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# Outstanding Business Reference Sources

## *The 2008 Selection of Recent Titles*

### BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee

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**A**fter many discussions and intense scrutiny, the working group of the BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee selected ten recent works as either “outstanding” or “other noteworthy titles.” Out of numerous print and electronic titles under consideration, only these ten fit the established criteria and guidelines. All the works were published after May 2007. All have useful content that make them appropriate selections for medium to large-sized academic and public libraries.

Two of the titles, one on marketing and one on business ethics, were designated “outstanding.” Seven other titles were placed into the other noteworthy titles category. These seven works cover a wide variety of subjects including economics, corporate social responsibility, product and industry reports, management consulting, information technology, and advertising. Brief reviews are included.

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### OUTSTANDING TITLES

*The Advanced Dictionary of Marketing: Putting Theory to Use.* By Scott Dacko. New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008. 601p. \$59.95 (ISBN: 978-0199286003).

*The Advanced Dictionary of Marketing* is an excellent example of how thoughtful, purposeful organization can increase the amount of information available to the user. The author has created two very helpful thematic indexes at the beginning of the volume. First, the “Table of Applications” allows the researcher to find any term listed in the book and instantly see what subsection of the discipline it falls into. The table also allows the user to scan for concepts associated with one segment simply by running a finger down the column. The segments are marketing strategy, marketing management, consumer behavior, marketing research, marketing modeling, services marketing, retail marketing, online marketing, business-to-business marketing, international marketing, and “other application areas” for the smaller segments. For example, the table shows that “expectancy theory” is used in marketing management, services marketing, and online marketing. The other index is “Searching for Marketing Terms Using Key Words,” which allows the user to find the correct marketing term for a common keyword. By placing both of these indexes at the beginning of the volume, the user is spared a hunt through the dictionary for terms that may not be there or for concepts that don’t apply to the problem.

Each entry in the dictionary is separated into six sections: description, key insights, key words, implications, application areas and further readings, and bibliography. The description is the definition itself; the key insights place the

term in a wider context. The implications section illustrates how a term might be used by marketers. The application areas refer the researcher to journal articles or books that detail how the concept would be put to practical use. Finally, the bibliography lists the citations for the definition and discussion of each term. Sources are arranged by order of importance to the discussion rather than alphabetically, thus once again conveying information by organization.

Finally, there is an appendix, "Classification of Key Terms." All the dictionary's entries are categorized into one of four areas: law, theory, concept, or effect. The author explains the use of these categories in the introduction, but essentially this classification allows the researcher to see the hierarchy of terms within the discipline of marketing.

This volume is very valuable as a reference source because it gives clear, succinct information about the major concepts, theories, laws, and effects of marketing. It will remain useful as a researcher progresses from novice to expert. However, the value is not limited to researchers because professionals can use the implications section to determine potential practical uses of the concept. The choice between hardback and paperback pricing makes this work affordable for any library. *The Advanced Dictionary of Marketing: Putting Theory to Use* is highly recommended for every business reference collection.—*Diane Campbell, Rider University, Lawrence, New Jersey*

***Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society.*** Ed. by Robert W. Kolb. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2008. 5 vols. \$795 (ISBN 978-1412916523).

Ethics has always been an important issue in business. However, due to the corporate scandals at Enron and WorldCom and the subsequent passing of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, there has been a resurgence of research interest in business ethics. This encyclopedia reflects this current research interest and emphasizes ethics in strategic management, corporate governance, and organizational culture.

The encyclopedia is an authoritative work compiled by Robert W. Kolb, a prolific writer and a professor for nearly thirty years. Kolb and an editorial board of thirty renowned business scholars invited three hundred scholars and business experts from around the world to write entries in this encyclopedia.

The encyclopedia consists of five volumes and includes nine hundred entries. The entries are arranged in alphabetical order and range from five hundred to eleven thousand words, depending on the topic. Brief essays introduce important personages and organizations; longer essays are written on important terms. Volume 5 also includes an appendix of business ethics periodicals as well as a comprehensive index with cross-references.

The *Encyclopedia* is available in print or electronic format. The electronic version is available both through Sage eReference and Gale Virtual Reference Library. The electronic version offers access to the eTable of Contents, the eBook Index, and the list of illustrations. In the eTable of Contents, users

can either choose a volume or browse a specific part of the encyclopedia starting from the title page. Also available for browsing is the Reader's Guide, which divides the encyclopedia into twenty-three broad thematic groups. Finally, the eBook Index includes an A–Z browsing section and a simple search box.

