



FROM COMMITTEES OF RUSA

# Outstanding Business Reference Sources

## *The 2005 Selection of Recent Titles*

*RUSA BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee*

To aid selectors and reference librarians serving business interests, a working group of the BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee, following established guidelines and criteria, voted to adopt these titles as "outstanding business reference sources" or "other notable titles" published during the previous fourteen months. Brief reviews are included.

The final ballot was narrowed to eight nominations. Following extensive discussion on the merits and shortcomings of each, only three were voted for inclusion in the "outstanding" category. Of these three titles, two were authored or coauthored by librarians. Four additional works were selected as "other notable titles." Each review includes the type of library for which these high-quality reference materials is suitable.

**Encyclopedia of American Women in Business: From Colonial Times to the Present.** By Carol H. Krismann. 2 vols. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005. 692p. \$175 (ISBN: 0-313-32757-2).

This encyclopedia joins a remarkably small group of sources that document the lives and contributions of American businesswomen. The author's goal is to tell the stories of some of these successful women and

summarize the issues and concerns that affect today's businesswomen. The 327 biographies include women whose names and achievements are well known, such as Estée Lauder, Madame C. J. Walker, and Katherine Graham. Also included are less well-known women such as Marguerite Greenfield, an early-twentieth-century Montana ice business owner who battled the extortion of Great Northern Railway operators, and Rosa Maria Hinojosa de Balli, who developed a huge Texas cattle ranch in the late eighteenth century, parts of which are still inhabited by her descendents. All the entries portray women of grit and determination.

Carol Krismann, head of the William M. White Business Library at the University of Colorado-Boulder, acknowledges that the most difficult aspect of the undertaking was deciding who to profile. She includes only women engaged in profit-making enterprises. A wide range of professions and business areas are represented, including mining, fashion, telecommunications, publishing, finance, prostitution, agriculture, and health care. Excluded are women who are primarily artists, whether actresses, musicians, or jewelry or interior designers. As the title states, women from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century are featured, but the majority were active in business during the twentieth century, as would be expected. Each biographical entry includes date and place of birth, a brief description of the woman's early life, significant personal events, and a discussion of her business struggles and achievements. "See also" references to other encyclopedia entries and suggestions for further reading direct the reader to additional resources.

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Working Group members from the **BRASS Business Reference Sources Committee** included: Linda Dausch, David Flynn, Mary Gilles, John Heintz, Chris LeBeau, and Elisabeth Leonard. For further information, contact Mary Gilles, Business Reference Librarian, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-5610; (509) 335-8740; fax (509) 335-1889; e-mail: gilles@wsu.edu.

The ninety-nine nonbiographical entries follow the same format and cover such topics as power, communication, networking, and entrepreneurs. Key laws, such as the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974, organizations and government agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, and such industries as energy, insurance, and broadcasting, are also treated.

Of particular value are the six appendixes and the chronology, which "lists events important to women's advancement in the world of business," beginning with the 1607 settlement of Jamestown, Virginia (xviii). The first two appendixes are ranked lists: *Fortune* magazine's "Fifty Most Powerful Women in American Business," 1998–2003, and *Working Woman's* "Top Thirty Woman Business Owners," 1997–2001. It is interesting to observe that Carleton S. Fiorina topped the *Fortune* list all six years. The next appendixes list the women profiled by ethnic and cultural heritage, historical period, and profession. The last appendix identifies the women who are in "Junior Achievement's Global Business Hall of Fame." The bibliography provides complete citations to all the further reading suggestions and a thorough index follows.

The author's research was limited to secondary sources, not personal interviews. She has, nonetheless, managed to capture the spirit of these remarkable women and to convey essential information about each of them in a rather brief entry. What sets this encyclopedia apart from other recent publications on American businesswomen is the large number of women it profiles. Well-written and easily understandable, this title is suitable for academic and medium to large public libraries. —*Mary Gilles, Washington State University, Pullman*

**Encyclopedia of World Trade: From Ancient Times to the Present.** Ed. by Cynthia Clark Northrup. 4 vols. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2004. 1,552p. \$425 (ISBN: 0-7656-8058-0).

From the first entry (Abbasid Caliphate, an Islamic empire that

existed from 750 to 1258), to the last (the text of the agreement establishing the World Trade Organization), this four-volume set from M. E. Sharpe addresses the development and history of trade throughout the world and throughout time. The set was edited by Cynthia Clark Northrup, who teaches history at the University of Texas-Arlington. Northrup, who coauthored the *Encyclopedia of Tariffs and Trade in U.S. History*, has found reputable scholars from varied settings and with wide-ranging backgrounds. They include Edlyne E. Anugwom, a sociologist at the University of Nigeria; Ali Ehsassi from the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade; Brian Sandberg, a historian at the Medici Archive Project in Italy; and Robert Whaples, an economist at Wake Forest University.

