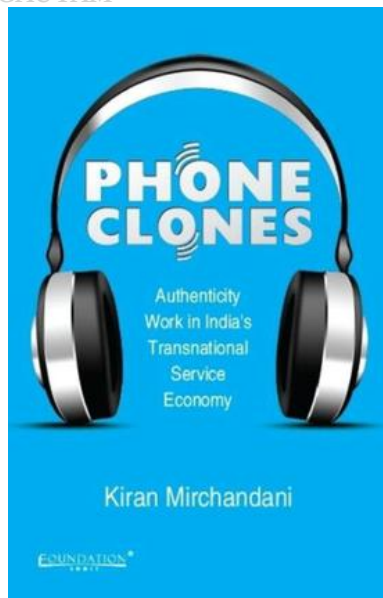


## Books

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### **Between the Covers**

Compiled by SAVITHA GAUTAM



Phone Clones: Authenticity Work in the Transnational Service Economy

*Special Arrangement*

### **Phone Clones: Authenticity Work in the Transnational Service Economy**

**Kiran Mirchandani**

**(Cambridge University Press, Rs. 695)**

There are boundaries, be they cultural, national or ethnic, when you become part of a team at a call centre. So what is it all about?

In this book, Kiran writes about the experiences of some men and women from various cities such as Bengaluru, Delhi and Pune, who work at call centres and have adapted to an unusual lifestyle.

Having interviewed employees extensively, Kiran talks about how the capital crosses national borders, colonial histories and racial hierarchies to become inextricably intertwined.

As a result, call centre workers in India have to place themselves in the shoes of their Western clients – to represent themselves both as foreign workers who do not threaten Western jobs and as being ‘just like’ their customers in the West. It’s a tough act, but nonetheless challenging, and, as Mirchandani calls it, ‘authenticity work’, which involves establishing familiarity in light of expectations of difference.

A call centre in a complex set-up where there’s interplay of colonial histories, gender practices, class relations, and national interests. Some of the chapters that touch upon various issues are titled Language Training, the Outsourcing Backlash, Surveillance Schooling for Professional Clones, “Don’t Take Calls, Make Contact!”: Legitimizing Racist Abuse and Being Nowhere in the World: Synchronous Work and Gendered Time.

The book provides a peek at a world where technology meets business and where people interact, and caste, nationality and colour are no bar.

### **The Outsiders**

**William N. Thorndike**

**(Harvard Business Review Press, Rs. 995)**

Being a CEO has its perks, no doubt. But what it entails is no mean task. And that's what Thorndike says in this book. He tries to redefine what a successful CEO has to be like. Ask most people what describes an effective CEO, and invariably the answer is, "A seasoned manager with deep industry expertise."

In this book, though, you meet not really high profile CEOs whose success stories have indeed become blueprints to follow. Instead, you learn more about eight iconoclastic leaders who helmed firms where returns on average outperformed the S&P 500 (a stock market index based on the market capitalisations of 500 leading companies) by over 20 times.

Their names might not sound familiar, but their story is as stunning as say Jack Welch's. Henry Singleton, Bill Anders and Tom Murphy and the companies run such as General Cinema, Ralston Purina, The Washington Post Company and Berkshire Hathaway are discussed in detail here.

As you read along, you understand and discover the leadership qualities in these entrepreneurs and realise that's what helped them make it big.

Humble, unassuming, and often frugal, these 'outsiders' have shunned Wall Street, kept away from the media and, more important, shied away from management trends. Instead they honed specific characteristics such as a laser-sharp focus on per share value rather than sales or earnings, a talent for allocating capital and human resources, the belief that cash flow, not reported earnings, determines a company's long-term value and a penchant for giving local managers autonomy to release entrepreneurial energy.

Thorndike has done extensive research on each of the people features, and their success story makes for an inspiring and most definitely, compelling read.

**Start-up Sutra: What the Angels Won't Tell You about Business and Life****Rohit Prasad****(Hachette India, Rs. 199)**

The true stories of two sets of people are juxtaposed to present a larger picture about the art of entrepreneurship.

It is not just about setting up shop by ticking off a checklist; it about realising a dream, a vision and doing it with courage, conviction and a combination of chutzpah, sagacity and luck.

In bringing to life the daily struggles and the impossible external odds along the journey to achievement, the book catalogues the qualities that an entrepreneur needs. For everyone who dares to dream big, this book may change the way you think.

Keywords: [Phone Clones](#), [Start-up Sutra](#), [The Outsiders](#)