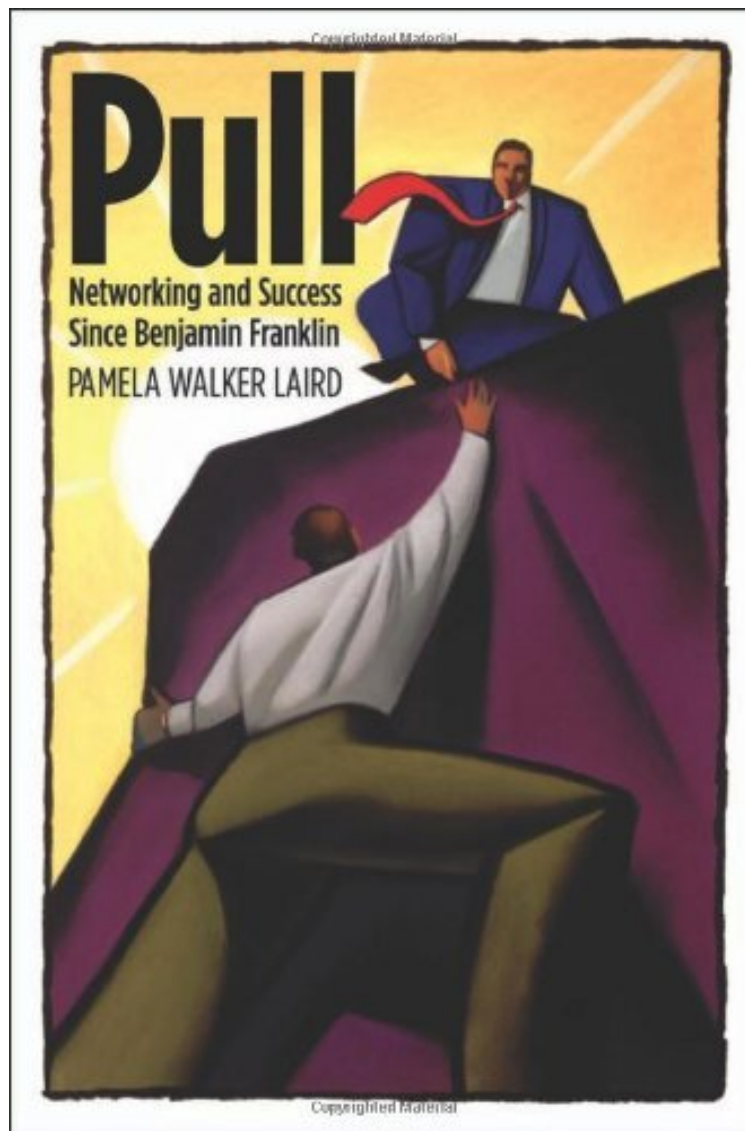


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Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin (Harvard Studies in Business History)

Pamela Walker Laird

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Pamela Walker Laird : Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin (Harvard Studies in Business History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin (Harvard Studies in Business History):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Peppy PowersExcellent, Fascinating book!9 of 13 people found the following review helpful. DisappointingBy Donald SteinyI usually get better ratings for my reviews

