

Books

Best books of 2016: Business

A round-up of must-read titles



DECEMBER 2, 2016 by: **Andrew Hill**

What Works (https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0674089030/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0674089030&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21):

Gender Equality by Design, by Iris Bohnet, *Belknap Press*,
RRP£21.95/\$26.95

A finalist for the FT/McKinsey Business Book of the Year award, this is a persuasive manual for anyone seeking to eliminate unconscious biases — in recruitment and management — that perpetuate imbalances between men and women. Bohnet offers invaluable, research-based guidance about how to design and run organisations that are not only fairer, but better.

Pre-Suasion (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1847941419/ref>

[=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=1847941419&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21\)](http://www.ft.com/content/7e6da92e-1148-11e6-91da-096d89bd2173): A

Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade, by Robert Cialdini, *Simon & Schuster*, RRP\$28/*Random House Business*, RRP£18.99

Cialdini, author of the best-selling *Influence*, returns with a book that points out how setting the scene for your audience — “pre-suading” them — is as important as the message itself. He backs this up with comprehensive references to the latest research and lays out ways to make your counterpart more susceptible to your pitch.

[Alibaba \(http://next.ft.com/content/7e6da92e-1148-11e6-91da-096d89bd2173\)](http://next.ft.com/content/7e6da92e-1148-11e6-91da-096d89bd2173): **The House that Jack Ma Built**, by Duncan Clark, *Ecco*, RRP£18.99/\$27.99

If Alibaba, the sprawling online retailer, is one of China’s most interesting companies, then Jack Ma, its founder, is one of the country’s most fascinating entrepreneurs. Clark has been witness to the rise of both since 1999 and turns their story into a compelling guide to the country’s new economy, shortlisted for the FT/McKinsey award.

[Brazillionaires \(http://next.ft.com/content/6abc12d2-476f-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab\)](http://next.ft.com/content/6abc12d2-476f-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab): **The Godfathers of Modern Brazil**, by Alex Cuadros, *Profile*, RRP£10.99/*Spiegel & Grau*, RRP\$28

Cuadros follows the money in modern Brazil and uncovers a tale of corruption and inequality worthy of the last days of the Roman empire, perfectly timed to coincide with the Rio Olympics and Brazil’s widening kickbacks scandal. The FT’s John Paul Rathbone said the “blend of memoir, exposé and historical narrative” was “a wonderful vehicle to explain how this state of affairs was reached”.

[Only Humans Need Apply \(http://next.ft.com/content/5aabad8a-15d8-11e6-b197-a4af20d5575e\)](http://next.ft.com/content/5aabad8a-15d8-11e6-b197-a4af20d5575e): **Winners and Losers in the Age of Smart Machines**, by Thomas Davenport and Julia Kirby, *Harper Business*, RRP\$29.99/£20

The human race's comeback was overdue after the recent wave of books on the rise of the robots, and Davenport and Kirby provide a fine call to action for flesh-and-blood workers by emphasising the collaborative possibilities of new technology. The spread of cognitive computing and artificial intelligence will threaten jobs, they concede, but the book lays out ways humans can meet and profit from the challenge.

[The Innovation Illusion \(https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0300217404/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0300217404&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21\)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0300217404/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0300217404&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21): **How So Little is Created by So Many Working So Hard**, by Frederik Erixon and Björn Weigel, *Yale University Press*, RRP£20/\$30

Faceless owners, risk-averse managers, globalisers and regulators are the villains of this book that challenges the idea that we are in an age of endless innovation. On the contrary, the authors point out, many innovations are “more fun than fundamental”.

[Chaos Monkeys \(http://next.ft.com/content/47d1cd50-4aa5-11e6-b387-64ab0a67014c\)](http://next.ft.com/content/47d1cd50-4aa5-11e6-b387-64ab0a67014c): **Inside the Silicon Valley Money Machine**, by Antonio García Martínez, *Ebury Press*, RRP£12.99/*Harper*, RRP\$29.99

This book is no *Liar's Poker*, as its publicity claims, but it makes at least a reasonable effort to expose the underbelly of Silicon Valley in the early 21st century, in the same way Michael Lewis highlighted Wall Street excesses in the late 20th. If you can stomach García Martínez's sexism and overblown prose, it is a revelatory read.

[Dear Chairman \(https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0062369830/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0062369830&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21\)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0062369830/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0062369830&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21): **Boardroom Battles and the Rise of Shareholder Activism**, by Jeff Gramm, *HarperCollins*, RRP£20/\$29.99

Built around a series of letters from shareholders to company bosses, this is an unexpectedly engaging and critical guide to a century of US activism and

activists. Gramm, who runs a hedge fund, provides a reminder of how the likes of Ross Perot and Warren Buffett shook up the world of US corporate governance.

Originals (https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0753556979/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0753556979&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21): **How Non-Conformists Move the World, by Adam Grant, *WH Allen*, RRP£20/*Viking*, RRP\$27**

Grant stamps his hallmark of original research, fine writing and fresh insights on to this book about how innovators make breakthroughs — not always in the predictable ways you may think. “Procrastinate strategically” is one nugget that will please anyone who has ever pushed a deadline.

The 100-Year Life (https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1472930150/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=1472930150&linkCode=as2&tag=finantimes-21): **Living and Working in an Age of Longevity, by Lynda Gratton and Andrew Scott, *Bloomsbury*, RRP£18.99/\$28**

Our obsession with millennials means we have not truly thought about what will happen at the other end of our — and their — lives. In this book, shortlisted for the FT/McKinsey award, Gratton and Scott, London Business School professors, offer insights and practical guidance on how living to 100 will change attitudes to careers, personal finance, corporate organisation and relationships.

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