

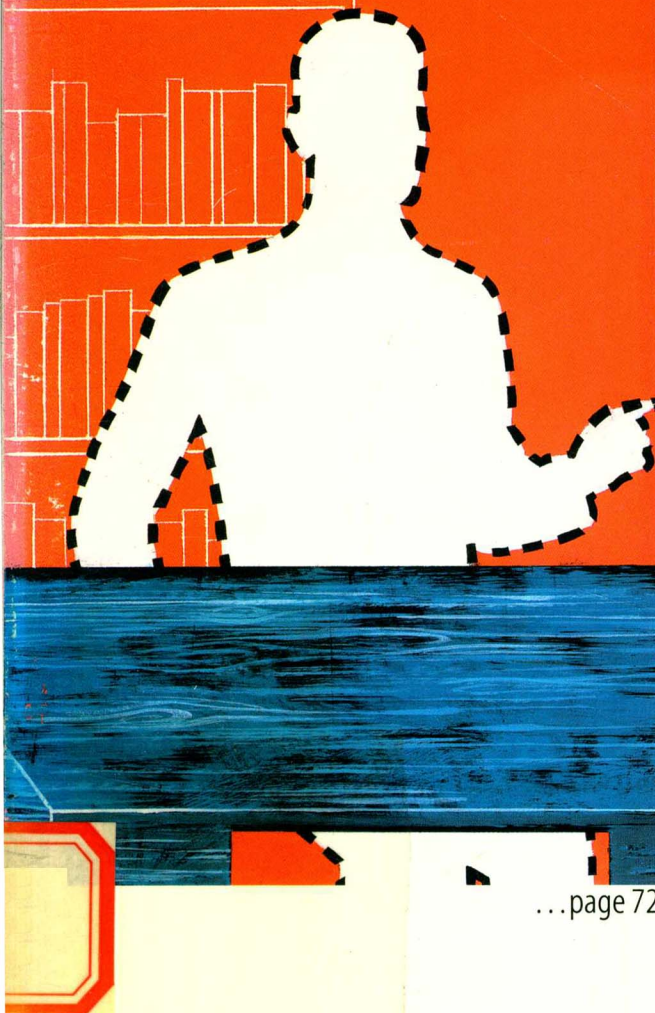
Harvard Business Review

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February 2005

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High-performance customer service, delivered.

To maintain its position as one of the country's largest property and casualty insurers—while also positioning itself to offer a broader range of financial products—Allstate wanted to offer new ways of interacting with customers, and to do it on an aggressive schedule. Building on a long relationship with Allstate, Accenture deployed eight development teams to help design and implement The Good Hands Network[®], which adds integrated Internet and call center channels to the existing system of local agents. Deployed in just 18 months, the two new channels enable customers to do business with Allstate 24/7. Already, over 40 percent of the company's more than 6 million yearly inquiries are made outside of traditional business hours, further extending the company's standing as a high-performance business.

Thomas Cook

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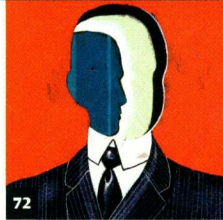


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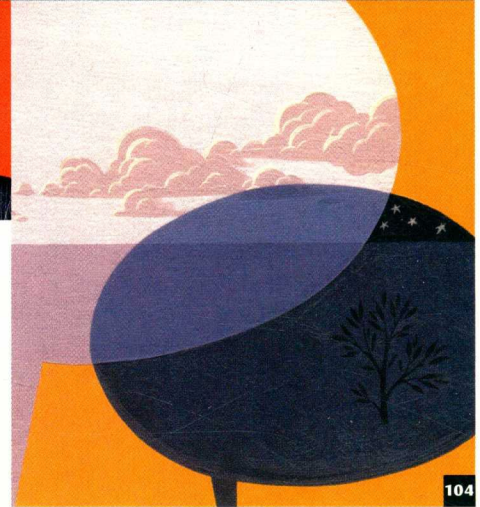
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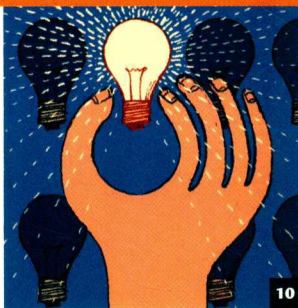


