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Winter 2011

Outstanding Business Reference Sources: The 2011 Selection of Recent Titles

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Repository Citation

Fang, C. S., Hurst, S., Rupp, N., Campbell, D., Eich, C., Fiegen, A., Giglierano, J., Hayworth, G., Houlson, V., Iheanacho, P., Matos, M., Oppenheim, M., & Zarsky, T. (2011). Outstanding Business Reference Sources: The 2011 Selection of Recent Titles. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 51 (2), 122-126.
https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/ul_pub/164

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Outstanding Business Reference Sources

The 2011 Selection of Recent Titles

BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee

BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee

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Each year, the Business Reference Sources Committee of BRASS selects the outstanding business reference sources published since May of the previous year. The committee reviewed 31 entries; 3 were designated as “outstanding,” and 7 were placed into the other noteworthy titles category. Of the 7 noteworthy titles, 2 were labeled as significant new editions. These works cover a variety of topics: industrial/organizational psychology, leadership, law and finance, economic history, marketing and demographics, as well as operations research and management science.

To qualify for the award, the title must meet the conventional definition of reference: a work compiled specifically to supply information on a certain subject or group of subjects in a form that will facilitate its ease of use. The works are examined for the following: authority and reputation of the publisher, author, or editor; accuracy; appropriate bibliography; organization; comprehensiveness; value of the content; currency; unique addition; ease of use for the intended purpose; quality and accuracy of index; and quality and usefulness of graphics and illustrations. Each year, more electronic reference titles are published. Additional criteria for electronic reference titles are accuracy of links, search features, stability of content and graphic design. Works selected must be suitable for medium- to large-size academic and public libraries.

OUTSTANDING TITLES

APA Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Ed. Sheldon Zedeck. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2011. 3 vols. 2300p. Print: \$695. Online: \$1,195. Both: \$1,890. (ISBN: 978-1-4338-0727-5).

This is a first entry in what will be a series of handbooks on the subfields of psychology. The title has three volumes: 1. Building and Developing the Organization (20 chapters); 2. Selecting and Developing Members for the Organization (19 chapters); and 3. Maintaining, Expanding, and Contracting the Organization (24 chapters). There is a cumulative index in the third volume. Edited by leading scholars, each volume gives an expansive overview of issues pertinent to organizations and their members at each stage of growth from creation to dissolution.

Each chapter is addressed from the applied as well as the theoretical perspective and there is a common structure. First there is a definition and description of the typical method of diagnosis, followed by how research on it is conducted, the generally accepted resolutions to the issue, and common assessment methods. Finally, each chapter includes an

identification of future opportunities for research. This work is obviously useful to the industrial and organizational psychology community, but perhaps less obvious is its value to other areas of business research. As an example, the chapter on entrepreneurship was very comprehensive. The chapter highlights entrepreneurial motivation and the various cognitive theories used to explain opportunity recognition. Anyone doing research in entrepreneurial studies would do well to consult this chapter.

In the second volume, the chapter on interviews is another example of content valuable to a wide range of readers, including human resources professionals and hiring managers. It not only covers the history and theories of the interviewing process which are useful for the researcher, but also provides a comprehensive overview of the common fallacies of interviewing that could be used to refocus recruitment efforts in any organization. In the third volume, the topic communication is well explored with subheadings that include the structure of communication in organizations, communication media, and organizational communications processes, as well as a comprehensive definition of communication and recommended methodologies of study. The subheading on organizational communications processes is further divided into sections on command, control coordination, participation, empowerment and domination. These examples serve to illustrate the scope and thoroughness of the chapters. Additionally, the chapters include multiple cross-references to each other that further illuminate each subject and ground it in context.

This work is also available as an e-book and the table of contents of each volume is viewable with the chapters in full APA citation format with links to abstracts. Each volume however, is accessed separately, and the interface could be more sophisticated. Despite this caveat, the expanded access is welcome.

