

Bookshelf

Want to get ahead in the corporate game?

Forget everything you've read in best sellers about quiet competence and servant leadership. In *Power*, Stanford University professor Jeffrey Pfeffer offers an unsentimental blueprint for getting noticed and achieving high goals. "There is no doubt that the world would be a much better, more humane place if people were always authentic,

modest, truthful, and consistently concerned for the welfare of others instead of pursuing their own aims," he writes. "But that world doesn't exist." He encourages ambitious readers to figure out and get good at what matters to their

bosses; learn how to flatter effectively; project a sometimes audacious self-confidence; and assess and exploit the power bases within their own organizations. This unapologetically pragmatic analysis of the avenues to power won't be to everyone's taste, but it's certainly a bracing entry in the expanding library of books that offer to guide executives through successful careers. (Harper Business, \$27.99)

Head-swimmingly complex but endlessly

fascinating, Tom Bower's *Oil* arrives at a sadly opportune time, as the industry deals with the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. That it's only the most recent of many setbacks, reverses, and cyclical triumphs Bower makes perfectly clear. Bower, a journalist and historian, spins a compelling tale of the presidents, politicians, engineers, and traders who have played their parts in the saga of big oil since the turn of the 21st century.

"Oil is not a business for fools or the faint of heart," he writes. His epic story spans the globe from New York markets to Russian meeting rooms to Houston command centers where geologists watch highly specialized equipment drill below the surface of the sea at a cost of more than \$200,000 a day. While the story is labyrinthine, the goal is straightforward: If we understand how we got here, maybe we can figure out where we must go next. (Grand Central Publishing, \$26.99)

Traditional business ethics courses teach

students to analyze complex moral situations and navigate murky waters in the workplace. But the Giving Voice to Values program—developed for the Aspen Institute and supported by Babson College and the Yale School of Management—takes a wholly different approach. It doesn't aim to help people determine the right thing to do, but how to gather the courage to do it. In *Giving Voice to Values*, Mary Gentile points out that many people find it difficult to speak up when confronted with unethical behavior. However, if they've spent time in class exploring their personal values and scripting responses they might make to workplace violations, they learn how to express their thoughts and how to brace themselves for possible consequences. Gentile's book lists values commonly held across cultures; helps readers identify and express their own core values; and shows them how to counter ration-



alizations others use when they're embarking on bad behavior. Neither didactic nor judgmental, *Giving Voice to Values* is inspiring and empowering. Instead of thinking, "I wish I could," readers will come away saying, "I know I can." (Yale University Press, \$26)

More than 90 percent of U.S. employees

answer to at least one supervisor. And when that supervisor is demanding, mean-spirited, or abusive, the company suffers: Workers are more likely to have heart attacks, slack off, deliberately sabotage projects, and otherwise negatively affect the company. In *Good Boss, Bad Boss*, Stanford professor Robert Sutton explores the very different ways the best and the worst bosses motivate, reward, and redirect their teams. "The best bosses balance performance and humanity, getting things done in ways that enhance rather than destroy dignity and pride," he writes. They also project confidence, protect their workers, strive for small victories,

and never forget how closely their employees study their every move. Sutton brings passion to his analysis of workplace dynamics. He writes, "I don't care if you lead the most productive salespeople in your organization, coach a world championship soccer team, or are principal of an award-winning high school, if you treat your people like dirt, you don't deserve to be called a great boss." He provides guidelines for how to be the *other* kind. (Business Plus, \$23.99)

Business schools are full of classes on strategy and finance, but short on courses that explain how graduates

