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Back to Business
Managing survivors and navigating a new terrain.
 By Sarah J. Robbins
 Jun 14, 2010

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Finally turning the page on 2009, publishers of business management books are feeling optimistic, focusing their energy on topics that suggest the worst just may be behind us, and on books that speak of rebuilding, reinvesting, reconsidering, and reinvigorating. Reflecting on the headline of last year's Publishers Weekly business management feature, "Managing to Survive," McGraw-Hill business group publisher Gary M. Krebs says, "We're past the 'managing to survive' book and more about the 'back to business' books."

Harper Business publisher Hollis Heimbouch also believes the immediate crisis is in the rearview mirror: "What people are looking for is some advice or insight into how we're going to build the future."

With this optimism comes an uptick in ideas, says Susan Williams, executive editor with Jossey-Bass Business: "New project submissions from agents were very low in 2009—it seems they started to pick up in February," she says. And her imprint, she adds, has emerged rock-solid: "Our authors would argue that what happened in business was failed leadership—and addressing the root causes and the very tough issues that go along with that will never go away."

Embracing—and Profiting from—Change

Employees who survived the layoffs of late 2008 and 2009 are essential to rebuilding shaken organizations, and they have unique needs. "What we're seeing out there is that while many people still have employment, they are not necessarily satisfied in their positions," says Erika Heilman, editorial director of Nicholas Brealey Publishing. "When the floodgates open again, and they will, companies will need to be prepared to answer this 'running of the bulls, American style' with proper employee development programs." Employee retention, she adds, requires a concerted effort by an entire management team, especially if that team looks strikingly different from the one in place before the financial crisis.

In January, Nicholas Brealey will publish Roberta Chinsky Matuson's *Suddenly in Charge: Managing Up and Managing Down, Succeeding All Around*. Matuson writes from experience, having been promoted into the position of director of human resources for a major commercial real estate company at age 24. "I always felt there should be a comprehensive book for managers who were suddenly in charge. It certainly would have helped me avoid many mistakes," she says.

"The companies that survive and thrive are those that have change adaptation built into their cultures," says Krebs. In July, McGraw-Hill will publish *The Resilient Organization: How Adaptive Cultures Thrive Even When Strategy Fails*. The author, Liisa Välikangas, a professor of innovation management at the Aalto University School of Economics in Finland, has a new perspective on business: "This book really shows why being resilient and adaptable is more important than strategy," says Krebs. "For the week the market changes, does your strategy still make sense?"

Union Square Press, an imprint of Sterling, offers a fresh take on managing change: David Shaner's *The Seven Arts of Change* (Nov.) melds the author's four decades of aikido, a Japanese martial art, with his 20-year career in business consulting for the likes of Duracell, Frito-Lay, Caesars Palace, and Gillette. "He takes tough lessons he's learned molding top Fortune 500 companies," says Carlo Devito, Sterling's editorial director, "and explains how to incorporate them into your own life and work, as well as how to change the attitude in the workplace."

More Than a Paycheck

Another silver lining in the dark cloud of the recession: "People are a lot more focused on finding some meaning in the workplace, after all the hardships of the past couple of years," says Krebs. "It's not just about making money."

That search can be a tall order, considering drastic cutbacks on staff and salaries. This month, Dave and Wendy Ulrich's *The Why of Work: How Great Leaders Build Abundant Organizations That Win* will help managers create a sense of purpose among employees, motivating them and inspiring them to break out to do more.

"It's not just about survival, it's about growth. People want to do better," says Will Weisser, associate publisher and director of marketing for Portfolio. Coming in August is *Bury My Heart at Conference Room B: The Unbeatable Impact of Truly Committed Managers* by Stan Slap, a corporate strategist who counts Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Banana Republic, and the Four Seasons among his clients. "He's a very unconventional speaker and business guru, and this is his first book," says Weisser. The premise of the book is connecting mental commitment to emotional commitment, empowering managers to, according to the jacket copy, "live your deepest personal values at work and then [providing] a remarkable process that allows you to use your own values to achieve

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In the same spirit, Ballantine's *Life by Design: Six Steps to an Extraordinary You*, released last month, brings the counsel of business coach Tom Ferry, CEO of YourCoach and veteran on the motivational seminar circuit, to individual readers, enabling them to create a plan for achieving their career goals.

Who's in Charge?

The oft-maligned "boss" can make or break an employee's self-esteem and health of a team—not to mention the company's bottom line. In September, Business Plus will publish *Good Boss, Bad Boss* by Dr. Robert Sutton of Stanford University, who turned heads a few years ago with *The No Asshole Rule*. "This new book deals with the question that people always ask: what separates a great boss from just a good boss? And what do you do if you find yourself in a situation that's really not very good?" says Rick Wolff, publisher and editor-in-chief of Business Plus. "It's a serious, academic book, but obviously a fun read—we've gotten great feedback so far and bloggers are already writing on it."