The *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society* compiles extensive amounts of current business ethics literature into one place. Two criticisms of the online version are that the graphics and charts are not downloadable and that the Reader's Guide section does not include hyperlinks to the individual entries. But this encyclopedia is an excellent, authoritative background resource for business ethics that is easy to use. The encyclopedia serves as a research tool for business students and provides a good introduction to basic ideas and concepts in business ethics. The information contained in this encyclopedia could lead to a better understanding of the connections between business, ethics, and society. Public and school libraries can also benefit from this work as both students and business owners search for information on this popular topic.—*Leticia Camacho, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah*

## OTHER NOTEWORTHY TITLES

***The A to Z of Corporate Social Responsibility: A Complete Reference Guide to Concepts, Codes and Organisations.*** By Wayne Visser et al. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2008. 535p. \$120 (ISBN 978-0470723951).

*The A to Z of Corporate Social Responsibility* is the first complete reference on corporate social responsibility (CSR) to be published. The contributors, a mix of academics and practitioners from around the globe, provide a comprehensive and timely resource for anybody interested in CSR. This standard reference was compiled to help managers, consultants, teachers, students, volunteers, and researchers navigate through the terms, codes, and organizations associated with CSR.

*The A to Z of Corporate Social Responsibility* includes 350 entries split into 10 core terms, 85 key terms, and 250 definitions. The core terms give an in-depth discussion approximately two thousand words in length. For example, "business ethics" has an eight-page entry that includes everything from a definition to a list of key debates surrounding the term. Entries for key terms give less detail and are 500–750 words in length. Finally, the definitions simply provide short statements that encapsulate the essence of the term and are 100–250 words in length. The book includes terminology from business, government, civil society, and nongovernmental organizations.

The arrangement of entries is alphabetical. However, several useful indexes, such as one with a hierarchical structure of the terms, are also included. The book would have benefited from the inclusion of bibliographies or "further readings" lists. Overall, this notable book is definitely a must-buy for any library serving individuals involved in corporate social responsibility.—*Terry Zarsky, Pikes Peak Library District, Colorado*

## FROM COMMITTEES OF RUSA

**Concise Encyclopedia of Economics.** 3rd ed. Ed. by David R. Henderson. Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 2008. 656p. \$45 (ISBN 978-0865976665).

This newly revised version of the *Concise Encyclopedia of Economics* contains 168 signed articles in one easy-to-use reference volume. New entries have been included, as have twenty-one new biographies of select economists. The articles, many newly updated, will help citizens better understand current controversies by offering economic analyses of political issues, including social problems, such as discrimination and poverty; global issues, such as environmental policy and global warming; and historical events, such as bubbles and business cycles.

Most articles are followed by brief author information and further reading list. Longer articles are divided into subsections with subtitles in boldface. Many entries contain tables and figures, as well as short case studies. Cross references are made in the text by capitalizing all topics that are also main entries.

The Contributors section confirms that most of the 153 authors are affiliated with top universities or think tanks in the United States. The specialized appendixes list some authors as Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics winners, former chairmen of the Council of Economic Advisors, or former presidents of the American Economic Association.

Although these experts usually write at an advanced level, this authoritative resource concisely explains complex concepts to those without an economics background. Therefore this resource is recommended for both academic and public libraries. Researchers interested in exploring former article entries, especially those omitted from the current edition, can freely access them by visiting Liberty Fund's Econlib website ([www.econlib.org](http://www.econlib.org)).—*Caroline Geck, MLS, MBA, Somerset, New Jersey*

**Encyclopedia of Products and Industries—Manufacturing.** Ed. by Patricia J. Bungert and Arsen J. Darnay. Detroit: Gale Cengage Learning, 2008. 2 vols. \$740 (ISBN: 978-1414429830).

The *Encyclopedia of Products and Industries* is a timely publication that helps users understand manufacturing trends in the United States. Unlike the *Encyclopedia of American Industries*, which provides a traditional industry-level analysis, the *Encyclopedia of Products and Industries* focuses on product categories within the industrial framework (for example, recycled paper and hand tools). A user of both encyclopedias will gain a deep understanding of industry structure, major players, and products.