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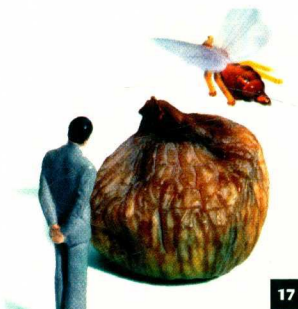
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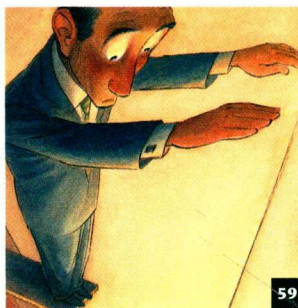
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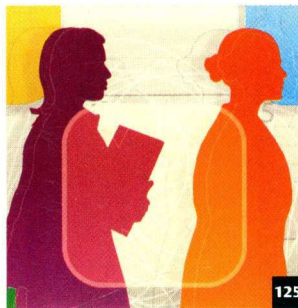


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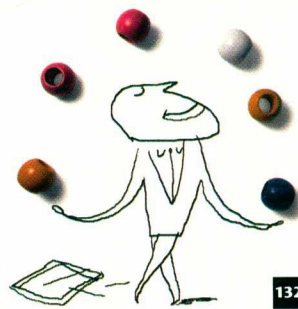
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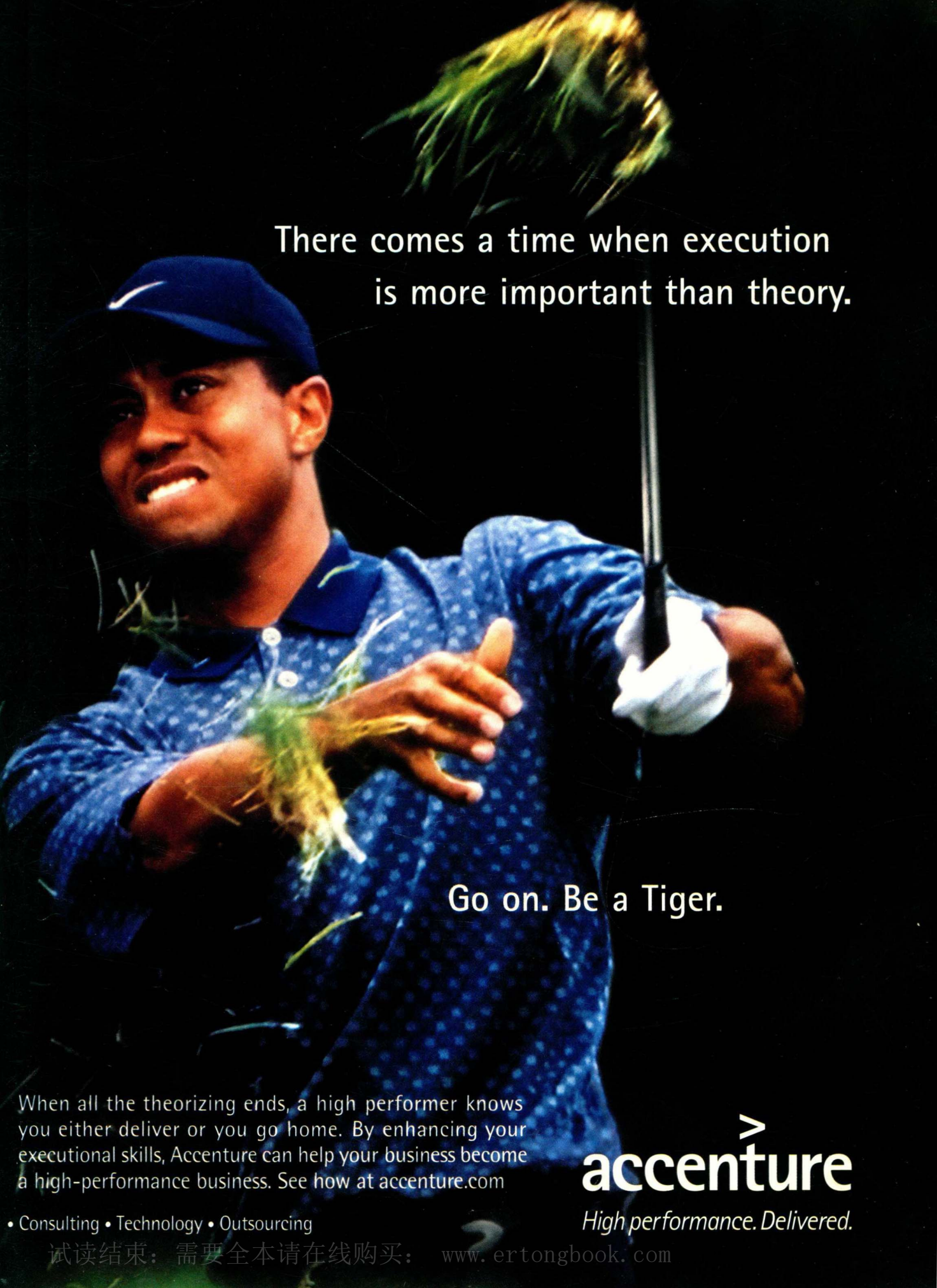
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A photograph of Tiger Woods in the middle of a golf swing. He is wearing a blue Nike cap and a blue patterned polo shirt. The background is dark, and the grass is blurred, suggesting motion. The text is overlaid on the image.