One innovative way to evaluate leadership is to consider two categories: Multipliers and Diminishers, according to Harper Business's *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter* by Liz Wiseman with Greg McKeown. Their book explains which characteristics help leaders get the best work from their employees, and which drain resources and energy. Wiseman based her book on 17 years working as a v-p in human resources at Oracle. "As we have been teaching these ideas inside companies, we've found that most people aspire to be Multipliers, but tend to recognize a couple of Diminisher practices within themselves," says Wiseman. The case for considering the difference—and its implications—is compelling, given the economic necessity to do more with fewer resources: "Multipliers get more from the people they work with," says Wiseman. "The most frequent description we heard from people was, 'I was exhausted, but exhilarated and ready to do it again' or 'I would do anything not to disappoint them.'"

More Motivation?

Coming in September from Bantam is *Carrots and Sticks: Unlock the Power of Incentives to Get Things Done* by Ian Ayres, a Forbes columnist and New York Times bestselling author of *Super Crunchers*. *Carrots* is based on the concept of "commitment contracts," a straightforward strategy for setting and achieving goals. One example Ayres cites is online shoe retailer Zappos.com: "After a four-week training is completed, they do something very strange—they offer trainees \$2,000 to quit," says Ayres. "They want people to stay on the job long-term. What's interesting is that 98% of trainees reject the offer. In the process of resisting the temptation, they teach themselves that they care about the job."

Connection and Collaboration

If it's well known that business is personal, common wisdom now holds that it's also psychological—and that employees need to be just as attuned to group and individual dynamics as team leaders. Your *Body at Work: Your Guide to Sight-Reading the Body Language of Businesses, Bosses, and Boardrooms* (St. Martin's Griffin, Aug.) illustrates the influence of nonverbal cues. "I think the points our author, David Givens, makes are all the more relevant now, as people are feeling a sense of job insecurity and are wanting to be more proactive about their jobs," says editor Yaniv Soha. Givens, director of the Center for Nonverbal Studies, focuses on the subtle cues of the work place—a shrug of the shoulders as a diminishing gesture, for example.

But it takes more than open arms and uncrossed legs to foster relationships that will improve your work life and beyond. In August, Broadway Business will publish *It's Not Just Who You Know* by former *Up with People* CEO Tommy Spaulding. "It's a book about relationships and in the vein of *Never Eat Alone* [published by Broadway in 2005], which has been a huge success," says editor John Mahaney.

The power of these human interactions, of course, transcends the cubicle and the conference room. *The Language of Trust: Selling Ideas in a World of Skeptics* (Prentice Hall Press, May) is written by Michael Maslansky, CEO of a corporate and public affairs market research firm. "Every promise you try to make to consumers is now looked at through this very skeptical lens," says Maslansky. "We've been overpromised and underdelivered by just about every system in America, from the government to the housing market to the financial system." There's a new way to approach the consumer, says Maslansky: "It's much more positive than using fear to sell—it makes smaller promises that companies can deliver on, it makes things very personal. And it's very plainspoken: if we can't explain complex concepts to the ordinary consumer, it's our fault."

Just as entrepreneurs understand the importance of fostering connections, publishers agree that the most compelling way to deliver their message is through narrative: "Two or three years ago, narratives were like chopped liver—no one wanted them," says Broadway's Mahaney. "Then when the big story of the financial meltdown happened, they started working again."

An author with a compelling narrative benefits from a platform—one that, in many cases, was established through prior publication. In February, Broadway Business published *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* by Dan and Chip Heath, whose 2007 *Made to Stick* reached the New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestseller lists and spent two years on BusinessWeek's list. (*Switch* has spent nine weeks on PW's bestseller list.) In March of this year, Crown Business published *Rework*, written by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, the executive team behind Web-based software company 37signals, in which Jeff Bezos invested in 2006. "They have a very unconventional, counterintuitive view about how organizations should work that is probably 180 degrees from the way most companies operate," says Mahaney.

In *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption* (Harper Business, Oct.), authors Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers explore the rise in business models based on shared resources. "We're really excited about this book," says Harper's Heimboach. "It's about people having higher values than just getting rich—it's about creating businesses that give back, but it's not just pie in the sky." Concrete examples of businesses in this book include Zipcar, the world's biggest car-sharing service.

Zipcar also makes an appearance in *The Mesh: Why the Future of Business Is Sharing* by Lisa Gansky, coming from Portfolio in November. "Mesh" businesses, argues Gansky, do not follow typical sales procedures. Instead, they employ social media, wireless networks, and endless sources of data

Best Books of 2010

This year we took our annual slugfest to the pub underneath our new office and came up with a list of the year's top 100 books that could be our best ever. It wasn't any easier with a drink in hand to pick what we had to agree on were the best books of 2010, but once again, we've got a list we love.



