

Editor's letter



adapting to disruption is the theme of this issue of *Strategy & Leadership*.

In Brian Leavy's interview "**Whitney Johnson: Applying the principles of disruptive entrepreneurship to talent management**," she explains how her novel theories apply to individual careers and to corporate talent management. A disciple of disruption guru Clayton Christensen, Johnson warns that, "**Individuals need to learn how to disrupt themselves repeatedly throughout their careers and the companies that are best able to enable and encourage this approach to talent management will be the ones most likely to become successful serial disruptors at the business level.**"

In an era when disruption challenges almost every industry, agility is a critical capability. But adopting actual Agile practices and mindset makes hierarchical managements apprehensive. A leading proponent of radical management innovation, Stephen Denning deflates the misplaced fears and highlights new best practices in "**Ten Agile axioms that make conventional managers anxious.**" He offers this potent definition of the disruptive mindset: "**Agile is about generating instant, intimate, frictionless, low-risk, incremental value at scale. That's the new performance requirement.**"

This is a record year for M&A deals. Many of them are about buying disruptors or access to potentially disruptive technology. M&A is a notoriously risky strategy, but Oxford lecturer Timothy J. Galpin offers a tested model companies can use to boost their chances of success in "**Reap exceptional value from M&A: manage it as a core competence.**" A consultant and author of a textbook on the subject, he says, "**Firms learning to build their M&A competence can use the model to record and catalogue their M&A process tools, templates and talent in an organized fashion across the ten-stages.**"

In every industry, the propensity to collaborate – to discover and create new forms of value in tandem with partners – has absorbed much of the shock of disruption by insurgent rivals, according to the 19th IBM Global C-suite Study of Chief Executive Officers. From interviews with more than 2000 CEOs the IBM researchers extracted insights on how the most successful companies are "**Navigating disruption with ecosystems, partners and platforms.**" The lead author is Saul Berman, a senior IBM strategist.

Where M&A, disruption and innovation are happening rapidly management will likely have to adapt the structure of the organization. Veteran consultants Herman Vantrappen and Frederic Wirtz offer field-tested guidelines in "**A smarter process for managing and explaining organization design change.**" They warn corporate leaders that, "**Unless repeated design changes are thoughtfully explained, managers are likely to hear grumbling that the firm leadership is steering haphazardly or has been seduced into 'rearranging the corporate ship's deck chairs' by the promise of the latest organizational fad.**"

In a turnaround case study, former CEO Kris Babicci and Professor Winai Wongsurawat tell how the BankDhofar was transformed "**From an 'Underperforming 80's bank' to one of Oman's best.**" Stopping a talent exodus, establishing a can-do culture, rolling out a new digital system, innovating products, all were initiatives of the strategic makeover. "**One year after the subprime crisis rocked the global financial system, BankDhofar won the 'Number One Bank in Oman' prize...[its] accomplishments were remarkable, considering that only two years earlier, BankDhofar was rapidly losing ground, slipping to number five in market share.**"

And don't miss a double selection of the "Strategist's bookshelf," one by reviewer Prof. Gayle Avery and another by the team of Prof. V. K. Narayanan and Andrea C. Farro.

Good reading,
Robert M. Randall
Editor

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