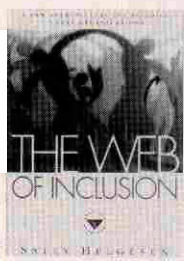


THE WEB OF INCLUSION: A NEW ARCHITECTURE FOR BUILDING GREAT ORGANIZATIONS

BY SALLY HELGENSEN



In *The Web of Inclusion*, author Sally Helgesen presents an innovative blueprint for structuring and managing organizations in the information age. What Helgesen terms a

“web of inclusion” is an organizational structure that minimizes differences in people’s ranks and maximizes the flow of information among them. A leader in such an organization sees herself or himself in the center of it, not on top.

Research for an earlier book by Helgesen, *The Female Advantage*, showed that many successful women in leadership positions tend to share power and information in this way. But the concept is not gender-specific, she shows in the new book.

“While it is surely no accident that ‘the web of inclusion’ should have been identified in a study of women’s organizations, the structure has a significance and utility that far transcends the bounds of gender,” Helgesen says. “As the new century approaches, organizations of every variety are being

challenged to reconfigure in ways that will make them better able to take advantage of innovative technologies and more responsive to a vastly expanded market—while in the process becoming more satisfactory places for people to work.”

Helgesen explains that the last imperative is not just an issue of doing the right thing; it’s a sensible way to make use of a valuable resource. People can be more creative problem solvers, she says, in an organization that makes them feel valued.

Webs of inclusion do not have to be organization-wide, she says. Many begin in one part of an organization and later become models for large-scale transformation.

Helgesen shows the web in action by detailing a series of five case studies.

- ▶ Intel Corporation used a small, innovative web to redefine its customer base—leading to a total redefinition of its business.

- ▶ At the *Miami Herald*, the concept enabled the newspaper to achieve diversity within its ranks and its leadership. A web structure brought former “outsiders” into the decision-making loop and increased employees’ control over their work.

- ▶ Boston’s Beth Israel Hospital challenged the medical hierarchy by placing its nursing staff at the center of its

care-giving web. The repositioning of nursing affected every aspect of hospital life and transformed the hospital’s ability to meet patients’ needs.

- ▶ Anixter—a global networking specialist, based in Skokie, Illinois—is the setting for a case study of particular interest to trainers. Helgesen calls Anixter “a great place to watch the paradox of an entrepreneurial company trying to make sophisticated training part of its process.”

- ▶ The cable-television network Nickelodeon has extended its web to form partnerships. It allies itself both with customers—including children, who make up the network’s target audience—and with other companies.

In the final section of the book, Helgesen describes strategies for establishing webs of inclusion, including a look at the relationship between an organization’s structure and culture and the physical design of its work areas.

Author and speaker Sally Helgesen is based in New York City.

The Web of Inclusion: A New Architecture for Building Great Organizations, by Sally Helgesen. 304 pp. New York, NY: Currency/Doubleday. This book is available through ASTD Press, 703/683-8100. Order code: HETW. Priority code: KFA. \$23 (ASTD members); \$25 (nonmembers).

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LIVING WITHOUT A GOAL: FINDING THE FREEDOM TO LIVE A CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE LIFE

BY JAMES OGIIVY



To workaholic readers who climbed to corporate success in the goal-oriented 1980s, author James Ogilvy’s philosophy—summed up in the book’s title—might sound frivo-

lous, or even blasphemous. But *Living Without a Goal* doesn’t advocate a life of utter aimlessness.

Ogilvy differentiates between per-

sonal, individual goals (such as climbing Mount Everest, writing a novel, or raising a family) and grand, overriding Goals-with-a-capital-G (such as achieving Wealth, Love, Social Justice, or Spiritual Enlightenment). Personal goals are valid and necessary, he says. But we limit ourselves when we set our sights on a Grand Goal such as Success or Wisdom.

Once, absolute values guided our decisions. Now, says Ogilvy, we can’t even agree that such absolutes exist—let alone agree on what those values might be. Standards of right and wrong are constantly shifting. And because the old absolutes have fallen, the Grand Goals that grew out of them no longer provide fixed stars

to steer by.

