Primal Management: Unraveling the Secrets of Human Nature to Drive High Performance
Paul Herr. Amacom, $25 (288p) ISBN 978-0-8144-1396-8

It's pure myth that human beings are fundamentally rational creatures—we are sublimely emotional at heart and work best when treated as such, argues consultant Herr, who contends that companies need to take a hard-science approach to the soft side of the business if they want to maximize their gains. He explores the human social appetites—innovation, skill mastery and deployment, goal attainment, cooperation and self-protection—maintaining that these drives are as integral to our biology as our need for food, sex and love. People want to excel at work, and companies that encourage that desire bring out the best in their employees. Arguing against a hyper-rational, bureaucratic management, Herr advocates a “tribal” connected workforce, a corporate superorganism composed of individual human beings who strive toward the same goal. Some fairly heavy theory is backed up with solid practical advice for leaders, including a methodology to create a high-performance workplace. The biological approach lends a fresh aspect to the subject of employee performance enhancement, and the well-researched, entertaining presentation should make this an appealing reference for progressive business leaders. (May)