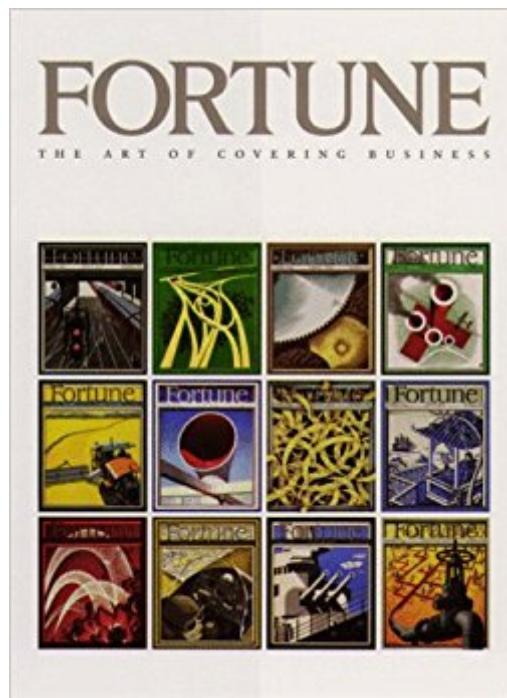


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# Fortune: The Art Of Covering Business



## **Synopsis**

Fortune's cover collection, 1930-1950, celebrating business, industry, culture, and the art of a world at work.

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Gibbs Publishing (October 1999)

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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## **Customer Reviews**

Fortune's cover collection, 1930-1950, celebrating business, industry, culture, and the art of a world at work.

Gorgeous book! Exactly as described, the illustrations even better than expected. Carefully packed, arrived when promised. Would buy from again...

epic illustrations.. one of the best book for graphic art!

Poorly designed. I am in love with the Art Nouveau and Art Deco period in America. Fortune Magazine created some of the most spectacular cover design in the 1930's of any magazine in the world and I wanted all of them. Why did I want them. Who really knows. In any case, when I heard about this book, I thought that it, too, would glorify this period and these covers. I was hoping it would be, at the very least, the size of the magazine but even there I was disappointed. And, then there was the extremely ordinary design. An art book should be an "art book", do you know what I mean. It should validate in its being, your love for the subject. Not here.

Henry Luce, the cofounder of Time Magazine, decided to launch Fortune after the market crash in 1929. He priced it at a dollar a copy (about ten dollars in today's currency value), and set out to make it the best possible magazine. In the publisher's eyes (as taken from an advertising brochure), American business "has importance -- even majesty -- so the magazine . . . will look and feel important -- even majestic." " . . . [E]very page will be a work of art." Luce went on to say, "[T]he new magazine will be as beautiful as exists in the United States. If possible, the undisputed most beautiful." Early staff members often later became famous poets and authors (such as Archibald MacLeish and James Agee) who worked just enough to earn a living, and then went back to their poetry. Luce found it easier to teach poets about business than to teach those who knew about business how to write. The essays contain many rewarding stories. One of the best is how Thomas Maitland Cleland designed the first cover by sketching it upside down on a tablecloth in a speakeasy for the editor, Parker Lloyd-Smith. The original tablecloth, complete with drawing, is still mounted in the Time-Life building. Some of the famous cover artists included Diego Rivera and Fernande Leger. In those days, the cover was independent of the stories in the issue. The cover was simply to attract attention and to encourage thought. If you remember early Saturday Evening Post covers by Norman Rockwell, you will get the idea. By 1948, the vision changed. Luce wanted Fortune professionalized. The new concept was for "a magazine with a mission . . . to assist in the successful development of American business enterprise at home and abroad." By 1950, the artful covers were gone. Now I must admit here that I found the covers displayed to be primarily of interest as reflecting social attitudes toward business. So I found these images to be like Monet's Gare St. Lazare, except without the appeal of Monet's technique. Frankly, the art did not move me or appeal to me except for one Leger cover. Perhaps the art will speak more to you. I graded the book down one star accordingly. A value to me in this book was stopping to think about how much business has changed in the last 71 years, since Fortune was founded. That was "before Social Security, . . . the sitdown strikes of the thirties, . . . the creation of the SEC." " . . . [D]isclosure requirements for public companies were virtually nonexistent." As a result, companies didn't tell anybody anything. So it was a pretty bold idea to write about business. Contrast that with out information overload of data about every possible business and economic angle. What a difference! How much time do you spend obtaining business information now? How can that be reduced while increasing your effectiveness? Perhaps, like the Fortune art, you can get an overview that will connect with what needs to be done . . . and found a great American business in the process like Fortune Magazine did. When was the last time a bunch of 20-somethings started a new business that featured art and

majesty, as Luce and his colleagues did? Aren't we overdue for some quality again? Take in the big picture!

Fortune magazine, for many years, had the luxury of using eye-catching graphics on its covers unrelated to the contents inside. This rather unusual arrangement was because most copies were on subscription to the folks who ran the nation's business and any newsstand sales were a bonus. The fact that it did not have to use its cover to compete with other magazines for sales allowed the various Art Editors to go for great illustrations from the leading graphic artists of the day. All the covers from the first issue in February 1930 to December 1950 are shown in this lovely designed and printed book, either one to a page or four to a page (I felt the four to a page ones could have been a little bigger) and each year starts on a page with a few news items and some stats about business. The magazine's owner Henry Luce chose Tom Cleland to art edit the first issue and he came up with a rather ugly format for the covers, a double frame devise, the logo was in one and the illustration in another, I think this heavy framing design rather spoils the early covers and fortunately by 1942 it was dropped. Daniel Okrent explains in his short introduction that cover artists were chosen for their creativity, some of the best graphic artists commissioned included Fred Ludekens, Erik Nitsche, A M Cassandre, Joseph Binder, George Gusti, John Atherton and Lester Beal. Although artists from the fine arts were also used, such as Ben Shahn, Fernand Leger, Charles Sheeler and Diego Rivera I don't think these covers work as well because their work is not suited to the constraints of commercial graphics. By 1950 Fortune, now a very successful business monthly and making Henry Luce even richer, changed its editorial focus into a magazine that Luce said should "...assist in the successful development of American business enterprise at home and abroad." Covers now had to work harder as other business weeklies and monthlies all competed for the CEO's time and the luxury of a stunning cover image for its own sake had gone. This lovely book shows you the best of Fortune covers.

Fortune: The Art Of Covering Business is a compendium of cover art drawn from past issues of Fortune magazine in celebration of its 70th anniversary. These covers are reproduced in full color and span the magazine from 1930 to 1950. Informatively enhanced with a Foreword by John Huey and an Historical Essay by Daniel Okrent, Fortune: The Art Of Covering Business is a welcome celebration drawing from a spectrum of artistic talents who provided visual symbols of America's burgeoning industrial society on the cover of one of the nation's most influential and prestigious magazines.

The history of business can be seen through the covers of Fortune magazine. One can see how business has changed from 1930 to 1950 month by month. The art work is excellent and is a historical reference of economic and industrial changes in North America and the world. There is some interesting reading, as well.

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