



Bookviews

Bookviews by Alan Caruba, May 2008

Getting Down to Business (Books)

Books on personal finance and how to manage a successful business keep pouring off the press, so let's take a quick look at just a few, any one of which might prove useful.

It is an appalling fact of modern life that today's college students are graduating with thousands of dollars in debt for the loans they took to attend. *Ramen Noodles, Rent and Resumes: An After-College Guide to Life* (\$14.95, Super College, Belmont, CA, softcover) by Kristen Fischer addresses what some are beginning to call the "quarter-life crisis" as graduates face both debt and the need for a job to relieve the burden. This book offers practical tips to help cope with the stress and transition to a satisfying career.

This is stuff a graduate needs to know in order to cope effectively. The book is available at www.supercollege.com. *Career Contentment* by Jeffrey Garton (\$22.95, ASTD Press, softcover) addresses the fact that employees lack control over the people and things such as salary, benefits, a good boss and favorable working conditions. Formerly in human resources with Philip Morris Companies for over twenty years, Garton presents specific techniques and step-by-step strategies to shape your job situation into one that yields satisfaction. It is all about one's state of mind and resilience at a time when corporations are laying off employees, the job markets are uncertain, and there are grounds for skepticism. Maybe you should also read *Life Entrepreneurs: Ordinary People Creating Extraordinary Lives* (\$24.95, Jossey-Bass) by Christopher Gergen and Gregg Vanourek that is about integrating the principles of entrepreneurship into one's life beyond just the arena of business. In an uncertain economy, the authors interviewed a variety of successful people to demonstrate how developing a personal vision for one's life is the first step to achieving it.

There are a number of books devoted to marketing that are worth a look. *Accidental Branding: How Ordinary People Build Extraordinary Brands* by David Vinjamuri (\$24.95, Wiley) is about the stories behind seven different brands started by amateurs such as Craig Newmark of Craig's List, John Peterman of J. Peterman Company, and Julie Aigner-Clark who started Baby Einstein. None were privileged Ivy Leagers and some didn't even graduate college. This is a look inside the process by which they created brands that made them wealthy and provides practical insight to what steps they took that may prove surprising as well as the pitfalls they avoided. It doesn't happen overnight, but it can happen.

The Alpha Factor by Wes Ball (\$27.95, Westlyn Publishing) shatters a lot of myths. Based on the author's long-term study involving 100,000 interviews, he offers a proven blueprint that any organization can apply in order to drive demand, showing how the world's leading companies are doing it even in the present economy. This is some real nitty-gritty stuff that will benefit any CEO or top management person.

Gravitational Marketing: The Science of Attracting Customers by a trio of authors (\$26.95, Wiley) provides entrepreneurs, business owners, and independent sales professionals a simple method for finding customers without the hassle of traditional sales techniques. They examine what chasing prospects doesn't work, how to Recession-proof your business, why traditional small business marketing is dead, and much more worth learning. The chairman and CEO of Proctor & Gamble, A.G. Lafley

teamed with Ram Charan to write *The Game Changer* (\$27.50, Crown Business) to put the process of innovation to work in order to stay competitive and on top of the marketplace. It explains how to make customers the real “boss” of your company, how to innovate to grow a mature business, manage risk, and much more in today’s challenging and increasingly globalized competitive marketplace.

A slew of books address personal financial topics. Robert T. Kiyosaki has written *Increase Your Financial IQ: Getting Smarter with Your Money* (\$16.95, Business Plus) that has a foreword by Donald J. Trump. In 1997, the author stunned readers saying, “Your house is not an asset.” His book, *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, was an international bestseller as a primer on the importance of financial education. His new book examines the problems of today’s depressed housing market and how investing in the stock market has become even riskier. In a time of turbulence, knowing how to manage your finances has become even more essential. *A Million Is Not Enough: How to Retire with the Money You’ll Need* by Michael K. Farr (\$24.99, Springboard Press) addresses the steps one must take to save, invest, manage and protect your money in a clear, practical guide to wealth accumulation. If you are at a point in your life where you need to be planning for retirement, this is an excellent book. Likewise, *Cash-Rich Retirement* by Jim Schlagheck (\$24.95, St. Martins Press) examines the investing techniques of the mega-wealthy as a way to secure your own future. It avoids the conventional advice, offering provocative and practical advice by an author who is an investment advisor to the wealthy. It takes a plan and any one of these books offers the kind of information you need to create a plan that will work for you.

Finally, if you have thoughts to becoming an online millionaire, you need to read *Internet Riches: The Simple Money-Making Secrets of Online Millionaires* by Scott Fox (\$17.95, Amacom, softcover). Featuring exclusive interviews with online entrepreneurs, the author demonstrates how to get started and build an enterprise using readily available technology and turn-key opportunities. This is not for the risk-averse, but for those looking at the Internet as a means to make big bucks, this is a useful book to read.

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