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FT business books: August edition

From achieving ‘unreasonable’ success to how music jamming sessions can aid workplace inclusion — here are this month’s top titles

‘Jam Cultures: Inclusion — Having a Seat at the Table, a Voice and a Vote’, by Jitske Kramer, translated by Mischa Hoyinck and Robert Chesal



We don’t often review management and leadership books that are not written in English, the dominant language of business — which makes *Jam Cultures*, translated from Dutch, an interesting and inclusive prospect in itself.

The “jam cultures” of the title are the author’s way of comparing active efforts to create diverse and inclusive workplaces (and beyond) with musical jam sessions: “Where we are all trying to

find our own voice, summoning the courage to make it heard, and tuning in to each other to create a better sound”.

If that sounds cheesy, prepare yourself. The book has lots of inspirational asides from the author, but get past those and there is a lot that is valuable — and very different — to take in here.

Recommended



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The non-Anglocentric focus of this book allows readers a glimpse into a different range of academics. Kramer is an anthropologist — it’s useful and non stigmatising to see the evidence of how hard inclusion can be to enact properly, by respecting people’s individuality rather than asking them to assimilate or change. Kramer cites the work of Dutch anthropology professor Gloria Wekker, for

example, on what she calls our “cultural archive, an unacknowledged reservoir of knowledge and emotions, based on 400 years of colonial domination, which continually informs our feelings, thoughts and actions without us even realizing it”.

Kramer sets out a clear path for any group or organisation that really wants to have difficult conversations and listen to everyone’s contribution. Her chapters are clearly laid out, with exercises and advice — but this is no quick-fix guide. We are still in the very early days of working out how to talk about diversity and inclusion, and Kramer uses her experiences in helping to embed democratic conversations in South Africa, among other places, as a blueprint to guide us towards better understanding — and more inclusive cultures.