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Reaching for value

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Stuart E. Jackson

How does a company break the mold, leapfrog over the competition, and achieve the double-digit growth that shareholders are clamoring for? The short answer is: You use your existing strengths as your jumping-off point, building strategic marketing positions that are related in key ways to existing positions.

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Den R. Dalton and Catherine M. Dalton

Our columnists consider the finer points of CEO succession. Boards must be particularly vigilant when CEOs are appointed under "awkward" circumstances. And while there may be no consensus about best practices when it comes to choosing CEOs, the authors suggest that a productive discussion is very necessary, especially since the current corporate environment is exceedingly unfriendly.

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Meetings are the bane of corporate existence, especially since they are usually unnecessary. Our columnist examines the several sizes of groups in which humans tend to work; the attributes, strengths and weaknesses of each; and examples of success and failure of each of them.

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Google in China: government censorship and corporate reputation 12

James S. O'Rourke IV, Brynri Harris and Allison Ogilvy

This case study examines the ethical and business dilemma faced by Google as it entered the Chinese market and encountered government censorship restrictions. Bowing to the censorship, Google found itself the victim of scorn and criticism from the mass media while Wall Street rewarded the share price. The case study asks: does the pursuit of profit in the developing world trump the need for ethics and values in business operations?

The experts offer advice on Google 23

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Three experts in reputation, management and communications offer advice to Google executives on handling the China censorship issue presented in the case study above.

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Lee Li, Gongming Qian and Brian Gaber

In the past decade, Chinese enterprises have achieved superior cost advantages in the labor-intensive industries. The authors explore the valuable resources that Chinese enterprises use to develop such advantages and the effective mechanisms they employ to sustain the advantages. Resources at the same level fit, support, and reinforce one another and they work together to achieve certain competitive advantages.

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Michael B. Goodman and Jay Wang

Chinese companies are developing global business cultures and corporate communication management functions as they make the transition from government control to market-driven enterprises. Understanding communication practices is important to foreign nationals seeking healthy business relationships in China. The authors report and analyze the results of a survey of Chinese companies to benchmark their communication positions.

The Chinese are coming, and I'm afraid 42

John Humphreys

The paper offers a contrarian viewpoint based on a balanced inquiry and a broad understanding of the growing Chinese economy and the substantial opportunities presented by such historic expansion. If Western firms and economies are to benefit from the Asian expansion boom, they must become more engaged and less afraid.

Stop competing yourself to death: strategic collaboration among rivals 45

Adrian Slywotzky and Charlie Hoban

Most companies compete too much and cooperate too little on activities that hold little value to customers. As a result, they hurt their margins and put their futures at risk. Rethinking and changing the competitor collaborate ratio offers a way out that benefits all players. By joining forces to carry out common and largely undifferentiated functions or processes, companies can avoid redundant expenditures and capitalize on economies of scale and shared expertise.

Social marketing: strengthening company-customer bonds 56

Marios Katsioloudes, Jim Grant and Donelda S. McKechnie

Increasingly, customers are setting the pace in the company-customer relationship. While traditional customer relationship management maximizes customer satisfaction, social marketing maximizes customer loyalty. Together, they can support customer retention by sharing socially responsible activities, generating tremendous goodwill with customers and in the marketplace.