Ogilvy doesn’t mean that Happiness, Wealth, and Justice are necessarily bad things—just that we shouldn’t arrange our entire lives around attaining them. A Grand Goal necessitates a focus on some distant future. But sooner or later, Ogilvy says, it’s time to cease preparing for life and start living it. “I have come to believe that a life enslaved to a single Goal, no matter how noble, becomes a mechanism rather than an organism, a business plan rather than a biography, a tool rather than a gift.”

Ogilvy speaks of the paradox of “useful uselessness” and the goal of Goallessness.

“Too much of our work amounts to

the drudgery of arranging means toward ends, mechanically placing the right foot in front of the left ... moving down narrow corridors toward narrow goals. Play widens the halls. Work will always be with us, and many works are worthy. But the worthiest works of all often reflect an artful creativity that looks more like play than work."

In *Living Without a Goal*, Ogilvy frequently relates work—and life—to art. His discussion pulls in lessons from a wide-ranging list of other disciplines, as well—including history, music, Chaos theory, linguistics, physics, ethics, classical mythology, and economics.

Even the chapter titles are intriguing; for example, "For Love of Narcissus" and "How Howard Hughes Died for Our Sins."

Of course, this is not a book about training, human resource management, or organization development. But Ogilvy's eloquent analyses have implications for all aspects of work and the ways we balance and integrate it into the rest of our lives. Anyone with an interest in human development can glean insights and inspiration from his intelligent prose. Even those who disagree with Ogilvy's arguments will find much food for thought.

"Let go the goal of unnecessary riches at others' expense," he advises. "Give up the goal of wealth. You probably have as much money as you need. Much more may bring more trouble, not less.

"Let go the goal of total self-sufficiency. You will never achieve it, and you will destroy your relationships with others while trying.

"Give up the goal of independence. The world does not work that way.... And anyway, your friends want to help you....

"Let go the goal of happiness. That sweet bird lights only when least expected.

"Let go the goal of fame. Its concave mirror distorts as it amplifies.

"Treat these goals and others like them as powerful medicines, used as prescribed, but dangerous if misused. Keep out of the reach of children."

James Ogilvy is vice-president and co-founder of Global Business Network. He is based in Emeryville,

Worthy work reflects an artful creativity that looks like play

California.

Living Without a Goal: Finding the Freedom To Live a Creative and Innovative Life, by James Ogilvy. 201 pp. New York, NY: Currency/Doubleday, 800/431-0725. \$22.95 (U.S.); \$29.95 (Canada).

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TWO APPROACHES TO A BIAS-FREE WORKPLACE

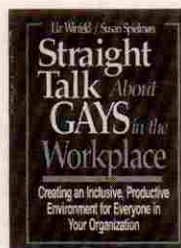
Gay men and lesbians make up as much as 10 percent of the population, according to various studies. They are part of the workforce and customer base of virtually all organizations—in all industries and professions. Still, the culture of most U.S. companies tends to ignore them.

More and more gay men and lesbians are "coming out of the closet"—making their sexual orientation known and asking to be recognized and treated as valued members of their organizations. The responses they receive from employers and co-workers range from wholehearted support to discouragement, discrimination, and harassment.

The authors of the two books reviewed below take different approaches to workplace issues of sexual orientation.

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT GAYS IN THE WORKPLACE: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE, PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

BY LIZ WINFELD AND SUSAN SPIELMAN



In *Straight Talk About Gays in the Workplace*, Susan Spielman and Liz Winfeld state that companies need to recognize and accept the fact that gay men and les-

sbians are an integral part of the diverse workforce.

All too often, gay employees in hostile work environments suffer a loss of morale, effectiveness, and commitment. And ultimately, say the authors of *Straight Talk*, it is the company that suffers the greatest loss.

According to the authors, heterosexuals often contend that sexual behavior has nothing to do with the workplace, so gay employees have no reason to "come out" at work. "This is a heterosexist question that deserves a straight (pun intended) answer," respond Winfeld and Spielman. "Sexual behavior does not and should not have anything to do with work. Sexual orientation, however, is not sexual behavior. Orientation is who a person is, not what a person does.

"Heterosexuality is constantly on display in the workplace from straight people chatting about their vacations with lovers or spouses and families, to the pictures of spouses or opposite-sex partners on their desks, to the freedom straight people feel to bring their spouses or dates to a company function....