There comes a time when execution
is more important than theory.

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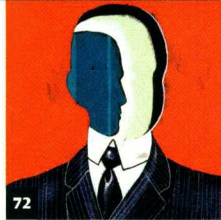


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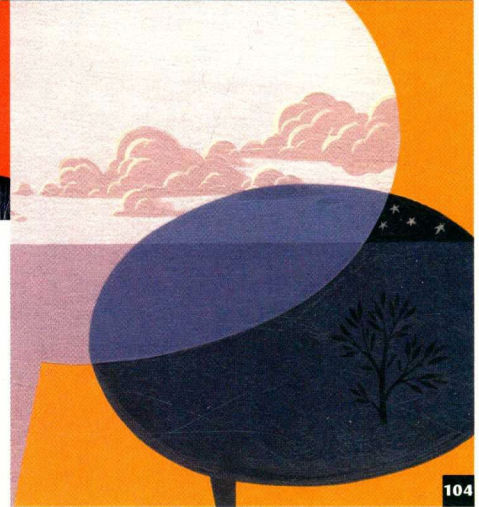
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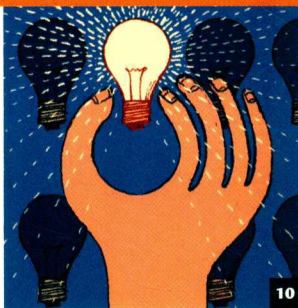
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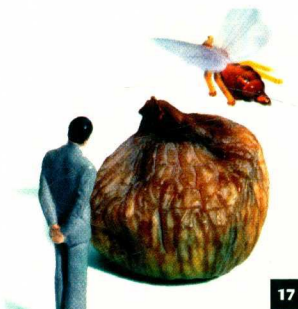
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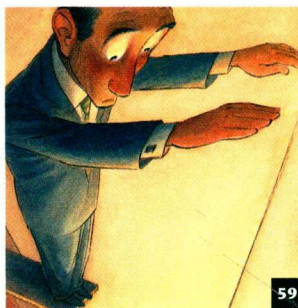
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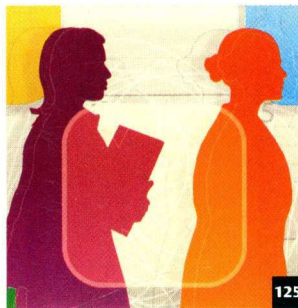


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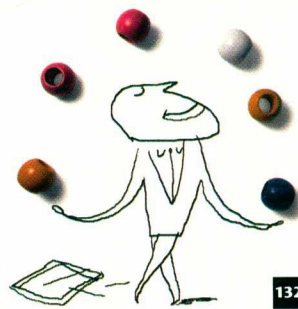
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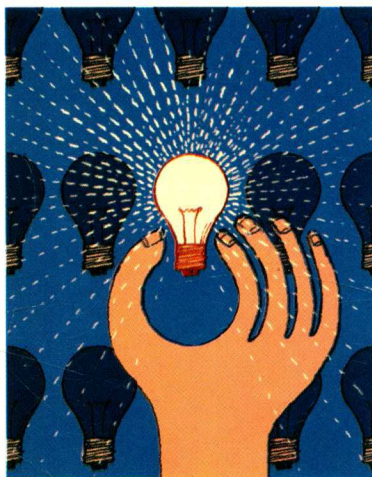
Picking and Choosing

WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT with fear or excitement? What do you know—or suspect—will change business but isn't widely recognized now? What's the dot on the horizon that will be a big topic on the executive committee's agenda a couple of years hence? Those are the questions that animate our search for breakthrough ideas for the annual HBR List, featured in this issue. Ideas are our stock-in-trade, in every issue, in every article. For several years, we tagged each cover with the phrase "Ideas with Impact."

