

THE DEAL

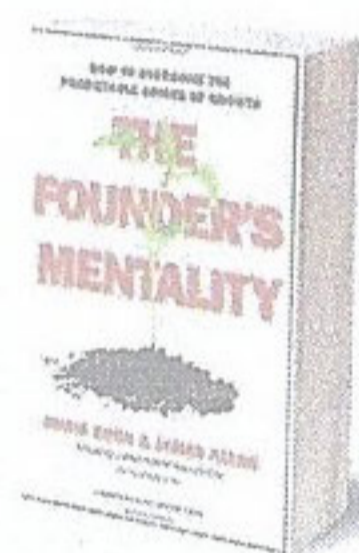
REINVENTING BUSINESS



LIFE AFTER STEVE
How Tim Cook's leadership is bearing fruit

September 2016 | THE DEAL

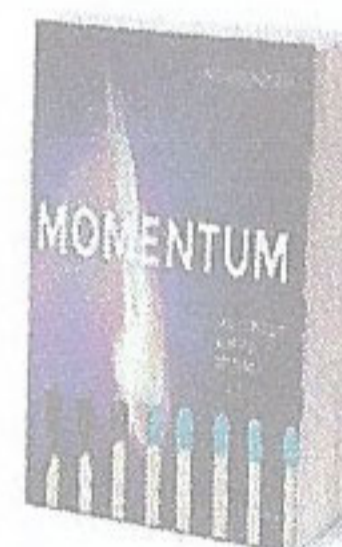
Books



The Founder's Mentality

Chris Zook & James Allen, Harvard Business Review Press \$44.99

There is plenty of evidence that those who set up successful companies are often missed when they step back: so much of the power of an organisation comes from leaders who literally or figuratively "own" the exercise. Here, two partners in the consulting firm, Bain & Company argue that there are approaches and attributes we can all adopt to bring the clarity and determination of the founder to running companies. Chris Zook and James Allen have been studying companies in more than 40 countries, and this book has solid research and ideas behind it. It begins with the notion that most business failures are due to internal, rather than external factors and that companies that grow big and stay successful have the "founder's mentality". According to the authors, founders or entrepreneurs "live and breathe their insurgent mission". It's not rocket science but in a world where CEOs come and go in a handful of years it's interesting to see the consultants advising the recovery of such unambiguous and raw passion.



Momentum: How to build it, keep it or get it back

Michael McQueen, Wiley, \$34.95

How-to books are seductive and when they talk to us about making money or making progress at work, they are almost irresistible. This one comes with a disarmingly glamorous stock and format that speaks to a generation hooked on digital and visuals. Michael McQueen, a "trend forecaster" among other things, promises to tell us how to develop a "clear sense of what it takes to build unstoppable momentum in every area of life. There may not be a shortcut or a silver bullet but there is a surefire formula – and it works." The book certainly works as a quick and aspirational read, with tiny case studies of huge companies like Nokia and Kodak; neat lists such as "10 tips for getting out of a rut". (No 9 suggests getting a good playlist together to lift your spirits when times are tough); and epithets including "Never confuse action with activity." That one is from Benjamin Franklin. You get the picture.



The Innovation Race: How to change a culture to change the game

Andrew Grant and Gaia Grant, Wiley, \$34.95

More how-to from Wiley, but this time a more conventional 350 pages of heavily researched discussion about how to grow and innovate but in a sustainable manner. The Grants' goal is to look at why some societies seemed to have raced ahead in technology while others have been left behind, and then move onto some more complex, philosophical issues such as whether it makes sense to be in the innovation race at all. "Instead of racing against each other," they ask, couldn't we strive to overcome climate change challenges or worldwide poverty together? Or to put it another way: "The big question here is not whether creative thinking and innovation are important, as they clearly are: it is whether we are innovating in the best way and for the best reasons. Are we innovating to find the best solutions for dealing with the world's greatest challenges, or are we innovating for the sake of innovating?"



The Dyehouse

Mena Calthorpe, Text Publishing, \$12.95

It's not your usual business read but this 1956 classic novel set in a factory, and republished by Text, is a reminder of how rarely these days fiction tackles the world of work that so dominates our lives. Calthorpe, who died in 1996, was a Catholic country girl who became a school teacher, a political activist and a member of the Communist Party in NSW for four years in the 1930s. Fiona McFarlane's introduction to the new edition notes that Australia produced a lot of such work in the mid-20th century, much of it by people associated with the party, and including Dorothy Hewett and Katharine Susannah Pritchard. Calthorpe was an unabashed supporter of working people but her book is much more than advocacy and worth reading as much for its social history and its understanding of human nature as its rendering of the labour/capital clash.

Helen Trinca