

## Best 30 business books this year

What to read, from 'Adam Smith' to 'The Zeroes'

By James Pressley, Bloomberg News

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With so many business books being published each month, we're often asked for recommendations. Here are 30 of our favorite hardbacks published this year.

“Adam Smith” by Nicholas Phillipson (Yale/Allen Lane). This “intellectual biography” documents how Smith's “The Wealth of Nations” grew out of the Scottish Enlightenment.

“Aftershock” by Robert B. Reich (Knopf). The former U.S. Labor Secretary explores how 30 years of growing income inequality helped bring on the Great Recession.

“American Colossus” by H.W. Brands (Doubleday). A big, brash narrative history that shows how capitalism triumphed over democracy between 1865 and 1900.

“The Big Short” by Michael Lewis (Norton/Allen Lane). The author of “Liar's Poker” tells the story of a loner with a glass eye and other outliers who shorted the subprime market.

“Broke, USA” by Gary Rivlin (HarperBusiness). Rivlin, a tireless reporter, takes a queasy journey through what he calls “Poverty Inc.,” where the rich get richer by lending to the working poor.

“Chasing Goldman Sachs” by Suzanne McGee (Crown Business). A disturbing account of how Goldman Sachs Group Inc. became a seductively successful Pied Piper, luring rival banks down a path to destruction.

“Crash Course” by Paul Ingrassia (Random House). A poised account of Detroit's slide “from glory to disaster.”

“Crisis Economics” by Nouriel Roubini and Stephen Mihm (Penguin Press/Allen Lane). The prescient New York University professor explains why booms and busts occur.

“The Devil's Casino” by Vicky Ward (Wiley). A look at the destructive rivalry among Richard S. Fuld Jr. and four other men who rose to power at Lehman in the 1980s.

“Diary of a Very Bad Year” by Anonymous Hedge Fund Manager, n+1 and Keith Gessen (Harper Perennial). Gessen, a founding editor of literary magazine n+1, presents an arresting clutch of interviews that he says he conducted with an anonymous hedge-fund manager during the crisis.

“The End of Wall Street” by Roger Lowenstein (Penguin Press). A decade after capturing the hubris of Long-Term Capital Management LP in “When Genius Failed,” Lowenstein reports on what he calls “the mother of all bubbles.”

“The Facebook Effect” by David Kirkpatrick (Simon & Schuster). An engrossing and scrupulously fair history of how Mark Zuckerberg built the social-networking website.

“Fault Lines” by Raghuram G. Rajan (Princeton). The University of Chicago professor shows why our flawed financial order risks driving us “from bubble to bubble.”

“Freefall” by Joseph E. Stiglitz (Norton/Allen Lane). The Nobel Prize-winning economist describes the flawed theories and misguided policies that wrought the meltdown.

“The Great Reset” by Richard Florida (Harper). The crisis could allow Schumpeterian “creative destruction” to sweep away obsolete systems and make room for innovation, Florida says.

“High Financier” by Niall Ferguson (Penguin Press/Allen Lane). The Harvard historian presents a fresh assessment of how and why Siegmund Warburg rose to fame in postwar London.

“Identity Economics” by George A. Akerlof and Rachel E. Kranton (Princeton). Decisions that shape our lives often hinge on our perceived place in society, not solely on a calculation of financial costs and benefits.

“The Invisible Hands” by Steven Drobny (Wiley). The co-founder of Drobny Global Advisors frets that taxpayers may end up bailing out pension plans. He blames Harvard's class of '69.

“King of Capital” by David Carey and John E. Morris (Crown Business). A useful primer on private equity as viewed through the story of Stephen Schwarzman and Blackstone Group LP.

“More Money Than God” by Sebastian Mallaby (Penguin Press/Bloomsbury). A storied history of hedge-fund luminaries, from Alfred Winslow Jones to Ken Griffin.

“No One Would Listen” by Harry Markopolos (Wiley). A first-person account of the struggle to convince the Securities and Exchange Commission that Bernard Madoff's returns were mathematically impossible.

“On the Brink” by Henry M. Paulson Jr. (Business Plus). The former U.S. Treasury secretary describes his fight to prop up the financial system.

“Priceless” by William Poundstone (Hill and Wang). Companies, restaurants and even artists exploit psychology to extract more cash from the rest of us, as Poundstone shows.

“The Quants” by Scott Patterson (Crown Business). A behind-the-scenes look at the turbulent lives of four quants, including Ken Griffin.

“The Rise and Fall of Bear Stearns” by Alan C. Greenberg (Simon & Schuster). The former chairman, a self-described “bald guy wearing a bowtie,” tells his side of the story.

“The Sugar King of Havana” by John Paul Rathbone (Penguin Press). An evocative mixture of history and memoir that traces the rise and fall of Cuban sugar magnate Julio Lobo.

“13 Bankers” by Simon Johnson and James Kwak (Pantheon). Unless too-big-to-fail banks are broken up, they will trigger another meltdown, the authors say.

“War at the Wall Street Journal” by Sarah Ellison (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). An inside look at Rupert Murdoch's takeover.

“You Are Not a Gadget” by Jaron Lanier (Knopf/Allen Lane). The virtual-reality pioneer dismantles the tropes of the “Web 2.0” online culture and calls for a more humanistic digital future.

“The Zeroes” by Randall Lane (Portfolio). A farcical memoir of the financial bubble as seen by the creator of Trader Monthly and Dealmaker.

(James Pressley writes for Muse, the arts and leisure section of Bloomberg News. The opinions expressed are his own.)