The encyclopedia contains 450 entries that include brief biographies, information on historic events, essays on various trade topics, and the text of original documents, primarily from the middle ages to the present. All the entries are signed and include brief bibliographies. While the set is arranged alphabetically, there are multiple extensive indexes, including a general index, a geographic index, and a biographical index. In case the indexes are not enough, there is also a topic finder. While the topic finder does not include page numbers, it does help guide use of the encyclopedia. For example, if you want to find something on commodities, but aren't sure what the possibilities are, take a look at the topic finder (located in the beginning of each volume), see the list of commodities (amber, guano, tobacco, whales), and then use the index to find the relevant entry.

While many of the entries include information that can be found easily elsewhere (who was Marco Polo), the encyclopedia is often a fascinating read. For instance, in the entry for advertising, the authors state that "advertising is as old as human civilization" (vol. 1, 4) and that the earliest known political ad was found in Pompeii, where a wall painting was

found extolling the virtues of a political candidate. The addition of the primary resources also is a welcome find. The documents include the *Code of Hammurabi*, *Pope Urban 11 Initiates the First Crusade*, the *Treaty of Nanjing*, and the *Dutch East India Company Charter*.

Although there are other resources that cover similar ground, there is little that treats world trade so completely. This source is well suited for any library receiving questions about trade throughout the ages. The entries are well-written and accessible for most audiences.—*Elisabeth Leonard, University of California-San Diego*

**Industry Research Using the Economic Census: How to Find It, How to Use It.** By Jennifer C. Boettcher and Leonard M. Gaines. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004. 328p. \$85 (ISBN: 1-57356-351-X).

The federal government's key source of industry information gets an in-depth treatment in this important reference work. The Economic Census provides an overwhelming array of data on the U.S. economy. The key data is provided in reports organized by industry, geography, and subject, and is the basis for such activities as:

- ◆ Public policy analysis: the census data are used to update the National Income and Product Accounts, which drive national economic models and the Gross Domestic Product calculations; to measure industry concentration for antitrust analysis; for disaster assistance; and for other national, state, and local planning purposes.
- ◆ Calculating market share: by industry and geographical area.
- ◆ Benchmarking industries in various ways: by company size, characteristics of operating expenses, resources inputs, and so on.

Part 1 of the book comprises six chapters describing the Economic Census and how it's conducted, the data sought and terminology used, the NAICS classification used to organize the material, and the reports

available. This section explains the core data that are the heart of all industry reports: the number of establishments, employment, payroll, and sales receipts (or value of shipments for manufacturers), and also the special reports available in many industries, such as capital expenditures, materials consumed, and class of customer. Considerable attention is also paid to the geographic hierarchy of information available and to the NAICS classification system and the consequences of its application for industry and time series analysis.

Part 2 consists of six chapters describing the major industry sectors, how different data are collected for each, and what specific reports are available for that sector. Sectors addressed in separate chapters include agriculture, transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, and a final chapter on the remaining sectors (mining, utilities, construction, information, finance and real estate services, management, and other services sectors). Appendixes display sample questionnaires and other information.

An important feature of the book is its explanation of how Economic U.S. Census material is organized on the Census Bureau's Web site and the various forms of downloadable reports and CD-ROM data. Each chapter also contains a separate bibliography of relevant books, articles, and Web sites.

Users get a fairly complete picture of the Economic Census from this work. This is the only current work on the topic that I'm aware of, excluding the Census Bureau's own documentation. It is well done and brings the perspective of authors well versed in helping users locate and use industry information from this source.

Overall, this is an outstanding reference work, a must-have for any academic, public, or special library that deals with business or economic questions.—*John P. Heintz, University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota*

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## Other Notable Titles

**Biographical Dictionary of British Economists.** Ed. by Donald Rutherford. 2 vols. Bristol: Thoemmes, 2004. 1,330p. \$670 (ISBN: 1-84371-030-7).

The *Biographical Dictionary of British Economists* is edited by Donald Rutherford, known also for the *Routledge Dictionary of Economics*. With the help of dozens of contributors, Rutherford has compiled a work that covers six hundred known and lesser-known names in the field of economics, such as it was prior to the twentieth century. Rutherford reminds us that before the 1900s many teachers and researchers contributed to the field, but the field was not known as economics. These people were engaged in everything from retail and banking to philosophy and journalism, but all related to economics in some way, and all influenced the field. A doctoral degree is not necessary to be recognized in this work.

