

For many readers, the first third of the book will be the meat—but it's also likely to contain the very articles already read when they came out in *HBR*. This first section essentially rehashes his theory of five competitive forces (entry of new competitors, threat of substitutes, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, and rivalry among existing competitors), so if you're unclear on any of them, this is the part to concentrate on.

Next come Porter's brilliantly researched and cogent models of competitiveness, stretching from the corporate to the international level. This second section deals with locational issues, coming down heavily in favor of the global corporations.

Skim the last section on solving societal problems, but be sure to read the last chapter, "Capital Disadvantage: America's Failing Capital Investment System," which deals with investment market issues.

Irresistible Miscellanea: Porter doesn't usually make scintillating asides, but he does note that most Japanese companies have no strategy. **You will throw this book across the room if:** You're hungry for fresh Porter material.

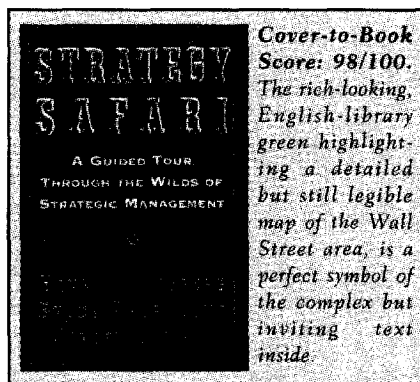
Price/Value: \$35.95/\$35.95, which is certainly cheaper than maintaining an *HBR* subscription since 1979 (date of the oldest Porter article included here). But try to get the 20% Barnes & Noble or Amazon.com discount.

Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour Through the Wilds of Strategic Management

**Henry Mintzberg, Bruce Ahlstrand, Joseph Lampel
Simon & Schuster, New York**

Authors' Credentials: Professor at McGill and INSEAD; professor at Trent; and a reader in management at the University of St Andrews, Scotland.

Thesis: Setting out to answer once and for all, "What is strategy?" the authors conclude there are five definitions: Various, strategy is a plan, a pattern, a position, a perspective, and a ploy.



Cover-to-Book Score: 98/100. The rich-looking, English-library green highlighting a detailed but still legible map of the Wall Street area, is a perfect symbol of the complex but inviting text inside

Scope: Sun-Tzu to the present.

File Under: Finally, the full version of John Godfrey Saxe's "The Blind Men and the Elephant" fable.

Reason to Buy/Read: In the first chapter, the authors cite F. Scott Fitzgerald's quote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."

In a nutshell, this book is for those with that kind of "first-rate intelligence." But, instead of two opposed ideas, the authors lay out four groups, five definitions, and 10 schools dealing with strategy. Needless to say, many conflict, but all must be kept in mind to get the full value out of the book.

Far from producing an overall muddle through information overload, the authors succinctly identify and critique each school, detail the pros and cons, show its origins and how it developed, identify its key proponents, and quickly note examples of the school in action.

Unintended Effect: Who knew academics could write in such a refreshingly crisp style?

Placement in Your Life: Perfect book for a business trip. It can be read equally well in those long airplane rides, while others are watching an inane movie selection, and in the odd gaps of time one gets in the morning (or evening) when one is several time zones away from home.

How to Read: Best read straight through, since the authors' framework builds on the last "school" or concept of strategy explained. You can, howev-

er, skim for the cartoons that start each chapter, or dip in and out of the excellent charts and sidebars if you're looking for another entry point.

Irresistible Miscellanea: If you put bees and flies in a glass jar with the closed end toward a window, the bees will keep flying toward the window, trying to get through the glass until they die. The flies, on the other hand, take about two minutes to get out the open end. It is the bees' natural intelligence—to go toward the outdoors—that is their undoing.

You will throw this book across the room if: You find animal-safari imagery tiresome ("Birds of the same academic feather" is where this reader lost it). By the end of the book, where the authors concede strategy is not just one type animal—neither a spider, a lone wolf, an owl, or a troop of monkeys—the reader could care less.

Price/Value: \$27/full price.

The Ultimate Book of Business Gurus: 110 Thinkers Who Really Made a Difference

**Stuart Cramer
AMACOM, New York**

Author's Credentials: wrote several best-selling business books including *The Ultimate Book of Business Quotations*.

Thesis: None. The book is a Who's Who in business theory

Scope: Sun-Tzu to present.

File Under: 110 people (50 in main book, 60 mini-bios in appendices) I should know about—and be able to tell apart.

Reason to Buy/Read: If you've ever gotten slightly confused about which thinker or practitioner came up with which theory first, this is the book for you. Arranged alphabetically, each chapter starts with key dates and a representative quote from the subject, followed by a list of his or her "Break-through idea(s)" and "Key book(s)."

Then for the next two to six pages, the subject's life, seminal work, and theories are reviewed. While the biographies focus on the thinker's legacy, they also point out timely relevances.

