
Books

Easing Transitional Pain

Fitting In: How to Get a Good Start in Your New Job, by Natasha Josefowitz and Herman Gadon

Thousands of people change jobs every year—in fact, one out of five Americans. On any given workday, there are 80,000 “new kids on the block.” This book, written by two management consultants who know the feeling well, tells how to go from being an outsider to an inside contributor on the working team. It shows how to get off to a good start in a new position whether you’ve been promoted, transferred, or are brand new in the field.

In a conversational tone, *Fitting In* presents case studies of successful and failed transitions as well as insightful advice on surviving and thriving during those first stressful days and weeks. “The new employee must learn whether to address superiors by their first or last names, to eat lunch with people from other departments, to stay late and show commitment or to keep a messy desk, demonstrating great activity.”

This book will be most valuable to new or soon-to-be-new employees who are trying to understand and ease the discomfort of transition. Included are tips on recognizing the differences between teasing, testing, and harassing, as well as learning the social norms (“How long are coffee breaks?” or “How strict is the dress code?”) and the task norms (“Do people work until the task is done or punch out at 5:00?”, “Are conversations confirmed by memos?”, or “Does the boss’ open-door policy extend to everyone?”).

Other outlined strategies for coping with newness include making a good first impression, achieving the

right mental attitude, dealing with the logistics of relocation, and becoming part of an internal work group.

Fitting In also can give managers perspective on the plight of new employees and lists some basic ways to make the transition easier: “. . . give the new employee a tour of the work place, pointing out the wash-room facilities, the coffee machine, the cafeteria, where to go on breaks,” and so on. On the whole the writing is interesting and thoughtful, although some of the discussion is rather simplistic and perhaps too digressive for some tastes.

The authors claim that although the road from outsider to insider may be rocky, it has identifiable steps. And while knowing the pitfalls won’t necessarily make them disappear, it can make the crossing easier. *Fitting In* shows how.

The book is the result of a five-year research study based on interviews of more than 1,000 people in various fields and at various job levels who have been new themselves at one time. Josefowitz adds a personal touch with excerpts of her poetry from a previous publication.

Calculated Change

Rites of Passage at \$100,000 + . . . the Insider’s Guide to Absolutely Everything About Executive Job-Changing, by John Lucht

This book is fast paced, engrossing, and amusing. The emphasis is on changing jobs. If you can’t find a job using this book, the authors claim you’re unemployable. From developing contacts, to writing persuasive letters and resumes, to interviewing successfully, to dealing with pushy recruiters, to using direct mail

in a personal job campaign—this book outlines it all.

Lucht takes a perceptive and refreshingly direct look at self-marketing, at how the business of head-hunting really operates, and at how to avoid butting heads with self-interested recruiters. “Circumventing the recruiters,” he writes, “and going straight to the employer is the smartest move in nine cases out of ten.”

The breezy yet forceful book also shows how to bypass a regular job right into consulting, how to purchase your own business, how to pursue one job in secret while holding down another, and how to protect and improve the job you have through negotiation. “All you have to lose is your anonymity,” Lucht says.

Rites of Passage offers examples and tips for writing more lively and persuasive letters and resumes. Lucht advises not to be overly brief, just more compelling. “Your resume must perform two functions. Brevity suits one. . . and defeats the other. . . Cut out all the adjectives. But be specific. Cite plenty of facts in a tight, interesting way.”

Lucht is subtle like Dr. Ruth or Helen Gurley Brown are subtle. (“Avoid looking tasteless and cheap,” he cautions. “Avoid looking like the passively packaged product of an outplacement firm.”) Lucht addresses sensitive issues in a way that impels action. (“Here’s how to mount a wide-ranging campaign right under your boss’ nose and never let him suspect you’re looking.”) His writing style and the publisher’s use of large type and bold-faced callouts make for quick, lively reading. Also included are valuable references: a directory of 91 leading recruiting firms and key contacts; a bibliography of 150 directories for investigating industries, companies, and their executives; and a fictional case study on how a major recruiting firm fills a high-level position.

Books

Changing Times

Effective Human Resource Development: How to Build a Strong and Responsive HRD Function, by Neal E. Chalofsky and Carlene Reinhart

American organizations are experiencing a drastic paradigm shift—that is, our working assumptions are in conflict with the realities of day-to-day life. Many of the formerly accepted “truths” about HRD functions now are not only irrelevant, but they may even counter overall organizational competence.

Effective Human Resource Development, based on a three-year research study, provides practical guidelines for building a successful HRD function in public and private organizations of all sizes. Written for line and staff managers and other HRD professionals with an extensive knowledge base, the book is intended for use in conjunction with existing programs and strategic plans. Checklists and charts will help practitioners evaluate the components of individual programs.

In ten chapters, each of which builds on the chapter before, the authors share their research findings and numerous examples of tested methods for making the HRD function more effective. They encourage identifying and using all available resources to their fullest. The book includes an extensive literature review and excerpts of interviews with practitioners.

The book is not a conclusive summary; it contains no quick-fix answers or one-minute concepts. Rather it is a point of departure for practitioners. The authors acknowledge that achieving organizational effectiveness is hard work and time consuming; this book presents ways of looking at, assessing, and improving the critical HRD function so that organizations can provide the ser-

vices and support needed to build competence.

Chalofsky is a visiting professor of human resource development at George Washington University and former director of the HRD graduate program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Reinhart is manager of computer-assisted instruction design for customer and marketing education for the U.S. Marketing Group at Xerox Corporation in Leesburg, Virginia.

The ABCs of Training

One-On-One/Step-By-Step: A Supervisor's Guide to Training in the Workplace, by John J. Connor

Ideally, supervisors know their workers better than anyone. They know what the jobs are and how they should be performed. They're also in the best position to observe performance, to spot performance deficiencies, and to initiate corrective action. Supervisors, therefore, must know how to develop and conduct good training.

The basic training system developed in this book patterns the title: one-on-one and step-by-step. The system is “best-suited for training small tasks, not complex, lengthy, involved ones.” It will be particularly useful at small organizations, branch offices, or remote work sites where supervisors must do the training, often with little support from other functions.

Each outlined chapter begins with objectives and key terms to know; a glossary defines basic training terminology. The six chapter titles are “The Supervisor's Challenge,” “The Supervisor and Training,” “Training as Communication,” “Training Objectives,” “One-on-One: The Training Session,” and “Feedback and Follow-Up.” Training objective

matrices are key to this system. Sample forms show how to organize tasks, conditions, standards, and objectives to guide the step-by-step development of a program.

For supervisors with little or no training experience, this book provides a quick look at the role of a trainer and at the how-tos of setting up basic training programs. The language is simple, straightforward, and jargon-free, and Connor steers clear of design elements that might confuse the beginning trainer. Connor is an international training consultant and the editor and publisher of Training Resources Catalogs.

Fitting In: How to Get a Good Start in Your New Job. 222 pp. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. \$9.95.

Circle No. 189 on Reader Service Card.

Rites of Passage at \$100,000+ . . . the Insider's Guide to Absolutely Everything About Executive Job-Changing. 545 pp. New York: The Viceroy Press Inc. \$24.95.

Circle No. 190 on Reader Service Card.

Effective Human Resource Development. 146 pp. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. \$19.95.

Circle No. 191 on Reader Service Card.

One-On-One/Step-By-Step: A Supervisor's Guide to Training in the Workplace. 120 pp. Christiansted, St. Croix: TRC Press. \$24.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

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