

Editor's letter

The articles in this issue examine how today's leaders are succeeding by employing potent strategic management concepts—stakeholder-centric corporate purpose, radical principles for digital transformation, innovative business model design processes, devising effective fighter brands, tools boards need to assess M&A deals and strategic tech and talent practices trending in 2022.

In setting the context for his interview, **“Fred Reichheld: Customer centricity and the strategic power of embracing the ‘Golden Rule’ in business,”** Brian Leavy, Emeritus Professor of Strategy at Dublin City University Business School, notes that, “Few have done more to advance the cause of a customer-first approach over the last two decades than Reichheld, a pioneer in the area of the customer loyalty economics.” His new book, *Winning on Purpose*, with Bain co-authors, “argues that there is one (and only one) purpose that generates long-term prosperity for a business and that is to enrich the lives of customers.”

Some prominent business journalists have recently argued that nothing much has changed in hierarchical corporate management in the past few decades. In response, in his article **“In the digital age, the combination of technology and radical management practices drives competitive advantage,”** Stephen Denning, author of *The Leader's Guide to Radical Management*, disagrees. “Whether traditional management thinkers want to recognize it or not, we are already living in a new economic age—with radically different management practices that are driving the growth of the economy.”

Sayan Chatterjee, Professor of Strategy at Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, offers practitioners an intriguing methodology in his article, **“Isolate and SEAL: two steps to designing an innovative and potent business model.”** He shows how “A systematic and repeatable process—Isolate and SEAL—can enable strategists to identify such potentially game-changing operational actions that will support significant business model innovations.”

“When and how to use a fighter brand to combat a low-price entry” by Daniel Deneffe and Herman Vantrappen, co-authors of *Fad-Free Strategy: Rigorous Methods to Help Executives Make Strategic Choices Confidently*, offers a “Decision-making framework to help managers think through the specific design of a fighter brand supported by field experience in designing and successfully launching fighter brands.”

“Tools the board can use to prevent an M&A synergy trap” by Mark L. Sirower and Jeffery M. Weirens, Partners at Deloitte and co-authors of *The Synergy Solution: How Companies Win the Mergers and Acquisitions Game*, offers an advisory for corporate boards considering a potential acquisition or managing the integration of a deal. They provide an introduction to the tools and insights of the assessment process and warn that “Boards need useful tools to stress test deal economics, the messages CEOs give the market and the level of preparation required to immediately begin delivering on their promises.”

IBM researchers Haynes Cooney, Anthony Marshall and David Zaharchuk analyzed recent Institute for Business Value surveys and interviews of tens of thousands of executives, employees and consumers around the world for their article, **“Five strategic tech and talent trends for 2022 and beyond.”** Taken together, their findings help chart the business landscape to learn what high-performing organizations are doing differently. For example, “More than three times as many executives plan to participate in business ecosystems in 2022 compared to 2018.”

And don't miss the review of *Strategic Management: State of the Field and Its Future*, edited by Irene Duhaime, Michael Hitt and Marjorie Lyles by S&L Contributing editor Liam Fahey. He rates it, "A rare volume that offers a formidable education for adventurous academics and practitioners willing to put in some extra effort."

Good reading!

Robert M. Randall

Editor

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