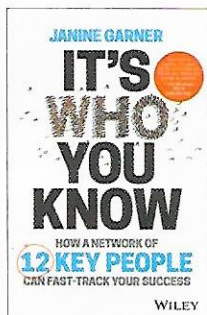


BOOKS AND JOURNALS

REVIEWS BY DEREK PARKER



It's Who You Know:
How a network of 12 key people can fast-track your success
By Janine Garner
Wiley, A\$28

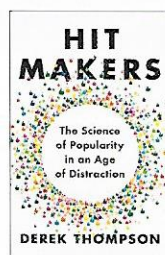
The idea of networking is hardly new but Janine Garner believes knowing the right people is more important than having a long list of contacts. She defines four core

categories of people: the promoter (to inspire you and identify your potential); pit crew (to keep you focused); teacher (to help you develop knowledge and wisdom); and butt-kicker (to push you to do more). Each of these categories has subdivisions, but the point is about knowing where each person fits into a broader system.

The aim is to move your networking from a transactional model to a transformational vehicle. This requires going beyond the social events often associated with networking, and seeking out people of different backgrounds and personalities

who can broaden your own views. At the same time, you have to be aware of what you bring to the relationship, which means understanding the role you can play for others. Networking is an investment, and you have to be ready to put in as well as take out.

Garner devotes several chapters to building relationships for the long term, and underlines the importance of value exchange and strategic thinking. A network, she says, is about life management rather than business growth, although if you get the former right the latter is very likely to follow.



Hit Makers:
The science of popularity in an age of distraction
By Derek Thompson
Penguin, A\$50

There is a point where art intersects with commerce, and imagination can turn an astounding profit. Some massive cultural hits, whether a song or

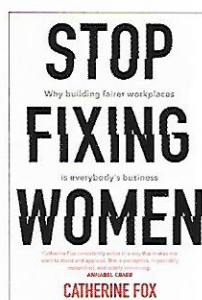
a phone, seem to come out of nowhere, but Derek Thompson sees the reality as much more complex. Big-hit products nearly always combine the new with a streak of the comforting old. This concept was developed by the remarkable designer Raymond Loewy: he called it MAYA, the idea that consumers want the Most Advanced Yet Acceptable version of any product or design. It seems strikingly obvious, once someone has thought of it!

Good design, however, is not

enough. There also has to be a solid method of distribution. In the past this meant not only physical transportation but the migration of people. These days, it has more to do with the internet.

Thompson doesn't believe that the digital age has changed much of the underlying science of popularity although some people's attention spans have shortened. Managing that is a key issue for marketers.

Hit Makers does not provide an infallible formula for successful products but is an insightful package.



Stop Fixing Women:
Why building fairer workplaces is everybody's business
By Catherine Fox
NewSouth, A\$30

Despite 40 years of good intentions, gender imbalance remains a problem in the world of work. Catherine Fox delves into the structural

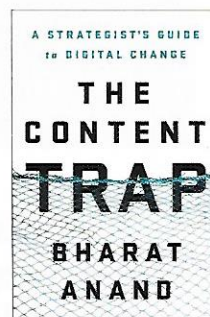
issues that underlie this situation, and is particularly scathing of the view that women should act more like men, by being more assertive and taking risks. This misses the point, she says. Gender imbalance happens to women, not because of them.

There are many male leaders who are aware of the issue, but the problem is that they haven't thought enough about innovative solutions. A crucial way forward is to accept that this is a matter for the highest levels of executive thinking,

and should inform decisions ranging from recruitment to flexible work hours.

Some important ideas are ensuring that promotion criteria are clearly defined to avoid subjective ideas about merit; trying gender-free recruiting methods; auditing pay systems to identify gender-based gaps; and analysing career paths to ensure women have access to the same training and experience as men.

These are good ideas, but Fox makes it clear that they will only work if backed up by cultural change within an organisation.



The Content Trap:
A strategist's guide to digital change
By Bharat Anand
Penguin, \$45

Getting someone's attention, then turning that attention into profit, are big preoccupations for media and digital businesses today. However, Bharat Anand, professor of

strategy at Harvard Business School, believes many companies are looking in the wrong direction. They are focusing on creating the best content when they should be taking a wider view of the marketplace, he says. Good products are important, but the competitive advantage lies in recognising how content enables a customer's connectivity, and exploiting the opportunities that arise because of that.

He illustrates his points with a slew of case studies, including Chinese digital giant Tencent and Scandinavian

media conglomerate Schibsted. Along the way he provides a good summary of how e-commerce evolved to its current state. He argues that differentiating digital products in what he calls a "network effects" strategy is more likely to lead to a dominant position in a market segment.

In the final chapter, Anand recounts his own experiences with the online education platform of Harvard Business School, known as HBX. This is interesting stuff, and it lends a real-world tone to a book which could easily have become overly academic.