In tackling a biographical dictionary, the editor seeks to tie life events to each person's professional perspective and contribution. Readers will find entries mostly of men, such as Thomas Hobbes and Friedrich Engels, but there is an occasional female such as Lucy Hammond, a clever woman with flaming red hair who was a bit of a feminist and influential in the improvement of the working class.

Entries are biographical, and in some cases the facts are obtained from newly discovered family records. Contributions to the field of economics are noted, and all entries are signed and are accompanied by a small bibliography. The focus is on economists from the twentieth century such as Keynesians and econometricians, but readers will find neoclassicals and even names from medieval and Elizabethan periods.

The dictionary is organized alphabetically by surname. For further reading, readers may consult the list of eighteen general economic history books in the front matter. There is an index

of names, although, admittedly, one improvement would be the integration of economic terms and concepts so readers could connect concepts to certain people. But perhaps that is the difference between a dictionary and a biographical work, and Rutherford now has done both. This work is appropriate for research libraries.—*Chris LeBeau, University of Missouri/University of Missouri-Kansas City*

**Encyclopedia of Actuarial Science.** Ed. by Jozef L. Teugels and Bjorn Sundt. 3 vols. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2004. 1,944p. \$1,745 (ISBN: 0-470-84676-3).

Promoted as a "comprehensive reference work" developed to meet a longtime need felt by scholars from actuarial practice and academia, this encyclopedia is not only comprehensive, it's also scholarly, thorough, and exhaustive in its coverage of actuarial science, insurance, and related business and financial activities. Consisting of more than 450 articles written by more than 250 international contributors from academia and the actuarial profession, this is a major work in the field.

In designing the encyclopedia the editors-in-chief identified twelve broad sections or areas, such as collective risk theory, reinsurance, finance, and economics. Each section has one or more editors who are experts in that area. The sections are listed at the beginning of the encyclopedia, followed by the titles of the articles related to each section. If a reader wanted to cover everything in the section on collective risk theory, for example, he would need to consult a number of different articles that appear throughout the encyclopedia.

The articles themselves are arranged alphabetically by title across the three volumes. They deal with both quantitative methods and practical aspects of actuarial science and insurance. Examples of article entries include "Premium Principles," "Stop Loss Reinsurance," and "Pensions: Financing, Risk and Accounting." Each article discusses the topic in depth, and the treatment is aimed at the professional,

faculty member, or graduate student. "See" references are embedded in the text of an article and also appear at the end. Terms or phrases that appear in bold in the text of one article are treated as distinct articles elsewhere in the encyclopedia. The articles are attributed, and the contributor provides an extensive list of references. The encyclopedia also includes an index.

This source is highly specialized and will have a limited audience. It is appropriate for large research libraries and selected corporate libraries.—*Mary Gilles, Washington State University, Pullman*

**Plunkett's Insurance Industry Almanac.** By Jack W. Plunkett. Houston, Tex.: Plunkett Research, 2005. 413p. \$249.99 (ISBN: 1-59392-014-8).

This offshoot of Plunkett's Financial Services Industry Almanac, put out by the prolific Plunkett family (publisher of more than twenty industry almanacs commonly found in large research and public libraries), takes on

the rapidly rebounding and globalizing insurance industry. Highlights include listings and profiles (also gathered on the accompanying CD-ROM) of the top three hundred insurance companies; online and underwriting trends; insurance information technologies; such related services as call centers and risk analysis; and a very up-to-date glossary that includes, for example, a discussion on health savings accounts.

This almanac will be an excellent annual insurance market research and business intelligence tool, comprehensible to the layperson and beginning student, while still relevant for executives. It will be a valuable data resource and utility for strategic planning, job searching, and creating prospect lists. Weaknesses of the publication are a lack of consistency among entries and a veiled research process. It may be too general for the insurance professional. The Plunketts promise an increasing global thrust in future editions.—*Linda Dausch, Chicago Public Library*

**Small Business Desk Reference.** Ed. by Gene Marks. New York: Alpha, 2004. 1,126p. \$29.95 (ISBN: 1-59257-295-2).

Marks, an author of several small business titles as well as a college instructor and owner of a small business consulting firm, has edited a handy, comprehensive, and easily browsed compendium on how to run a small business. There are many publications offering advice on how to start a small business, but very few on how to keep one afloat. Valuable topics, conveniently and colorfully tabbed, include customer service, operations, legal issues, handling finances, reinvesting, taxes, insurance, personnel management, and contracts. The glossary of small business terms is strong. Two drawbacks to the book are its lack of information on individual contributors and an emphasis on breadth as opposed to depth. This affordable paperback behemoth belongs in every public library and in academic libraries feeding entrepreneurial programs.—*Linda Dausch, Chicago Public Library* ■