

**Business books****FT business books: what to read this month**

Charting the rise of the influencing industry and how experts could make better leaders



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## ‘Credible: The Power of Expert Leaders’, by Amanda Goodall

In this book, Bayes Business School leadership professor Amanda Goodall outlines a vision to shake up her own profession. Too much of what is held up as good leadership practice is based around personality traits and character. None of this has apparently made much difference. As Goodall writes: “Given the abundance of research into leadership, why is so little reliable and generalizable information known?”

Goodall wants business leaders and decision makers to focus instead on appointing and supporting “credible expert leaders”, rather than generalist MBA-type managers, as a way to guarantee better leadership. *Credible*, as Goodall explains, is the result of the “line of research I have followed for many years”, and her hope is that it is applicable to all.

Goodall packs the book with examples of what she means, particularly in the healthcare arena. The heads of the Mayo Clinic and the Cleveland Clinic, two very successful US hospital groups, are both run by physicians, not general managers. Meanwhile in 2021, not a single clinician was appointed to a major UK health service review body — a group led by a former soldier.

The latter part of the book focuses on how to make experts into great leaders, and making whole organisations expert-run as specialists are developed throughout their careers. If more people adopted this approach, it might also mean that they could save money by not needing expert advice from big, incredibly expensive consultancies. As Goodall wryly points out, those consultants always take care to train up experts within their own ranks.