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Nearly a century ago, President William Howard Taft tipped—flattened, more likely—the scales at 335 pounds. Don't feel bad if you remember nothing about Taft other than his mustachioed corpulence—it's his most lasting contribution to American culture. His rounded silhouette, with a waistcoat but no waistline, has survived as the instantly recognizable stereotype of the plutocrat, an ironic fate for a trust-busting politician. When a *New Yorker* cartoonist today wants to depict a generic corporate potentate, she often reaches back to the 1910s for that image, usually adding a cigar for good measure. And why not? Every reader understands the shorthand at a glance.



This equation of prosperity and rotundity, of power and plumpness, has persisted despite the fact that, as Jim Krohe notes in “Fat Cats,” CEOs don't look like that anymore. Indeed, the only time Americans see more than one or two CEOs at a time—on C-SPAN, whenever Congress summons a convoy of tobacco or airline or oil or investment-bank executives to queue up for a grilling—the blue-suited gentlemen bear little resemblance to their cartoon counterparts. “Fat Cats” examines how it is that, at a time when American waistbands are being stretched to the limit, executives are keeping fit and trim. Krohe argues that CEOs have higher personal standards than most and, more important, that they fear being viewed as undisciplined. Plus, in a body-conscious culture, it's no surprise that would-be stars who tend toward overweight don't rise as quickly.

Krohe has been offering well-researched assessments to the readers of this magazine longer than any other writer: He wrote his first cover story back in September 1978. That's nearly three decades of exploring the thinking and behavior of those in the upper reaches of corporate America.

Also aiming to probe the executive mind: our newest contributor, columnist Michael Raynor. In “From Theory to Practice,” he'll be taking a hard look at the high-level strategists hoping to influence CEOs' beliefs—and at whether those CEOs truly do change the way they think and act.

The connection between business theory and business practice is often far from clear. Consider: Every month, a fresh crop of hardcovers lands on Barnes & Noble business-section tables and in my office, plenty of them slapdash compilations of PowerPoint slides aimed only at giving consultants an “author” credit. Many, though, are earnest considerations of problems and efforts to provide solutions, the result of researchers and theorists putting forward arguments and evidence intended to make your innovation initiatives generate more new products, your top-line growth soar, and your leadership-development program produce real live leaders.

A lot of these books end up on C-suite office shelves, and some of them may be read or, at least, skimmed. But how many of them—how much of that thought and research—actually make their way into strategic plans and corporate policies? That's the gap that Raynor's “From Theory to Practice” will be looking to bridge. In a way, it's at the core of what *TCB Review* is all about: exploring the world of corporate culture and executive decision-making—raising questions, offering solutions—and helping readers negotiate a world of daunting challenges and breakthrough ideas.



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