"When straight people do any of these things, no one accuses them of flaunting their sexuality or making an issue of their sexual behavior. Heterosexuality is the standard, so people are free to be heterosexual. Heterosexism manifests itself in the homophobic belief that all gay people are about is their sex lives. If being straight is much more than sexual behavior, why is being gay not accepted as much more than sexual behavior?"

The authors debunk some common myths about sexual orientation, including the following:

- Being gay is a choice. "All straight people who say 'gays choose to be gay' should ask themselves whether they chose to be straight."

- Gay employees are found only in fashion, entertainment, and the arts. Actually, the authors say, 40 percent more gay men and lesbians work in finance and insurance than in entertainment and the arts. Ten times as many work in computers as in fashion.

- "All gay people have AIDS, and if we let them work here, we'll get AIDS too." Most gay women and men do not have AIDS and are not HIV-posi-

tive. In fact, gay men are no longer the highest-risk group for AIDS, say Winfeld and Spielman. The other essential fact is that people contract AIDS only in very specific ways, which are unlikely to occur in most workplaces.

The authors share practical strategies for creating an atmosphere of inclusiveness, discuss the issue of "coming out" at work, and answer common questions about sexual orientation in the workplace. They also relate some true stories about what it's like to be gay in today's business world—with case studies on and interviews with employees at Lotus, Polaroid, the Walt Disney Company, and other well-known organizations.

Especially useful are Winfeld and Spielman's discussions of such practical aspects as how to design and deliver employee education on sexual orientation, HIV, and AIDS; how to make decisions about domestic-partner benefits; and how to set workplace policies about HIV and AIDS.

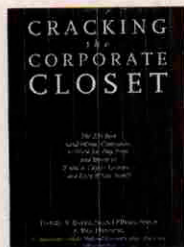
Liz Winfeld and Susan Spielman are the founders and principals of Common Ground, a Natick, Massachusetts, consulting firm that specializes in workplace education about sexual orientation.

Straight Talk About Gays in the Workplace: Creating an Inclusive, Productive Environment for Everyone in Your Organization, by Liz Winfeld and Susan Spielman. 216 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699. \$21.95.

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CRACKING THE CORPORATE CLOSET: THE 200 BEST (AND WORST) COMPANIES TO WORK FOR, BUY FROM, AND INVEST IN IF YOU'RE GAY OR LESBIAN—AND EVEN IF YOU AREN'T

BY DANIEL B. BAKER, SEAN O'BRIEN STRUB, AND BILL HENNING



Cracking the Corporate Closet paints a detailed landscape of the climate in U.S. companies for their gay and lesbian employees. To collect the information, researchers

surveyed firms of all sizes in a wide variety of industries. Authors Daniel Baker, Sean O'Brien Strub, and Bill Henning also interviewed present and former employees and examined press reports on the companies.

In this book—written in association with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute—they compile and analyze the results of the multifaceted research efforts.

The authors identify three yardsticks for measuring corporate progress in dealing with the gay community:

■ *There are three yardsticks for measuring corporate progress with the gay community* ■

- ▶ whether a company includes sexual orientation in its anti-discrimination policy
- ▶ whether it offers domestic-partner benefits
- ▶ whether it perceives gay men and lesbians as an important market and is sensitive about how to sell to that market.

Based on those measures, Baker, Strub, and Henning present a list of the 12 American companies surveyed that they say provide the best environment for their gay and lesbian employees. The "winners" list includes such firms as Apple Computer, Ben & Jerry's,

ADDITIONAL READING

Creating Customer Value: The Path to Sustainable Competitive Advantage, by Earl Naumann. 279 pp. Cincinnati, OH: Thomson Executive Press, 800/347-7707. \$24.95.

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The New Corporate Activism: Harnessing the Power of Grassroots Tactics for Your Organization, by Edward A. Grefe and Martin Linsky. 273 pp. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 800/2-MC-GRAW. \$39.95.

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The 24-Hour Business: Maximizing Productivity Through Round-the-Clock Operations, by Richard M. Coleman. 195 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699. \$24.95.