The 120 product entries are arranged alphabetically and accompanied by 233 informative exhibits or graphics. Each entry contains twelve rubrics, including industrial code, product overview, market, key products/manufacturers, materials and supply chain logistics, distribution channel, key users, adjacent markets, research and development, current trends, target markets and segmentation, and related associations and organizations.

The editors claim that the purpose of the encyclopedia is not just to provide historical record, but also to illuminate the trends for each product category. Some entries may be a little sparse on explicating trends, but overall, the encyclopedia provides insightful information for industry research projects. Especially useful are the sections on distribution and supply chain logistics. Often this information is either scattered or hard to find. The encyclopedia also does a very good job summarizing the supply chain of each product category.

The *Encyclopedia of Products and Industries* is available both in print and online through the Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL). The print price may be too steep for libraries with tighter budgets. However, if a library already subscribes to GVRL, this encyclopedia is a worthy addition.—*Baseema Krkoska, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*

**The Essential Management Toolbox: Tools, Models, and Notes for Managers and Consultants.** By Simon A. Burtonshaw-Gunn. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2008. 360p. \$50 (ISBN 978-0470518373).

Consultant and professor Simon Burtonshaw-Gunn captures the essence of management consulting with this handy collection of classic business models and general business tools.

Twenty broad topics are covered in this book, including "Change Management," "Decision Making and Problem Resolution," "Supply Chain Management," and "Customer Relationship Management." The categorical arrangement of entries makes it useful for students and business practitioners. A detailed index adds to its usefulness as a reference tool.

Core management concepts such as "Deming's 14 points," "Porter's Five Forces," and "Johari window" are presented concisely. Brief entries discussing figures typically studied in business school are also included. In addition, psychology models such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are explained.

Two features set this book apart from other recent general business reference titles. First is the ease of access to standard business concepts. For example, comprehensive works such as the *Encyclopedia of Business and Finance* (Macmillan, 2007) and *Business: The Ultimate Resource* (Basic Books, 2006) index the term "Deming." However, one has to read the entry to determine if the "14 points" are listed. The index entries for *The Essential Management Toolbox* are tool-specific, such as "Deming 14 points." Secondly, this book focuses on the work of a consultant and provides practical tools and models for individuals working in that field.

Overall, this is an excellent resource and is highly recommended for all collections.—*Patricia Kenly, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta*

**An Executive's Guide to Information Technology: Principles, Business Models, and Terminology.** By Robert Plant and Stephen Murrell. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2007. 374p. \$65 (ISBN: 978-0521853361).

Every manager today needs a rudimentary understanding of information technology (IT). This compendium of two

hundred IT terms, laws, and processes introduces the complex world of IT to the nontechnical practitioner. Following a brief definition, an overview explains the technology and its history as well as its role within the IT organization. Each entry also details why the subject should be of concern to the executive.

The distinctive features of *An Executive's Guide* are the "Business value propositions" and the positive and negative issues for each term. For example, could there possibly be a value proposition to cookies? Well certainly, there is to marketing companies! The authors point out that the Internet Engineering Task Force is examining the issue of "third-party" cookie requests. A positive issue for cookies is that they facilitate electronic commerce transactions. The negative issues include third parties who profile users and potential security risks.

An executive who had reviewed the above distinctive features and followed up with the references and associated terminology would be sufficiently armed to challenge the proposals of her or his internal IT consultants or biased vendors.

Plant and Murrell, both at the University of Miami, have more than twenty years of experience teaching at the executive level. With research interests in the role of information systems in strategic management and programming languages, respectively, they are well qualified to write in the IT field. They have demystified the subject of IT by presenting key concepts in a clear and concise format for the nontechnical executive and student.

A topical list of entries, organized by the foundation concepts (database, software, security, etc.), would be a welcomed addition. More diagrams and illustrations could clarify complex terms. With the discipline rapidly evolving, the publisher should consider adding a website with updates.

Consider *An Executive's Guide to Information Technology* as a core IT reference title for business collections in academic and public libraries.—*Lee Pasackow, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia*

**First Research.** Raleigh, N.C.: First Research, Inc. [www.firstresearch.com](http://www.firstresearch.com) (accessed July 21, 2008). Pricing available upon request.

*First Research* is the ideal source to answer a number of industry requests. For example: A student asks for a brief and simple overview of the spa industry for a marketing plan, or a commercial real estate agent needs to know about the banking industry before his sales pitch to a bank's VP.