Most of the year, we bring you ideas that have been thoroughly developed and rigorously tested by scholars and other experts. But you have also told us that you expect us to describe emergent ideas the experts suspect are true but cannot yet prove. That's the job of the HBR List—to present ideas that are very much alive but still caterpillars or chrysalides, if you will.

This year, senior editors Leigh Buchanan and Anand Raman led the search party, which took them through the groves of academe, consulting, and, of course, business. In August, we augmented the quest by bringing together a couple of dozen of the smartest people we know for a two-day convocation at the Harvard Faculty Club. A group from the World Economic Forum's Centre for Strategic Insight, headed by Ged Davis, acted as cohosts. We were hoping to find ideas that both of us—HBR and the WEF—felt ought to be brought forward, so that we could present them here in these pages and the WEF could arrange to discuss them at its annual meeting, held in Davos, Switzerland, in the last week of January. Indeed, as you'll see, several of the topics in the List came out of that August gathering and, by the time this is published, will have been the subject of discussion in Davos as well.

If the List looks forward, "Ending the CEO Succession Crisis" is an important article about an issue that is immediate and urgent. For a while now, I've been concerned that something is out of whack (mostly in the U.S.) with the way CEOs are chosen. I thought I saw too many outside hires, too few promotions from within. I certainly saw too many



"boomerang CEOs"—old guy retires, new guy comes in and quickly fails, board recalls old guy from the golf course in Scottsdale, and old guy runs the place while board tries again. I dug around a bit to check my hunch, then called Ram Charan.

Bless him, he said exactly what I'd hoped: Agreeing vociferously that CEO succession is in crisis, he offered to write an article about it. Ram, coauthor with Larry Bossidy of *Execution* and *Confronting Reality*, spends much of his time consulting to chief executives

and boards of directors. Rarely, he finds, do either take seriously enough their responsibility for CEO succession. When they do begin to focus on the topic, the incumbent CEO is usually nearing retirement. That's too late. Executive talent has to be mined, refined, and annealed in the fires of competition. It takes time. It can't be left to chance. Neither can boards rely on executive search firms. For all their value, search firms' work is no substitute for the kind of succession program that keeps a company's coffers filled with managerial gold.

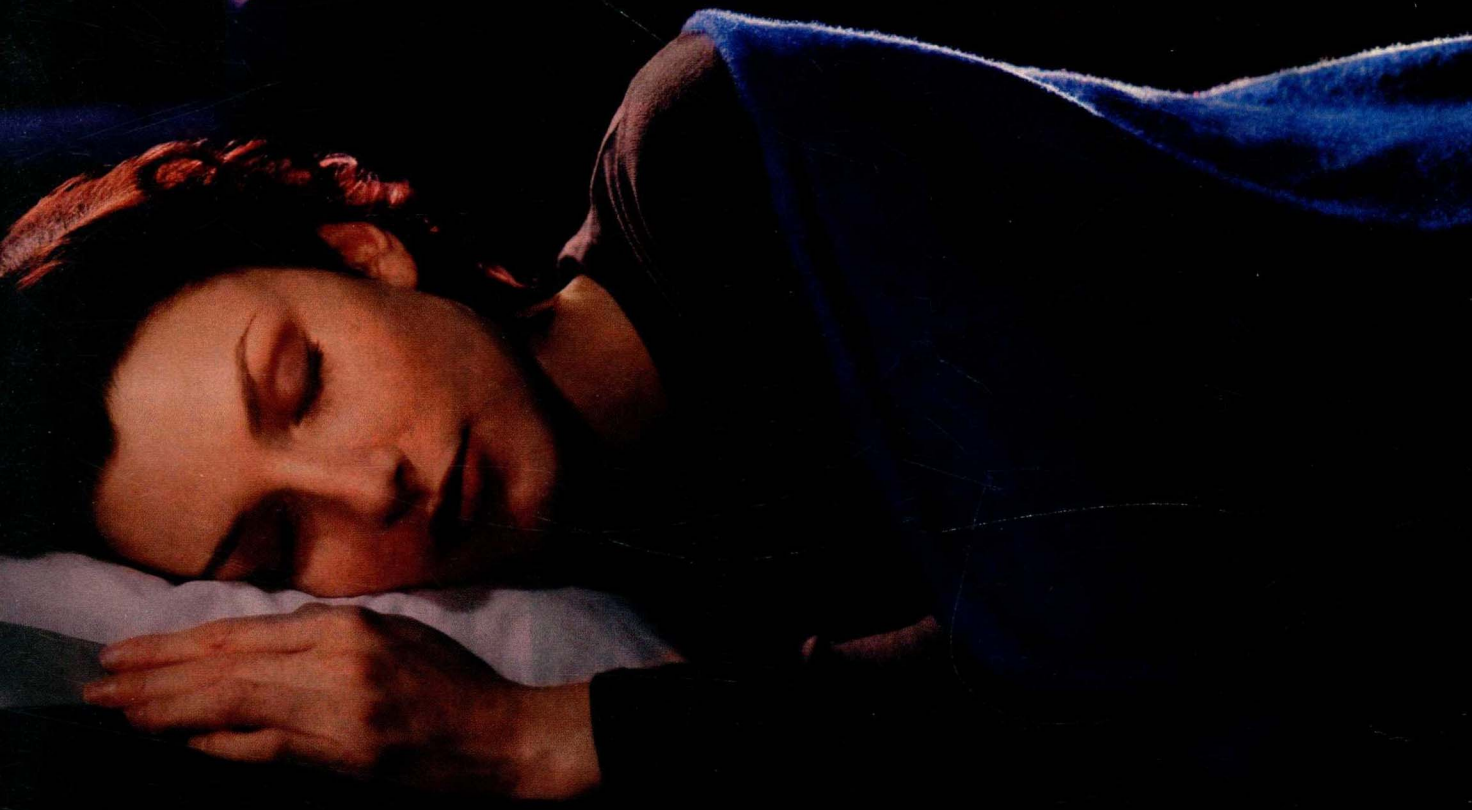
For one thing, imported talent tends to do less well than homegrown talent. That fact was revealed and explained some months ago in HBR, in "The Risky Business of Hiring Stars" (May 2004), by Harvard Business School professors Boris Groysberg, Ashish Nanda, and Nitin Nohria.

For another thing, a company busy developing talent has the benefit of that talent's work years before the corner office becomes vacant. It will simply be a better-led, better-managed, and better-performing organization. As you see from Ram's article, there are a number of straightforward ways in which CEOs and directors can help their companies become the kind of place where the biggest problem in picking a new CEO is having too many excellent candidates among whom to choose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Stewart".

Thomas A. Stewart

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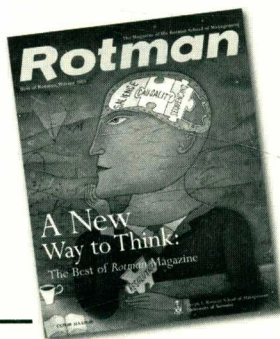
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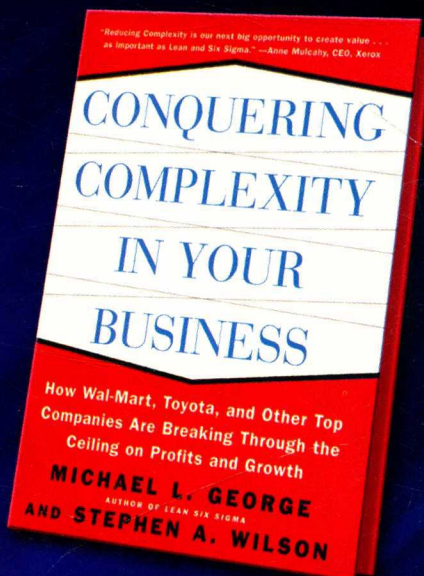
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Vending machine components Scales Intuitive LCD and CRT touchmonitors USB connectors Cable clamps Micropneumatic systems Cable ducting systems Sealants and gels Electrical metallic tubing set-screw connectors and couplings Insulation facers Call center monitoring services Relays with forcibly-guided contacts Spa controls Industrial control hybrids Gas masks Laser rangefinders Sodium bicarbonate based extinguishing agents Flame-retardant drapery systems Resuscitators for infants and children Digital watch parts Shade canopy accessories Barrier strips Chalkboards Therapeutic ultrasound PIN photo diode modules Medical monitoring services Check valves Resin systems Chemical oxygen generators All-in-one touch computers Chartering cable ships Elastic bandages Wireless systems Chillers Semiconductor heat sinks Digital audio services Automotive module relays Surface mounted cabinets Rotary switches Flame retardants Pressure seal closures Electric portable air compressors Circuit breakers Automotive quality inspection equipment Solid-state components Gas discharge tube replacements Components for camcorders Panel indicators Firefighter breathing systems Heat isolation devices Climate monitoring Hazardous material protective suits Solid state subsystems Signal magnetics Passive electronics Medical oxygen delivery Grounding connectors Telescoping sign support systems Broadband driver amplifiers Champagne glasses Drinking bottles Polymeric and porcelain surge arrestors for distribution and transmission networks Automotive power relays Garment hangers Microcoaxial assemblies Snack food packaging Aircraft wire and power cables Modem cable assemblies Industrial control switches Continuous-slot metal framing Landfill development Multi-mode radar Patch cable assemblies Shielded and coaxial cable sleeves Wine glasses Flame-retardant tape Range hoods Halogen-free cables for commercial and offshore applications Absorbable monofilament sutures Cable-TV converters Terminals and connectors for underground networks Syringe dispensers Cordless telephone batteries Fire protection systems Tubing for outdoor furniture framing Sensor arrays Easels PIN diodes High-performance solid state relays and power controllers Wire harness tape Ceramic burners Electrical equipment for saunas Cylindrical control connectors Terminals and splices Security systems Relay sockets and accessories Arson detection Galvanized steel tubing Paperboard Counters and timers Sealed connectors Database assemblies Television sets DC converters Subcutaneous sensors Pipe and tube products Electrical tape High pass filter inductors Pistol grip hand tool systems for IDCs Adhesive tape Segmentally welded pipe fittings USB cables Construction management Deactivators International mains adaptors Suction instruments Test equipment Steel box connectors Calibration equipment and services Plastic tumblers Cable trays Verified audio detection Thermoplastic piping systems Coaxial cable terminators Patch cable assemblies Waveguides Plastics engineering Institutional timekeeping Photocopiers Cabled and blind-mate power connectors High-performance connectors Safety relief valves Access floor modules Halogen-free wire Power systems Rained face flanges Connectors for high-voltage substations Flexible non-metallic conduit Reduced wall flexible metal conduit Catheters Medication nebulizers Digital metering systems Wiring harness sockets Automobile steering columns Pediatric monitoring equipment Cable design conductors Flame-retardant tubing for nuclear environments Roofing systems Digital products Air sampling equipment Voltage wheels Customized point-of-sale receipts Digital proofing Power tool switches Chokes Medical diagnostics Sound control equipment Traffic control equipment Digital visual interface products Vertical drain membranes and radiant barriers Cabinet power systems Wall track systems DIP switches Resistor networks Thermostats Electrical transformers High-performance RF/microwave antennas Lighting for public services Video cables Thermal circuit breakers Video endoscopy Infrared detection pipe Heat-tracing connectors Potassium bicarbonate based extinguishing agents Megaphone components Calculators Institutional can liners Cable management systems Water gear Tractors Coaxial cables Patient monitoring cables Drop cloths Alarms for hazardous areas Power splitters Chassis components Storm doors and windows Water meters and readers with web-based authentication Printer cable assemblies Engineering services Amusement machine components Disposable manual handling equipment Gas detection and gas installations Patch panels Airport lighting systems Soldering equipment Long-haul, transoceanic cable systems Entry modules Microprocessors and controllers for building management harness design software Automotive components Computer-assisted design services Porcelain disc insulators Flex and rigid pipe systems Diagnostic equipment for building management Diagnostic and stress testing Landscape plastic sheeting Rechargeable car flashlights Memory card receptacles Spirometry systems Digital video cameras for building management backed building and construction tapes Power magnetics Exhausters Ultraviolet disinfection systems Moisture analysis equipment Flange gaskets and flange assemblies Stainless steel alloys Professional fire department hardware Custom sterilizable cable assemblies Skin effect base systems Dental dressings and sutures Plastic pipe for irrigation Tape measures Flame detectors Ribbon cables Carpet backing Parallel groove clamps Graphics arts tape Extended coverage fire sprinkler heads for fire pumps Gas monitoring Satellite radio and digital audio systems Jacket compounds Galvanized steel armor with PVC jackets Irrigation pumps Utility cabinets Enclosures for power equipment Adhesives Large-screen video projectors Eye pads Arterial extension sets Paper mill wraps Fence framework Distribution panels Continuous timers Protective breathing apparatus Special purpose spiral antennas Automatic pick, place and press Power toggle switches Fiber-optic connectors Veterinary medical products Valve valves Carbon dioxide transmitters Specialty chemicals Rainfall gauges Alarms for motor vehicles Water sampling and analysis Fingerprint identification Mobile security systems Cable ties Fire extinguishers Multiplier diodes Fireproof cables Drum core magnetics Audio receivers Flexible exhaust connectors Isolators and circulators Magnet wire termination machines Dual hybrid relays Static measuring equipment Hand-held radios Cable management accessories Steam-tracing products Extrusion laminating Parking deck PVC jacketed metal cable Factory automation cables Steelwork fixings Airport construction management Instrument winterization Cotton balls Pipe for recreational equipment Self-adhesive cable covers Multi-patch high flexibility cables Fixed cable termination adapters Butterfly valves Portable memory Components for CD recorders and players Telemetry systems Audio production services Integrated molding/plating technology Telephone systems Safety goggles Reverse cutting sutures Decorative shields Temperature and pressure gauges Commercial-quality steel tubing Laser diodes Temperature sensors Connection droppers Dry-erase marker boards Feminine hygiene products Storage tanks Analgesics First aid kits Thermal controls Computer-assisted surgery Power modules Subminiature D connectors Front connector sockets Digital attenuators Automated teller machine components Spring pin probe assemblies Control panels Wet pipe sprinkler systems Alarm verification Security keypads Pain management products Helical gears Roadway and tunnel management systems Printed circuit terminals Galvanized round signposts Hooker and paddle switches Microwave components Roof and gutter heating cables Arson detection Voice amplifiers Fire alarm arrest systems High-voltage connectors Power entry modules Custom broadband networks Steel threaded sprinkler pipe Accounting software Ultrasonic cable assemblies Protective clothing for emergency workers Flame launchers Dry pipe systems Cable tie guns Broadband amplifiers Rectangular heavy duty connectors Discharge devices Ventilation dampers Electromagnetic field readers Laser components Advanced composites Coaxial connectors Adhesive covers Flat steel plates Elastomeric connectors Passive fiber optic hardware Singulation systems Electrosurgical devices Coffee service kits Automotive radar sensors Electrical metallic tubing compression connectors and couplings Intercommunication devices Customized valves Dry pipe valves Flexible hoses Curing ovens Insulated ground metal cable Digital satellite radio antennas Perimeter door/window protection systems Anemometers Cosmetic surgery needles Flexible non-metallic conduit Supply cabinet systems Communication systems Identification products Flexible piping equipment Rayon balls Dedicated fiber pair monitoring Hardened and tempered steel shafts and shafts for motor vehicles Motor vehicle detectors Floor-mounted points Specialty electrodes Alcohol preps Fire sprinkler monitoring systems Thermochromic color-changing ink Food services Tissue containers Sutures Carbon steels Flange adaptors PVC conduit and fittings Button battery holder components Carbon monoxide protection Environmental data management Instrument selector switches Biomedical Frequency response analyzers Thyristor surge protectors Subminiature ESD shielding powders Contactless position sensors Electrostatic discharge protectors Hospital blankets Modem and relays Terminal blocks Painter's plastic Industrial-grade trash bags Signal transducer cable harnesses DIN rail mount sockets Tap water filters and filters Jacketed cable Deep-sea cable installations Computer-printable cards Mechanical components Attic fire sprinklers Front end rectifiers for wireless applications Sealant gaskets Components for structural lighting Fuel dispensing systems Gaffers tape Arterial extension sets Pipe freeze thermal controls Infrastructure antennas Flanged channels Integrelec fuses Cardiac blank Battery connection cable assemblies Free-height connectors Power relays Custom-printed retail shelf labels Medical packaging Digital signage Steel metal fabrication Oxygen therapy products Extension cables Liquid bandages Very high-density cable interconnection assemblies Liquid chromatography systems Self-adhesive cable clips Extrusion heat sinks Facility management Lithium batteries Hazardous chemical spill control Vandal-proof photocontrol systems HDTV antennas Inflatables for pharmaceuticals LNA amplifiers Resettable devices Distribution compression connectors Specialty polymers Eye amplifiers Electromechanical relays Cathodic protection Input/output cable assemblies Electrical conduit Videocassette recorder components Disinfectants Filtered modular jacks Hydrologic and hydrographic services General purpose valves Programmable harsh environment connectors Recycling collection bins Surgical catheters Floor fixings Semiconductor switches Custom heat sinks Delineator posts Medical and surgical gages Signature capture devices Coplanar connectors Terminal clamps Reversible hydraulic power packs Structural steel tubing for greenhouses Rheostats Germicidal ultraviolet lamps Biomedical engineering Hydraulic controls Aluminum auto parts Composite station post insulators Codeine phosphate Heavy duty starter/battery lugs and connectors Scan converters Couplers Thermal grease Helical rotor pumps Sirens Battery interconnection systems for portable electronics Light rail transportation design and engineering Automotive semiconductor and magnetic sensors Custom-printed theatrical admission tickets Medical fluid warming systems Ratcheted crimp tools Inspection microscopes Medical temperature management Power supply distribution units Satellite cables Video endoscopy Digital transmitters Automatic sensors Greenhouse cover material PC board relays Microribbon connectors Abrasives Decontamination management services Fluorocarbon Aircraft hangars Spacers and dampers Finite element analysis Debate purpose connectors Wire and cable identification systems Environmental remediation Markers Fire detection systems Aerospace engine parts Cassette recorders GPS receivers High-frequency connectors Printed circuit boards Wire wrap Extractors Residential concealed fire sprinklers Customized chemicals Telecommunications Frequency synthesizers Precision time clocks Benchtop cut-and-strip machines High-power pulsed laser diodes De-icing thermal controls Flexible steel conduit Steel lugs Energy management consulting Roadway and tunnel construction management Battery terminals Surface skimmers World's largest producer of acetaminophen Interactive video surveillance systems Memory socket and delay relays and sensors Floor plates Laser-engraved markers Water motor alarms Multipurpose filters for emission control in high-noise industrial environments Switchgear wire identification materials Brake master cylinders Insulated lunch bags Plug valves Capacitors Institutional voice evacuation systems Twisted-pair cables Gaseous cleaners Undersea fiber-optic telecommunications Components for DVD players Special hazard protection products Electrostatic pencils Special shelving and partitions Holiday lighting controls Pneumatic cylinders for aluminum smelting Cartridge heaters Electronic article surveillance systems Integrated antenna systems Power transistors GPS components Components for home entertainment systems Deluge valves and accessories Perforated telescopic steel tubing Cathode ray tubes Theft, fire, and access control security systems Product disinfection Grating systems Current differential protection relays Scalpels Flood warning systems Computer-printable labels Hose racks Blind-mate hot plugs Antimicrobial dispensers Ruggedized transmitter/receiver modules Safety glasses Composite tension insulators Power cable assemblies for electrostatic devices Aluminum conduit with care products Barricade support legs Electrostatic testing and coating Alkaline batteries Hospital communication systems Cable cutters Video monitors Amplitude/phase tracking DF antennas Digital indicators Steelwork connection products Rail de-icing systems Hot-rolled steel coils Combustible gas leak detectors Fiberglass support systems and fasteners Shingle and roof underlayment Pitchers Backup power during blackouts Residential and commercial awning framework Aircraft power systems Transmission line protectors Edge emitting LEDs Gigabit cables Hypodermic syringes Epoxies Firefighting axes Ultrasonic surgical systems Clean room equipment Ice cream sealing wraps Flex film systems Electroqualified components Airport runways and terminals Overvoltage protective relays Identification labeling Water treatment for irrigation Liquid crystal display modules Heat Supermarket packaging Activation products Premises cabling Attic fire sprinklers High-speed radio frequency circuits Induction loop amplifiers Liquid crystal display modules Heat sink tubing Air filtration Digital video camera systems Food bags Surface wave touchscreens Bacteria filters Dry pipe fire sprinkler valves Wash presses Lightning protectors High-power transistor modules Welding branch outlets Composite wire gaskets Automotive twin pack relays Multi-conductor network cables Travel mugs Boiler components Automobile components Welding branch outlets Composite wire gaskets Automotive twin pack relays Multi-conductor network cables Travel mugs Boiler components Mobile phone connections Spark suppressor headlights Coated fasteners Forestry tools GPS antennas Internal storage interconnects Reprographics Electrical metal components Telecom and signal relays Weatherproofing Oxygen units Intrusion alarm detection devices Lighting cable Floodlights for high-security areas Intuitive alarm Modulators Downward facing approach sensors and timers Electronic crowd controlling queue systems Fire hose reel cabinets Keypads Double and quad-ridge waveguide Laboratory benches Aerospace ground power and industrial high-performance connectors Extreme temperature flexible metal conduit High speed RF modules Circuit breakers Heavy duty commercial applicators IF amplifiers Automobile battery disconnect switch relays Lecterns and podiums Fabric maintenance harness adapters Low

Water treatment facilities

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