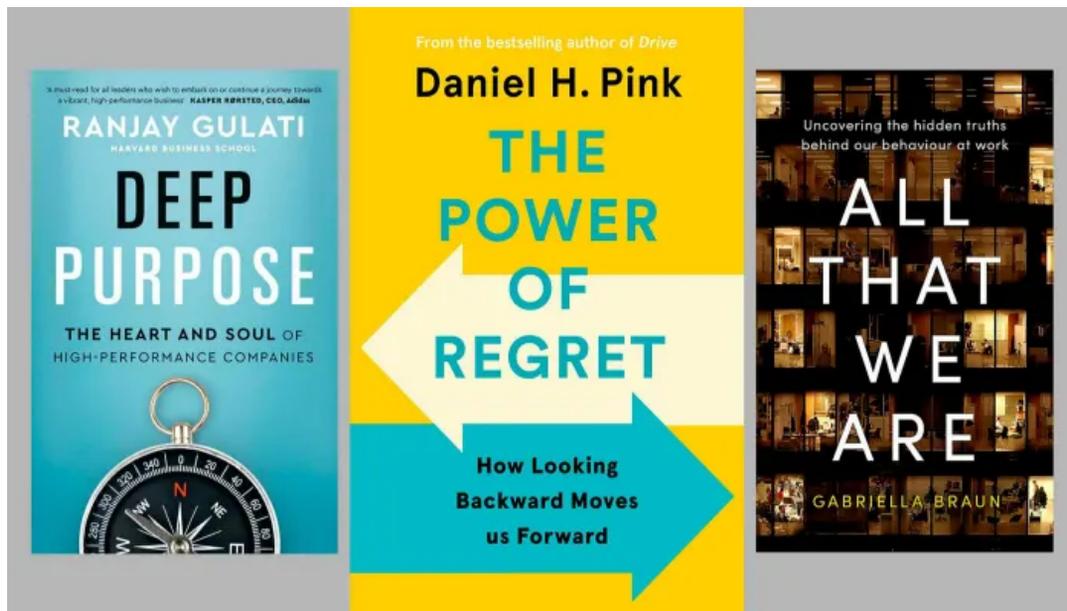


Business books

FT business books: February edition

The power of regret and how to reinvent the workplace — here are this month's top titles



Janina Conboye, Andrew Hill, Isabel Berwick, Leo Cremonesi, Kate Hodge and Jonathan Moules AN HOUR AGO

‘Deep Purpose: The Heart and Soul of High-Performance Companies’, by Ranjay Gulati

This year promises a wave of books on corporate purpose. In this short guide, Harvard Business School’s Ranjay Gulati offers plenty of useful advice about how leaders can set a principled course for their businesses.

Gulati rightly sets “deep purpose” apart from superficial varieties. The latter includes “convenient purpose”, “purpose-as-disguise” (of which disgraced start-up Theranos is given as an example), and “purpose as win-win only”, a dig at Harvard colleague Michael Porter’s [concept of “shared value”](#). Deep purpose, by contrast, is “an existential statement that expresses the firm’s very reason for being”.

Based on 200 interviews with selected companies from PepsiCo and Microsoft to less well-known names such as Bühler, a Swiss manufacturer of food processing equipment, and urban vegetable farmer Gotham Greens, Gulati lays out the challenges of embedding purpose. They include how to create a purpose-led culture that allows for staff members' individuality and diversity, and how to deal with "the personification paradox", when the leader who embodies a company's purpose moves on.

In a foreword, BlackRock's Larry Fink calls the book "at once inspirational and pragmatic". *Deep Purpose* will not be the last book to claim to show leaders the way, but it stands out as a thoughtful account of the dilemmas, trade-offs and pitfalls of moving beyond the pure-profit imperative, and how to overcome them.