The *Handbook* would be an excellent resource for students new to a topic to identify the necessary vocabulary, the leaders in the field, and the current research. Advanced researchers would find value in the historical overview of a subject as well as the chapter's identification of new avenues of inquiry. Practitioners in both human resources and general management would also find much information of applicable and immediate utility.—*Diane Campbell, Rider University, Lawrenceville, New Jersey*

Contracts: The Essential Business Desk Reference. By Richard Stim. Berkeley, Calif.: Nolo, 2010. 487p. \$39.99 (ISBN: 978-1-4133-1281-2).

Contracts are a part of everyday life whether you are a consumer or a business owner. Attorney Richard Stim offers more than three hundred contractual terms and their definitions and uses in a contract. He writes law for the layperson, not for the lawyer. The book offers many examples of how the terms are used in contracts, some of which are actual contracts. With this easy-to-use book, anyone can create a contract whether they are trying to buy something, enter into

a rental contract, hire an employee, or perform many other business functions.

The definitions range from a simple paragraph to a few longer entries like “license agreement,” which runs fourteen pages and includes a sample ten-page contract, to “lease, residential,” which has a sample six-page month-to-month lease contract.

Acronyms are used throughout but all have the acronym spelled out first followed by the acronym used in writing contracts, for example: Common Maintenance Area (CAM). Key points within longer definitions are bulleted for ease of finding the main points to consider when making this type of contract. There are examples of use as well as proper wording used to compile contracts. Definitions are clear and to the point. Synonyms are used, assisting users who are unfamiliar with legal terms find the needed terms quickly; for example—fraud (misrepresentation). See references are also abundant; for example—Frustration see Avoidance (and Frustration). Related terms are given at the end of entries to help users find terms they should also consider when entering into a contract for any purpose.

Contracts: The Essential Business Desk Reference will help anyone find and use common negotiating strategies, figure out which contract provisions should be used and how to use them correctly, what to expect if a contract is broken, find up-to-date explanations of electronic contracts and find tips on amending and modifying current agreements or contracts. Basic terminology like “waiver,” “act of god,” “fraud,” and “lease agreement” are included as well as little known terms such as “mutatis mutandi.” *Contracts* also explains the rules used by courts to interpret and enforce contracts.

Anyone who writes or uses contracts on a day-to-day basis will find this a very useful tool to have on their desk to make sure they are not surprised by unknown terminology and correctly use terms that clearly ensure their needs and wants are followed by all whom they do business with. This is a must have for businesses of all sizes, but essential for small businesses that can't afford to keep a lawyer around to assist with making sure all contracts they enter into are in their best interest. “This book is intended for the thousands of non-lawyers who must prepare, review, explain, or abide by contracts every day.” Nolo has given us an outstanding source to understand and create contracts in all aspects of life.—*Terry Zarsky, Pikes Peak Library District, Colorado Springs, Colorado*

Handbook of World Exchange Rates, 1590–1914. By Markus A. Denzel. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010. 768p. \$165 hardcover (ISBN: 0754603563).

While the title implies nothing more than endless tables of data, this work is actually much more. Besides the exchange rates, it provides a concise financial history of countries and regions through their financial exchanges, a treatise on the cashless payments system, and an examination of the various stages of global financial integration. The author, who has been working on this project since 1993, has done a tremendous job of compiling the sets of historical time series data

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by combing through primary sources, as well as historic and contemporary journal articles on the topic. Some of the main data sources used were exchange rate currents from financial and commercial journals of the time, particularly the London "Economist." Also utilized were merchant manuals, historical stock exchange quotations, and political sources, including the "Blue Books" of the Colonial Acts, all of which are cited in extensive footnotes.