Purchased by Dun and Bradstreet in 2007 to enhance Hoover's platform, First Research offers students and professionals overviews of over two hundred industries. Each industry profile includes a brief overview, a look at the competitive landscape, regional and international issues, recent developments, business challenges, trends and opportunities, and more. The interface is easily navigated and users can simply select industry profiles from a list. However, users can also search by SIC code, NAICS code, or keyword.

First Research is a valuable tool because it includes a broad range of industries not covered in resources such as *Standard and Poor's Industry Surveys*. Each industry profile provides timely information and is updated on a quarterly basis.

Also unique to First Research are call prep sheets. These one-page briefings prepare business professionals for appointments with information ranging from key business challenges to key business opportunities to executive talking points. A sidebar of fast facts gives a quick overview of the industry.

First Research is an impressive and affordable database that belongs in every public and academic library with a business collection.—*Elizabeth Malafi, Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, New York*

**The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics.** 2nd ed. Ed. by Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 8 vols. \$2,500.00 (ISBN: 978-0333786765). Pricing for electronic version available upon request.

Alfred Marshall, the great English economist whose brightest student was John Maynard Keynes, famously said, "Economics is the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life." While that may still be true (adding *women* as well), the second edition of the *New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* eloquently proves that modern economics is a highly complex field of study that requires years of study to thoroughly understand.

The latest edition of this landmark work fills eight print volumes; it has more than 1,750 articles, 1,500 distinguished contributors, and almost 6 million words. The subscription-based online edition incorporates quarterly additions, corrections, and updates. The list of contributors includes a "Who's Who in Economics," featuring Nobel Prize winners and leading authorities in their fields.

The articles cover every facet of economics from early philosophers such as Aristotle to classical thinkers like Adam Smith and Karl Marx to the modern masters of Keynes and Milton Friedman. Virtually every one of the many subfields of economics is fully treated, including experimental and behavioral economics, game theory, international economics, and financial economics. The specialized methodologies used by economists such as econometrics, linear programming, and Monte Carlo methods are also explored. Significant historical economic events are extensively covered in lengthy essays on the Price Revolution, the South Sea Bubble, the Great Depression, and others.

The dictionary features many fine tools that facilitate the exploration of any topic: references to the most important scholarly literature, lists of related articles in the dictionary, an abstract with keywords at the head of each article, a table of contents outlining extended articles, and *Journal of Economic Literature* Classification Codes.

For the serious study of economics, the *New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* is without peer. Although its primary target audience is economists and advanced economic students, many of the articles are clearly written at a level that

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will inform the general reader and serious student. The pricing model of the online edition requires substantial yearly payments, making it unaffordable for most libraries.—*Peter McKay, University of Florida, Gainesville*

***The Sage Handbook of Advertising.*** Ed. by Gerard J. Tellis and Tim Ambler. London: Sage, 2007. 491p. \$130 (ISBN 978-1412918862).

In the *Sage Handbook of Advertising*, editors Tellis and Ambler have provided an engaging summary of the field of advertising that is useful for both academics and practitioners. They have compiled a work that starts with the theoretical foundation of advertising, moves to practical applications of advertising, and then concludes with an attempt to place advertising within a societal context. The international roster of contributors consists primarily of well-qualified academics but also includes some current practitioners as well.

The more theory-focused chapters cover diverse topics from the history of advertising to brand equity. Those are followed by several chapters addressing how advertising works from a variety of psychological perspectives. Then, the practice-oriented part of the book addresses topics such

as client-agency relationships, techniques for developing campaigns, testing ideas, planning, budgeting, and assessing effectiveness. Concluding chapters address ethics, regulation, advertising across cultures, and the place of advertising in society.

The work is notable for its comprehensive overview of advertising concepts and functions—it would be useful in a reference setting for giving users a concise background on individual advertising concepts. Those wanting more in-depth information are provided with extensive references for further reading. Liberal use of subheadings makes the book easy to browse for relevant information. Tables, diagrams, and other illustrations are included where appropriate.

The handbook is especially useful for students and faculty, whether they are looking for concise treatments of advertising concepts and practices or they are searching for research topics and sources. While practical topics are covered, the articles are academic in nature and will be most useful in that setting. Recommended for academic and larger public libraries.—*John P. Heintz, University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota*