

### The King of Madison Avenue

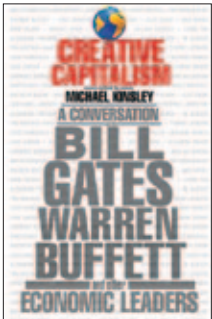
The eccentric ways and “wandering personal narrative” of the legendary adman David Mackenzie Ogilvy is captured in *The King of Madison Avenue*, by former Ogilvy CEO Ken Roman, as reviewed by Paul B. Carroll in the *Wall Street Journal* (1/21/09).



Little did we know, for instance, that Ogilvy’s famous campaign for Hathaway shirts — featuring a man wearing an eye-patch — was perhaps rooted in his personal heritage. One of Ogilvy’s ancestors had “stirred up trouble when he became angry at a relative of his wife, who had only one eye: He returned her to her own family on a one-eyed pony, with a one-eyed servant and a one-eyed dog.”

Indeed, much of what Ogilvy did on his tortured path into advertising contributed to his ultimate success. For example, he once worked as a cook, where he was assigned “to decorate the thighs of cold frogs with chervil leaves,” perhaps preparing him for a life of silk purses and sow’s ears.

Throughout his career, Ogilvy adamantly opposed “the slippery surface of irrelevant brilliance,” and favored the idea that “ads should promote some key attribute of a product.” Perhaps most notably of all, his penchant for data presaged today’s data-driven, direct-sales ways.



### Creative Capitalism

Bill Gates’s idea that corporations should do more to help solve society’s problems is the subject of *Creative Capitalism*, writes Leslie Lenkowsky in the *Wall Street Journal* (1/2/09). The book is actually an edited collection of blog posts by “a distinguished group of economists, journalists and executives of nonprofit organizations,” edited by Michael Kinsley.

Some of the experts contend that philanthropy and business are mutually exclusive.

“It is hard in this world to do well,” says Lawrence Summers, who now heads the National Economic Council. “It is hard to do good. When I hear a claim that an institution is going to do both, I reach for my wallet. You should too.”



District Judge Richard Posner meanwhile points out that if solving social problems were profitable, corporations would have been doing it all along. And Steven Landsburg, an economist, says corporations that sacrifice “profit to accomplish philanthropic goals end up betraying their shareholders.”

However, economist Ed Glaeser notes that there are profits to be had “in poorer countries, not least where failed governments are incapable of providing public services.” He also suggests that there may be innovations to be realized and competitive advantages to be had when companies make an effort “to balance good with doing well.”

### Problem Solving 101

If Ken Watanabe’s *Problem Solving 101* is a hit in America, it could create a new genre of business books, suggests Del Jones in *USA Today* (2/25/09). At just 100 pages long, it “was originally written as a textbook for seventh- and eighth-graders” but its simplicity has struck a chord with Japanese business people, as well.

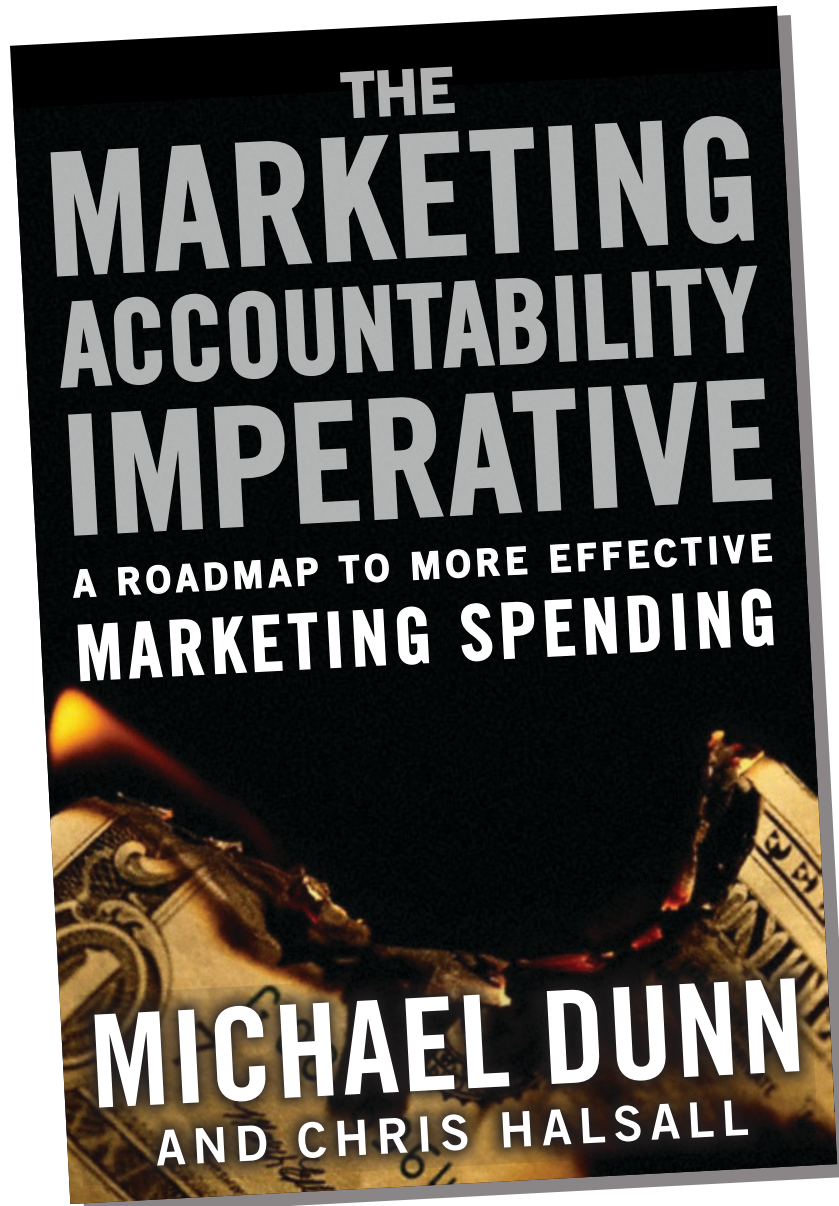
Using “juvenile-looking illustrations and flowcharts,” the book tells readers how to diagnose a problem and then implement a solution.

For example, in a case about “a rock band that can’t get an audience at concerts,” Ken’s advice is “to think like doctors trying to cure a patient. He recommends listing potential causes of the problem, arriving at a hypothesis for the most likely cause, analyzing the cause, coming up with possible solutions, then prioritizing action and implementing a plan.”

The book has already sold some 370,000 copies in Japan, and Ken says the demand exists because Japanese schools focus too much on rote memorization and not enough on critical thinking skills. He says American schools are better at teaching problem solving than those in Japan, but “still fall short.”

Should the book catch on in America, it will be the first time in a long time that a Japanese business book has sold well in the U.S., where interest in Japanese management techniques declined along with the Japanese economy some 20 years ago.

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