The first 150 pages of this work provide an overview of the history of exchange rates and international finance in various parts of the world, along with explanations of the overall sources and an extensive bibliography. Each subsequent chapter then focuses on a country or region's own financial history and provides further details concerning the specific sources and method used. He also explains the reasons behind certain conventions, such as rates only being fixed on particular days of the week, often because foreign mail arrived on those days. For researchers in these areas, this background information provides a wealth of data and fleshes out the numbers in the tables. This attention to detail also gives users confidence through knowing where the numbers came from and how they were compiled. It will also ease the task of future researchers who can track down the data for other purposes, with much of the legwork already accomplished.

Due to the nature of the work, it includes historical territories and colonies such as the Habsburg Empire and British India. Although naturally heavily focused on Europe; North and South America, Asia, Australia, and Egypt are included as well, with the periods covered varying by the country or political system. The most extensive data series are for England, Italy, and the Netherlands, each of which covers the 1590s to 1914. All data series end in 1914 with the exception of Poland, which has coverage from 1696 to 1812 when Berlin became the de facto Prussian exchange market.

The tables are well laid out and very well explained. Having these long time series of data all in one place and being able to compare apples to apples is a real find for researchers. For those interested in this area of study, this work provides both data as well as an excellent overview of historical exchange rates and currency policies around the world. While somewhat specialized, this is highly recommended for academic libraries, particularly those with strong finance or historical business programs.—Susan Hurst, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

OTHER NOTEWORTHY TITLES

American Buyer: Demographics of Shopping. Ithaca, N.Y.: New Strategist, 2010. 384p. \$125 hardcover (ISBN: 978-1-9351-1493-2).

New Strategist publications typically have a similar look and feel as they continue to focus on taking existing consumer data sets and making them more user-friendly. By laying out the numbers in easy to read tables and graphs, they make the data more accessible and understandable, which is particularly useful for students and community users. This

new title in their lineup focuses on the demographic aspects of consumption, an area of intense interest to many marketers. The data come from the government's Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES), which is organized by New Strategist into chapters based on product type (i.e., apparel, food and alcohol, entertainment, health care).

Each of these chapters then examines variations in consumption based on demographic characteristics. These characteristics include age, household income, high income households, household type, race, region of the country, and education. These are some of the basic components of market segmentation and provide users with the information needed to target specific sections of the population. Data are provided on a quarterly and weekly basis and as a percentage of consumers purchasing as well as the dollar amounts spent. They also add additional value by including some unpublished CES data, as well as providing explanatory text at the beginning of each chapter outlining the major expenditure items in each category along with a graph showing the percent of consumers purchasing the top ten items overall. An index at the back is a quick way to see if a specific product is covered in the publication. The layout of this title makes it easy for users to identify which consumers are purchasing various items as well as the average amount spent. This type of data are often just what marketers and business students are looking for, in a quick and easy to use format. *American Buyer: Demographics of Shopping* is recommended for undergraduate collections as well as public libraries serving the business community.—Susan Hurst, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: A Reference Handbook. Ed. Kathryn A. Agard. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2010. 2 vols. \$325 hardcover (ISBN: 1412968860).

Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations is a two-volume set published as part of the Sage Reference Series on Leadership and focuses on issues relevant to the nonprofit sector and voluntary organizations. The editor Kathryn A. Agard, Executive Director of Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, Grand Valley State University, has experience in the nonprofit field that spans decades. Contributions come from more than one hundred authors with diverse backgrounds including experienced leaders in the sector, academia, and practitioners. The authors addressed essential issues and leadership topics for those seeking to understand more about this sector of society. A major focus is on the specific leadership roles and the skills required in the nonprofit and voluntary organizations.

The book is arranged into eight parts, with each part focusing on a broad area of nonprofit sector such as history of the nonprofit and philanthropic, common interest areas of nonprofits and foundations, leading the nonprofit organization, etc. Each part further explores a range of topics within the sector. Part 1 includes topics that provide general information and background such as legal definitions, types of foundations and leadership characteristics, and the roles of government, business and family. The part on the areas of common interest to nonprofits and foundations cover topics

like advocacy organizations, community development, education, health and hospitals. Other parts cover financial management, human resources planning, strategic management, public relations, tax policy and regulations.