Circle 251 on reader service card.

Starting Out, Starting Over: Finding the Work That's Waiting for You, by Linda Peterson. 190 pp. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 800/624-1765. \$14.95.

Circle 252 on reader service card.

Managing Human Resources in Small and Mid-Sized Companies (second edition), by Diane Arthur. 338 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699. \$59.95.

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Transformation Thinking: Tools and Techniques That Open the Door to Powerful New Thinking for Every Member of Your Organization, by Joyce Wycoff, with Tim Richardson. 249 pp. New York, NY: Berkley Publishing, 800/223-0510. \$12.

Circle 254 on reader service card.

Job Power: How To Thrive From 9 to 5, by Grant Sharp. 298 pp. Redmond, WA: Treasure House, 206/881-6461. \$17 (U.S.), \$21 (Canada).

Circle 255 on reader service card.

The Eureka Principle: Alternative Thinking for Personal and Business Success, by Colin Turner. 165 pp. Rockport, MA: Element Books, 800/526-0275. \$19.95.

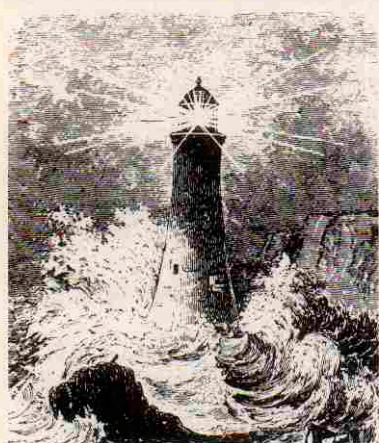
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Creating a Flexible Workplace: How To Select and Manage Alternative Work Options (second edition), by Barney Olmsted and Suzanne Smith. 402 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699. \$49.95.

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Secrets of Power Presentations, by Peter Urs Bender. 236 pp. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 800/387-5085. \$12.95.

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■ Books

Fannie Mae, Quark, and Ziff-Davis.

In addition, the authors single out 12 companies for providing the worst corporate environments for gay and lesbian employees.

After introducing the survey and presenting an overview of the results, Baker, Strub, and Henning embark on a detailed discussion of workplace sexual-orientation issues, organized by field or industry.

Unlike *Straight Talk*, which is upbeat and practical in tone, *Cracking the Corporate Closet* is hard-hitting and often blunt. The authors aren't shy about laying on criticism when they think it's deserved. In effect, the book is a challenge to all companies and industries to provide environments that treat gay and lesbian employees with equality and respect.

"It is not accidental when a company is at the forefront in addressing issues of concern to their lesbian and gay employees. One major determining factor is the nature of the company's business.

"The biggest strides have been made in the high-tech industries.... There are some obvious reasons for this. One is that almost all of these are young, start-up companies. They do not have an entrenched, conservative corporate culture to overcome....

"Another major factor is that these companies are in a highly competitive environment where the major input is human brainpower. A highly skilled technician or programmer is extremely valuable, no matter what her or his sexual orientation is....

"At the same time, there are other industries where lesbian and gay issues are only beginning to be addressed. The most blatant and unsurprising example is the defense industry, which hides behind the notoriously homophobic policies of the Pentagon in a way that actively discriminates against its homosexual employees."

The rhetoric will put some readers on the defensive. But the authors' analysis combines exhaustive, quantitative research with real-world examples, making this a comprehensive, eye-opening expose of the policies and attitudes that lesbians and gay men face on the job in

■ *The authors aren't shy about laying on criticism when they think it's deserved* ■

corporate America.

Baker is the president of Quotient Research, which publishes a newsletter about the gay and lesbian market. Strub is publisher and executive editor of *Poz* magazine, and Henning is deputy editor of *Poz*.

Cracking the Corporate Closet: The 200 Best (and Worst) Companies To Work for, Buy From, and Invest in If You're Gay or Lesbian—and Even If You Aren't, by Daniel B. Baker, Sean O'Brien Strub, and Bill Henning. 242 pp. New York, NY: HarperBusiness, 800/242-7737. \$23.

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This month's "Books" column was written by Catherine Petrini, a freelance writer based in Alexandria, Virginia. Send books for consideration to Books Editor, Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.