**The Future: 50 Ideas You Really Need to Know**
by Richard Watson

The 50 ideas series can be hit or miss. Philosophy: 50 Ideas by Ben Dupré, for example, is a boring, verbose read that will have even the most devout reader dozing off after a page. On the polar opposite of that spectrum is The Future: 50 Ideas.

Written by the entertaining and humorous Richard Watson, The Future: 50 Ideas is best read in small instalments to fully absorb and then ponder the awe-invoking information being fed to you page by page.

Some of the topics, like ubiquitous surveillance, water wars and cyber and drone warfare, will have you fearing for the future of mankind. Others, like the potential for local energy networks and the pursuit of happiness, will restore your faith in humanity, while chapters on nanotechnology and gamification will leave you marvelling at mankind's genius.

Many of the topics do, of course, make for heavy reading, especially if you're a luddite, like this reviewer. But Watson has made it easy in this compilation, explaining complex ideas in simple, accessible terms and making all concepts relatable to the layman. Interspersed with handy fact boxes, a futuristic timeline for each concept and a condensed idea to sum it all up, this is about as reader-friendly as jaw-dropping ideas of this complexity get.

— Melany Bendix

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**Uncommon Sense, Common Nonsense**
by Jules Goddard & Tony Eccles

Why do some organisations thrive in a recession while others stumble? The answers provided in Uncommon Sense, Common Nonsense may come as a surprise to you.

From the unique perspectives of Jules Goddard and Tony Eccles — business and management academics from the London Business School and Cass College, respectively — the reader quickly learns that managing a business during troubled times is not always black and white.

Throwing common sense and mainstream logic out the window, Goddard and Eccles use their own experiences to back up odd-ball tactics for business, like becoming purposefully disorganised and opening up oneself to mistakes in order to succeed. The authors do, however, make it clear from the get-go that their style is not for everyone: it’s aimed at the rational optimist and creative innovators willing to take risks.

Divided into five parts with chapters no longer than two to three pages, Uncommon Sense, Common Nonsense is light and easy to read. Plus each chapter is summed up niftily with an example to demonstrate the relevant myths and realities in the business world and how best to use the authors’ offbeat tactics to succeed.

If you’re an innovator who’s not afraid to go against the grain, this one’s for you. Just be prepared to have everything you thought you knew about business turned upside down. — Zach Dougherty

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**Shadows**
by Novuyo Rosa Tshuma

Seldom does one pick up a book not knowing much about it or its author, not expecting much, only to end up being completely bowled over. Novuyo Rosa Tshuma’s Shadows did just that.

Comprising a novella and four short stories, the tales in Shadows span the length and breadth of the human condition, all centred on life as a Zimbabwean in that troubled land or the equally troubled life of a Zimbabwean refugee in South Africa.

The novella, You in Paradise, takes the reader into the depths of protagonist Mpho’s despair after losing his sex-worker mother to HIV and his girlfriend to the bright lights of Johannesburg.

In the short story Waiting, rape, stigma and sexism are intertwined with the agony of daily life in Zimbabwe, with its escalating poverty and never-ending queues. Doctor S details the psychological trauma of a young refugee woman; Crossroads chronicles the anxiety and humiliation suffered when crossing the border to South Africa; and For the Love of the Country offers a view from the other side — that of the wife of a government official profiting from Zanu-PF’s rule.

This award-winning short fiction writer has her style down pat, enabling her to entrance the reader with her vivid prose and poignant narrative. You’d be the poorer for not picking up Shadows.

— Melany Bendix

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**Innovation As Usual**
by Paddy Miller and Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg

Innovation As Usual: How to Help Your People Bring Great Ideas to Life is a handy resource for business people in leadership positions, its subtitle capturing its value brilliantly.

Knowing how to help employees activate great ideas is the essence of what good managers do and the methods for doing it well are passed on in this how-to manual penned by authors with impressive bona fides.

Paddy Miller is a professor of managing people in organisations at IESE Business School at Spain’s University of Navarra. He also has hands-on experience in helping heavyweight companies worldwide, ranging from IBM to Lufthansa, maximise employee-creative output. Co-author Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg is a fellow lecturer of managing people in organisations, also at IESE, and a partner at the advisory firm The Innovation Architects.

Together they have compiled a concise collection of case studies involving businesses that have managed to make innovation a regular — and lucrative — part of their operations.

Making it user-friendly for the reader, Innovation As Usual distills the wisdom taken from these studies into six points. This level of clarity and focus means you could finish the book in two to three sittings and be ready to mend “choke points” on your company’s “creative path” the very next day. — Warren Glam