Len Riggio: PW's Person of the Year

By any standard, the past 15 months have been eventful for Barnes & Noble. In September 2009, the company completed its purchase of Barnes & Noble College Booksellers and two months later introduced the Nook, its entry into the e-reader wars. This spring, B&N appointed William Lynch as CEO and announced a \$140 million investment to upgrade its digital capabilities.



BLOGS

Beyond Her Book

Barbara Vey
WW Ladies Book Club
Blurbs

Last week I got to see Lily Tomlin with my sisters. It was amazing to watch her work the audience. She latched on to an older woman in the audience and when Lily asked her if she wanted to come on s...

ShelfTalker

Josie Leavitt
The Power of the Listserv

Yesterday, as I was checking my email I was struck again by the rapid response of the New England Bookselling Children's Advisory Council listserv. Here's the timeline...

Genreville

Rose Fox
Legally Free
SF/F E-books, Short Stories, and Podcasts

While discussing book piracy with a friend, I started coming up with a list of places to find legal free speculative fiction online. Please suggest your favorite sites in the comments!...



TOP BESTSELLERS

Tick Tock	Hardcover Fiction
Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption	Hardcover Nonfiction
Swimsuit	Mass Market Paper
Water for Elephants	Trade Paper
The Lost Hero	Children's Fiction
Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters	Children's Picture Book
House of Night	Children's Series & Tie-ins
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (unabr.)	Audio Fiction
Decision Points	Audio Nonfiction

to deliver exactly what consumers want—in many cases enabling them to get what they need without buying it outright and in turn creating a culture of collaboration.

The Gurus

If narrative is back in business, so to speak, then the ever-expanding blogosphere calls for caveat emptor. "Anyone with a computer can publish their opinion on the Web; there is an overabundance of advice," says Christina Parisi, executive editor at AMACOM. For reliable information, she says, business leaders are "turning to luminaries they can trust." This year some of the heaviest hitters step forward, among them renowned academic and author Henry Mintzberg, heralded by Fast Company as "one of the most original minds in management." Coauthored by Bruce Ahlstrand and Joseph Lampel, Mintzberg's Management? It's Not What You Think! (Sept.) is designed to make readers question their ideas of management. Says Parisi: "It debunks buzz words, management myths, and fads, and introduces a little irreverent debate on what it is managers do and what makes a good manager. Instead of informing you, it's meant to get you thinking for yourself."

In August, McGraw-Hill offers The Drucker Lectures: Essential Lessons on Management, Society and Economy by Rick Wartzman, executive director of the Drucker Institute. "What's remarkable about [Peter F.] Drucker is how timeless he really is," says Krebs. "And what makes the book so special is how relevant and significant he seems to be in these 50 never-before-published lectures." Another title that draws on renowned leaders' expertise is Working Together: Why Great Partnerships Succeed by Michael D. Eisner and Aaron R. Cohen (Collins Business, Sept.). The former Disney CEO discusses his partnership with the late Frank Wells and touches upon other famous duos, including Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger.

And last week, Zappos.com CEO Tony Hsieh (he of the \$2,000 incentive to quit training) published Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose with Business Plus. The key to Hsieh's success, according to Wolff: "It's not that he's so crazy about shoes, but he does have a passion for customer service." The book has a wide appeal, says Wolff, engaging young people averse to a 9-to-5 mentality as well as managers and executives hoping to engage employees to improve productivity. "Every company, every part of our economy, over the last couple of years has been hurt," says Wolff. "Obviously, when that happens, corporations and companies have to go back to those values and the things they see as strengths."

Zappos's stellar success is but one indicator of how the rapidly changing face of technology continues to greatly affect business—including business management books and their publishers. This summer, tech-savvy publishers are turning out titles that address technological innovation and, taking the advice of the business gurus mentioned above, are rebooting to join the digital revolution.

Rhonda Abrams, USA Today columnist and president and CEO of the Planning Shop in Palo Alto, Calif., says, "We're going digital not just in a big way but in many ways," listing academic textbooks, courseware, mobile apps for consumers, interactive downloadables, and e-books. The Planning Shop, which spins Abrams's business advice into books and instruction programs, has now entered a relationship with LibreDigital, in order to experiment with a wider variety of platforms. "Part of what makes us survive," says Abrams, "is that we have a culture of openness and experimentation."

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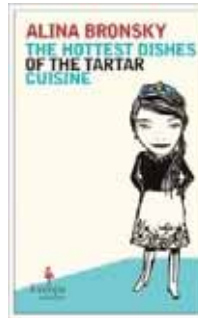
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PICK OF THE WEEK



[The Hottest Dishes of the Tartar Cuisine by Alina Bronsky](#)

Rosa Achmetowna, the frightening narrator of Bronsky's dark and wily latest, is a difficult person to like, much less love. [more...](#)

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