including LVMH, Apple, and Cisco—the book's message is strongest when told through the quotes and anecdotes of prominent executives. However, the message does get repetitive, and though the authors paint a vivid picture of the typical clever employee, many of their dos and don'ts (there's an entire table of them) easily also apply to workers who aren't so clever (do talk straight, don't use bull or deceive) or border on confusing nonsense (do create a galaxy, don't recruit a star). Nonetheless, *Clever* manages to remind you that your best assets aren't your people—they're your *cleverest* people. —Vadim Liberman

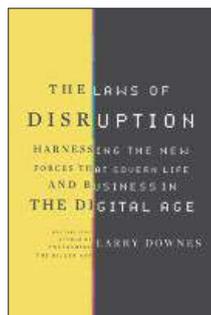
THE LAWS OF DISRUPTION

Harnessing the New Forces That Govern Life and Business in the Digital Age

By Larry Downes

Basic, \$26.95

In a world in which technology "is dramatically rewriting the rules of business and life," we all struggle not to fall further behind. But



Downes, a consultant and co-author of *Unleashing the Killer App*, makes a strong case that the problem is less shortened attention spans than it is anti-

quated laws and systems. "The technology we invent has the potential to change the world at an accelerating

pace," he writes, "but humans can no longer keep up." By understanding the gaps—how to spot them, close them, exploit them—people and organizations can get through this period of disruption.

The Laws of Disruption looks closely at the private lives of privacy-seeking "digital citizens" and the struggles of corporations grappling with cybercrime and shifting markets; Downes offers a guided tour of what's happening and what's next, what's legal and what's not, and how all of it is likely to impact individuals and businesses. Laced with examples of how conflicts and shifts are playing out in real life, the book looks beyond typical strategic advice, offering a fresh and valuable perspective—as when, for instance, the author argues for rethinking intellectual-property guidelines: "The case against Microsoft," he writes, "has cost a for-

tune and distracted an innovative company for years. But it has not helped one consumer one bit." —Matthew Budman

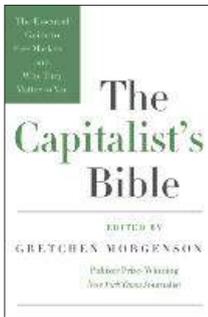
THE CAPITALIST'S BIBLE

The Essential Guide to Free Markets and Why They Matter to You

Edited by Gretchen Morgenson

HarperBusiness, \$16.99

The last year has seen millions of Americans fling about the word *socialism* despite having virtually no idea what it means. But beyond awareness of a few oversimplified concepts, most of us know little more about capitalism, the system by which Western economies live and die. Morgenson, *The New York Times'* indispensable business columnist, sets out to close that gap, and pretty much every reader would benefit from at least a skim through this trade



paperback.

As Morgenson notes in the preface, the book is less a bible than a primer—"Further reading is encouraged"—and as such, it lightly skips over

history, ideology, key figures, a geographical survey, and even (extremely) brief excerpts from seminal works, from Smith to Veblen to Schumpeter to Hayek to Galbraith to Friedman. The tone is upbeat—"America is still the place where even the most impoverished strivers can become millionaires," Morgenson writes—but realistic, particularly in the "Disasters in Capitalism" chapter.

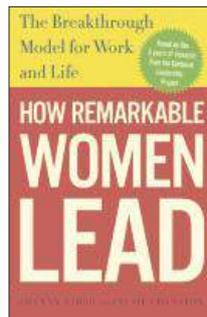
And even though it has in places the feel of a quickie book, with too many typos and a reliance on reference-volume text, *The Capitalist's Bible* succeeds in leaving the reader with a better sense of what capitalism was, is, and can be—and with a feeling that, notwithstanding the periodic meltdowns, someone is minding the store. —M.B.

HOW REMARKABLE WOMEN LEAD
The Breakthrough Model for Work and Life
By Joanna Barsh, Susie Cranston, and Geoffrey Lewis
Crown Business, \$27.50

In a book that feels like something of a throwback, the authors urge women would-be leaders to become "centered" through thinking more like, well, women. "We have unleashed optimism and joy and love as integral parts of leading," Barsh writes in the introduction. She envisions organizations "fueled by meaning and positive emo-

tions, full engagement and collaboration."

It's more rigorous than it might sound: The authors are McKinsey people and ground their work in the results of a five-year research program and extensive interviews with two dozen women leaders, including luminaries such as Avon's Andrea Jung and Xerox's Anne Mulcahy. The ultimate lesson, apart from how to conduct a search for "meaning," is to build on optimism



and innate strengths. "Though we're often told we should tone down our emotions in the workplace," the authors write, "our instincts and capabilities—seeing the emotional truth of a situation and spending time nurturing to bring out the talent in others—can make anyone who uses them an extraordinary leader." In explaining what the authors dub Centered Leadership, they draw a direct connection between home life and work life.

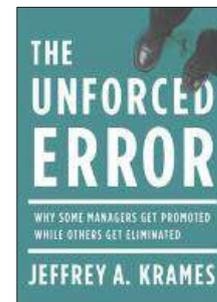
True, the prose gets more than a little gooey and inspirational; it's easy to find passages at which to scoff if one is so inclined. And despite occasional nods to diversity, the authors are awfully sweeping and essentialist when it comes to women, assigning particular traits to half the population. But it's refreshing to move beyond a tired language in which striving women try to *have it all* and, inevitably, face questions about whether to *opt out*. Those profiled here haven't had to choose, Barsh writes. "They love their children *and* they love their work." And, evidently, their organizations have benefited. —M.B.

THE UNFORCED ERROR
Why Some Managers Get Promoted While Others Get Eliminated

By Jeffrey A. Krames
Portfolio, \$21.95

In tennis, an unforced error is when a player who has the ability to keep the ball in play makes a mistake, thereby losing the point. "For tennis players, committing fewer unforced errors means winning more matches," Krames writes. "For people in business, it means better raises, speedier promotions, and enhanced job security." Unfortunately, this entire book feels like one big forced error, composed of one forced metaphor after another. By applying lessons from tennis to business—or is it the other way around? sometimes, it's hard to tell—Krames merely rehashes platitudes. For instance, he draws from the world of tennis to caution readers about "always playing with a singles mind-set," "not practicing enough," and "not stepping up to the net."

These metaphors hardly demand translation, but Krames explains them anyway, offering solid advice but scor-



ing no points for originality. His advice on facilitating teamwork, hiring staff, micromanaging, and enhancing your strengths typifies what you've likely

read elsewhere. What a shame. Senior executives need books to help them better understand business less than they need another compilation of sports metaphors. For Krames—a prolific and highly respected business-book editor, publisher, and author—*The Unforced Error* represents a rare whiff. —V.L. ■