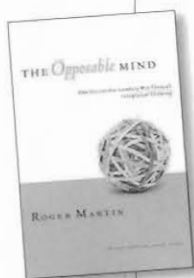


VISIONARY BUSINESS LEADERS "HAVE THE PREDISPOSITION AND THE CAPACITY TO HOLD TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSING IDEAS IN THEIR HEADS. AND THEN, WITHOUT PANICKING OR SIMPLY SETTLING FOR ONE ALTERNATIVE OR THE OTHER, THEY'RE ABLE TO PRODUCE A SYNTHESIS THAT IS SUPERIOR TO EITHER OPPOSING IDEA." —*The Opposable Mind*

■ **Most businesspeople, faced with complex choices,** tend to approach decisions on an either/or basis. But such oversimplification is a mistake that truly visionary business leaders avoid, suggests Roger Martin in *The Opposable Mind*. These leaders "have the predisposition and the capacity to hold two diametrically opposing ideas in their heads," writes Martin, dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. "And then, without panicking or simply settling for one alternative or the other, they're able to produce a synthesis that is superior to either opposing idea." Throughout the book Martin presents case studies of CEOs who have imaginatively and holistically solved huge problems, including A.G. Lafley of Procter & Gamble and Isadore Sharp of the Four Seasons Hotels. Martin breaks down the discrete steps most people take to decide on a course of action; then, he offers a roadmap for anyone who wants to develop a more integrative way of thinking. Just reading the book is an exercise in expanding the mind and looking at problems in a new way. (Harvard Business School Press, \$26.95)

■ **Is management theory obsolete?** Gary Hamel thinks so, and he says so bluntly in his fascinating book, *The Future of Management*. Treating the basic principles of management like any other product that was invented in the last century, Hamel posits that it's an ancient, creaking system that must radically reinvent itself if it's going to cope with modern challenges. But the very fact that accepted management theory is so

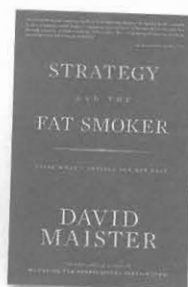
widespread and entrenched makes the essential innovation stupefyingly difficult. "If you've spent any time inside large organizations, you know that expecting them to be nimble, restlessly innovative, or highly engaging places to work...is like expecting a dog to do the tango," Hamel writes. Yet that's exactly what he thinks is required. He believes that "the three most formidable challenges that confront companies in this new century" include accel-



erating the pace of strategic renewal; making innovation everyone's job; and creating a highly engaging work environment. Hamel writes with such clarity and intelligence that his conclusions become not just persuasive, but urgent. (Harvard Business School Press, \$26.95)

■ **You might think your organization is** prepared for any contingency, but *Managing the Unexpected* will strip away any complacency. Authors Karl E. Weick and Kathleen M. Sutcliffe, both of the University of Michigan, examine high reliability organizations, or HROs, to draw lessons for less stress-intensive companies. These HROs include hospital emergency rooms, naval aircraft carriers, and other enterprises where the stakes are astronomical, the parameters are always changing, and the success rate is astonishingly high. Weick and Sutcliffe attribute that

phenomenal success rate to the state of mindfulness that prevails at these organizations, a realization that anything could go wrong at any time. According to the authors, HROs are obsessed with tracking and learning from failure; reluctant to oversimplify any situation for fear of overlooking information; sensitive to operations, especially in the current situation; committed to bouncing back from errors; and willing to let authority migrate to the person with the most



pertinent experience. All business leaders must prepare for some degree of chaos, and this book is an excellent tool for showing them how. (Jossey-Bass, \$27.95)

■ **All individuals—and all organizations—** know what they need to do to get healthy and upgrade performance. It's just that, most of the time, they're unwilling to invest the necessary effort. "Improving the quality of the analysis is not where the problem lies," writes David Maister in *Strategy and the Fat Smoker*. "The necessary outcome of strategic planning is not *analytical insight*, but *resolve*." Maister, who used to be a fat smoker himself, knows that a heart attack or a financial crisis is usually the urgent motivation that finally gets people or institutions to take action. Even so, no strategic plan can be implemented without the buy-in of all the players, from top management to low-level workers. Maister writes in a frank and refreshing style about what it really takes to implement a new strategy—and reap the rewards. (Spangle Press, \$29.95) ■