A key feature of the handbook is the inclusion of divergent voices from contributors that represent the nonprofit sector. The varied viewpoints will certainly advance the general understanding of the field. There are helpful appendixes including books, list of organizations and websites available to readers looking for more in-depth knowledge on specific areas or to find answers to questions.

Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations is a noteworthy contribution to the study of leadership, service delivery, and the essential skills required to manage and run effective nonprofit organizations.—Pauly Iheanacho, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware

The Manager's Pocket Calculator: A Quick Guide to Essential Business Formulas and Ratios. By Michael C. Thomsett. New York: AMACOM, 2010. 271p. \$18.95 (9-780-8144-1635-8).

The bottom line for the success and profitability of a business rests on the ability of an individual to calculate and interpret the numbers that demonstrate the financial health of a business. Author Michael Thomsett is a frequent author on investing, management and accounting and aims this practical desk reference book at those individuals who are not finance or accounting experts but have responsibilities to interpret and report the strategic success of a business. The book is organized in chapters that succinctly cover the most important financial aspects of a business: compound interest, present value, rates of return, breakeven and after tax profit, financial reporting, depreciation, and budgeting. Each chapter begins with a short discussion of concepts associated with a financial formula and is amply supplied with practical advice and tips for interpreting the results strategically. Each formula is defined succinctly, calculated arithmetically and also supplied as a spreadsheet calculation. There is a quick reference to common formulas and a chapter on using statistics in reporting and interpreting profitability and loss and for writing effective reports.

The chapter "Present Value and Sinking Funds" is twenty-three pages long and includes how to read loan amortization tables, how to compare loans, and common mistakes to avoid. The chapter "Calculating Breakeven and After-Tax Profits" has a four page section on hidden costs and another four pages on calculating the effects of inflation and taxes on a business. Unique to this book is its emphasis not just on the how-to of financial formulas but a discussion on their application to strategic management. This title is based on larger topics organized in chapters and subtopics and complemented by an index to specific formulas and topics. It goes beyond the dictionary type titles in this genre. The title is recommended as a handy desk reference for small business managers and students as an addition to a managerial library. Recommended for all public and academic libraries.—Ann M. Fiegen, California State University, San Marcos, California

Wiley Encyclopedia of Operations Research and Management Science. Ed. James J. Cochran et al. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2011. 8 vols. 6408p. \$2,380 (ISBN: 978-0-4704-0063-0). E-book available (978-0-4704-0053-1), call for pricing.

The field of operations research and management science includes a wide range of complex theories and mathematical formulas that have a direct impact on business and society. These concepts and formulas help solve complex problems that vary from real world applications to theoretical models, often dealing with probability and decision making. The *Wiley Encyclopedia of Operations Research and Management Science*, published in both print and online formats, provides an excellent guide to these concepts, mathematics and research, and is a welcome addition to any business library's reference collection. It brings together hundreds of specific examples of theories and applied research, and serves as a reference manual for academic researchers, advanced students, and professionals working in the field who wish to utilize a particular theory or to find seminal research in the fields of operations research and management science.

The *Encyclopedia* includes more than six hundred articles that demonstrate applications for estimating risk, making decisions, or predicting outcomes, many of which are based on experiments. For example, its articles range from research on American football to economic decision theories to articles on revenue management. It is more detailed and comprehensive than the one-volume *Encyclopedia of Operations Research and Management Science* by Saul Gass and Michael Fu. The *Wiley Encyclopedia* can be utilized by not only those studying operations research and management science but also those working in other business fields like product development and research and development, as well as those working in social science disciplines such as urban planning, psychology, economics and political science. Over one thousand operations professionals and researchers from an international community of organizations from academia, private industry, the nonprofit sector, and government led by a team of thirty-two editors, contributed to the *Encyclopedia*.—Van Houlson, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Nathan Rupp, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Wiley International Encyclopedia of Marketing. Ed. Jagdish Sheth and Naresh Malhotra. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2011. 1744p. \$900 (ISBN: 978-1-4051-6178-7).