if I give books good reviews, but I found this one disappointing and would suggest that readers might better spend their time on other books about networks and networking. The book presses the unremarkable point that social cohesion can exclude people, but it has an angry tone that makes this wrong. Rather than shedding light on the psychological and social forces that replicate these structures, it reads more like a catalog of the injustices that this have been metted out. The philosophical issue of what makes an ideal world where everyone is the best off is complex, and this book does not address this. Most importantly, it references very few of the books and studies that have been done on social networks for the past 70 years. I would recommend that readers look at the works of Mark Granovetter, Charles Tilly, Harrison White and others who have made significant contributions to our understanding of social structure, much of it based on empirical research and not opinions. The only network researcher she mentions, Wayne Baker, she does in a negative light. I, personally, find Baker's empirical research much more compelling than Laird's. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not Your Own Bootstraps By Tom Field If you subscribe to the notion of that oft repeated mantra that "success is all about who you know," then Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin (Harvard University Press; 2006) offers all the confirmation and evidence you would ever need. The value of social capital simply cannot be overrated, according to author Pamela Walker Laird. You can pickpocket all the examples you want from historical figures you may have erroneously thought were self-made men. Their achievements—much like the not so distant election campaign rhetoric that affirmed "you didn't build that"—were the end results of effective networking. Hands shaking hands. And hands pulling one another along the way. You can't dispute the premise of this book. Most thinking people know success doesn't bubble up out of an abyss. But in 439 pages, Laird is not going to leave out the other side of the equation. She spends adequate time in identifying those who weren't pulled. Those who didn't have social capital. Those who could have contributed, but were pushed away due to injustice and discrimination. Is Pull just a historical study? A diatribe against inequality? An unrealistic view of how the world works? Or a propaganda piece for reshaping the system? I'm not going to pull you into that discussion right now. Read the book.—Tom Field

Redefining the way we view business success, Pamela Laird demolishes the popular American self-made story as she exposes the social dynamics that navigate some people toward opportunity and steer others away. Who gets invited into the networks of business opportunity? What does an unacceptable candidate lack? The answer is social capital—all those social assets that attract respect, generate confidence, evoke affection, and invite loyalty. In retelling success stories from Benjamin Franklin to Andrew Carnegie to Bill Gates, Laird goes beyond personality, upbringing, and social skills to reveal the critical common key—access to circles that control and distribute opportunity and information. She explains how civil rights activism and feminism in the 1960s and 1970s helped demonstrate that personnel practices violated principles of equal opportunity. She evaluates what social privilege actually contributes to business success, and analyzes the balance between individual characteristics—effort, innovation, talent—and social factors such as race, gender, class, and connections. In contrasting how Americans have prospered—or not—with how we have talked about prospering, Laird offers rich insights into how business really operates and where its workings fit within American culture. From new perspectives on entrepreneurial achievement to the role of affirmative action and the operation of modern corporate personnel systems, Pull shows that business is a profoundly social process, and that no one can succeed alone.

Laird offers an illuminating analysis of how exceptional achievers have combined individual talent with social assets to rise in society. (Hardy Green Businessweek 2006-03-13) [A] highly readable appraisal of the social dynamics that navigate some Americans towards opportunity while steering others away; Pamela Laird has written an important book about the social forces that have blocked individual endeavour. (Margaret Walsh Business History 2007-03-01) Laird's historical perspective yields fresh insights into the history of American business practices and offers an original perspective on the challenges made by feminism and civil rights in the last decades of the twentieth century. (Kathy Peiss Business History 2007-04-01) Laird provides a comprehensive perspective and rich historical insight into the importance of social dynamics in achieving career success. She retells the success stories of famous Americans ranging from Horatio Alger, Benjamin Franklin, and Andrew Carnegie to Bill Gates and beyond to make the point that none were simply 'self-made men.' (T. Gutteridge Choice 2006-06-01) This eye-opening book helps explain why so many individuals—and nearly all African Americans and women—were so long left out when they exhibited the same intelligence and ambition as those who 'made it.' In emphasizing the social forces that blocked pathways up, in addition to those which held people down, Laird presents an exciting new way to think about success. (Walter A. Friedman, author of Birth of a Salesman) A bold, ambitious, and important book. Laird shows that the key to understanding how people succeed is social capital—the networks, mentors, role models, manners, connections, and understanding of codes of behavior that enable some Americans but not others to advance. (Daniel Horowitz, author of The Anxieties of Affluence) This eye-opening book helps explain why so many individuals—and nearly all African Americans and women—were so long left out when they exhibited the same intelligence and ambition as those who 'made it.' In emphasizing the social forces that blocked pathways up, in

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About the Author Pamela Walker Laird is Professor of History at the University of Colorado Denver.