This new encyclopedia from Wiley contains more than 300 entries by more than five hundred authors, ranging in length from brief overviews to short essays which examine the new developments, challenges and opportunities of modern marketing. Six volumes cover the broad subject headings: Marketing Strategy, Marketing Research, Consumer Behavior, Advertising and Integrated Communication, Product Innovation and Management, and International Marketing. A seventh volume contains the subject index as well as a cumulative index of authors. In addition, each volume has its own index at the end. The entries are arranged alphabetically within each of the subject volumes. In some respects

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the format and content of the *Encyclopedia* are more like a handbook than an encyclopedia. Entries include such topics as “Cannibalism,” “E-commerce and internet marketing,” “SWOT analyses” and “Trademarks, proprietary marks and brands.” Each entry has a useful bibliography, and there is good cross-referencing between the volumes and between the encyclopedia entries and external sources.

One example is the entry for “Brand growth strategy,” a five-page essay by Victoria L. Crittenden, which offers a concise review of the literature about branding, and provides sample campaigns that illustrate key concepts of branding like “line extension strategy.” The entry contains practical comparative tables and a short conclusion. Entries are balanced and informative, and this reference work will be useful to both scholars and the casual reader. The *Encyclopedia* is also available online.—*Gene Hayworth, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado*

SIGNIFICANT NEW EDITION TITLES

Booms and Busts: An Encyclopedia of Economic History from Tulipmania of the 1630s to the Global Financial Crisis of the 21st Century. Ed. James Ciment. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2010. 937p. \$339 (ISBN: 978-0-7656-8224-6).

The 3rd Revised edition of *Booms and Busts: An Encyclopedia of Economic History from Tulipmania of the 1630s to the Global Financial Crisis of the 21st Century* offers more than four hundred entries that cover key terms related to economic history. The period ranges from the Tulipmania of the 1630s when tulips were valued so highly that they were traded on the exchanges of numerous Dutch towns and cities, to the U.S. federal stimulus package of 2009. The majority of the articles in the encyclopedia examine issues of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Alphabetical entries are signed and range between two and ten pages, and they

cover a wide array of information such as recurring themes like Real Estate Speculation, notable figures like Bernard Madoff, underlying concepts, and major institutions like the National Bureau of Economic Research. There are fine black-and-white illustrations, as well as comprehensive charts and tables. Besides a cumulative index, volume 3 includes a chronology, a glossary of economic terms, sources for further research, and a selected bibliography. The encyclopedia is unique in its inclusion of both booms and busts in one resource. It is a useful tool for students and teachers, and it will appeal to anyone interested in understanding the history of economics and the precedents for our current global economic crisis.—*Gene Hayworth, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado*

The American Economy: A Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Cynthia L. Clark. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2011. 2 vols. 1257p. and index. \$195 (ISBN: 978-1-5988-4461-0). E-book available (978-1-5988-4462-8), call for pricing.

This historical encyclopedia on the American economy, first published in 2003, has been updated to include essays on the accounting scandals of the early 2000s and the Great Recession of 2008. The first volume includes short entries (less than a page) on topics ranging from A&M Records v. Napster (2001) to Yazoo Land Companies and the second volume includes longer (4–15 page) essays on topics ranging from Advertising to Welfare State. Volume 2 also includes primary source documents ranging from the Ordinance of the Northwest Territory (1783) to Barack Obama’s statement on the U.S. bailout of the automobile industry (2009). Both the short entries and long essays are signed with lists of references of varying length, and many of the short entries have see also references to other entries in the two-volume set. Finally, the second volume also includes a bibliography and index for the entire set.—*Nathan Rupp, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan*