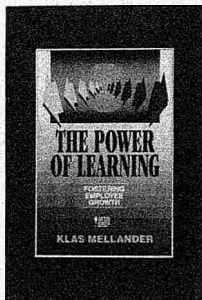


# Books

## **The Power of Learning: Fostering Employee Growth**

by *Klas Mellander*.



“What is it that we do, which we’re extremely well-equipped to do, that’s fun both while we’re doing it and after we’ve achieved our goal, that demands a minimum of unpleasant effort,

and that we use all the time?” The answer is learning, according to *The Power of Learning* author Klas Mellander.

Mellander says we’re learning all the time—constantly adding to our pool of knowledge—even when we’re not aware of it. And we enjoy it. But he argues that no one can learn on demand, which is required in formal educational and training-classroom situations.

Curiosity must be awakened, and the opportunity to test out the new information must be present within the learning process. Mellander says learners stay interested and are able to test their newly acquired knowledge when a “spontaneous learning” process is integrated into teaching environments.

So what is spontaneous learning? Mellander first explains what it’s not by examining the factors that normally promote and hinder learning. He then provides a convincing argument for restructuring training to weed out the obstacles by engaging in spontaneous learning.

Mellander explains that the spontaneous-learning process starts when a learner’s curiosity or attention is piqued. Curious learners are eager to receive information, which they then process with prior knowledge, until

they can understand its relationship to what is already known and form conclusions about it. At that point, learners must apply and test their conclusions to confirm that they understand and that learning has taken place. Mellander illustrates his point with an example of someone learning how to use a camera.

“A woman has bought a camera. Her interest in learning to use it has already been aroused. She’s curious about how it works, and her curiosity makes her receptive to the information that the camera and the instructions provide. She spontaneously chooses and assimilates the information that is meaningful to her. Just as unconsciously, she ignores other information. The information she takes in is processed in her brain as she uses the trial-and-error method to find meaningful relationships. She continues this way until she understands, ‘Aha, this is the shutter.’ Then she tries it a few times to confirm that she has drawn the right conclusions.”

Mellander concludes by showing how this process—which makes learners as responsible as the trainer for the way training is carried out—can create an environment that’s conducive to continuous learning. Such an environment is vital for building a true learning organization.

Klas Mellander is a senior consultant for Learning Methods International in Tyngelsjo, Sweden.

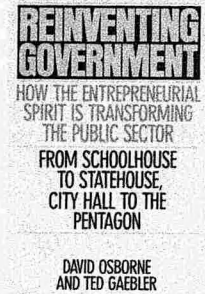
*The Power of Learning: Fostering Employee Growth*, by Klas Mellander. 226 pp. Homewood, IL: Business One Irwin and the American Society for Training and Development. This book can be purchased through ASTD Press, 703/683-8129. Order code: MEPL. \$18 for ASTD members; \$20 for nonmembers.

**Circle 245 on reader service card.**

*This month’s books cover a variety of topics, including learning, leading, reinventing government, and developing human resources on a global scale.*

**Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector From Schoolhouse to Statehouse, City Hall to the Pentagon**

by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler.



The last time the United States “reinvented” its government was in the early 1900s, during the Progressive Era and the New Deal, say authors David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. That early transformation took place in response to the emergence of a new industrial economy.

Today, the emerging post-industrial, knowledge-based, global economy requires another governmental reinvention. How this is being accomplished and by whom is the subject of the authors’ new book, *Reinventing Government*.

The book serves as “both a call to arms in the revolt against bureaucratic malaise and a guide to those who want to build something better.”

With a flair for the dramatic, Osborne and Gaebler describe what they believe are the major conceptual and operating problems within the United States’ current federal, state, and local government structures. Then, using impressive examples of how these governments—large and small—are reinventing themselves, they describe how an entrepreneurial spirit can enable government workers to run their agencies, districts, or even departments as efficiently as well-run businesses.

The authors emphasize that they have not written a derogatory overview of just how bad things have become. Instead, they believe themselves to be mapmakers who have optimistically charted the course of a new breed of innovative, civil-servant “pioneers.” And they believe that the principles they list for duplicating these pioneers’ efforts will help others change the way they conduct public affairs.

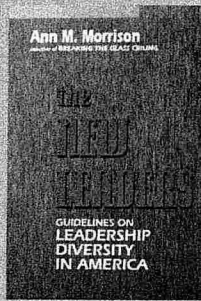
“Columbus never knew he had come upon a new continent, [and] many of today’s pioneers do not understand the global significance of

**Readers’ Reviews**

**T**his month, readers critique books about the new faces in leadership ranks and the challenges associated with providing leadership-development training.

**The New Leaders: Guidelines on Leadership Diversity in America**

by Ann M. Morrison.



*The New Leaders* addresses the issue of growing workforce diversity and the type of leadership that must be developed and exercised to improve employee contributions and performance.

Though focusing specifically on the situation in the United States, author Ann Morrison’s research and observations have global implications. The author says diversity at work is viewed in terms of gender, age, and minority backgrounds—particularly nonwhite. The research presented in her book documents this and other results of the four-year Gold Research Project she led for the Center for Creative Leadership.

Instead of concentrating merely on cultural awareness or barriers faced by particular groups, the study was concerned with organizational success models in coping with workforce diversity and career advancement. Researchers interviewed nearly 200 managers in 16 U.S.-based private and public organizations to determine practices that encourage white women and people of color, particularly within management ranks, to move into executive positions—and practices that obstruct their advancement.

Morrison is well qualified for this undertaking, having participated in two of the center’s previous research studies on diversity: one on the upward mobility of women and the other on the development of executive talent of

both sexes. In her new book, the author examines the global demographic realities of increasing workforce diversity and describes some of the best designs and practices for developing all managers—especially those who have traditionally been excluded from advancement.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 examines the diversity evolution and the benefits of exercising strong leadership to meet the associated challenges by incorporating diversity into an organization’s business strategy. The author discusses the treatment of people at work based on sex and ethnicity. She also introduces a model that links the major advancement barriers to key factors in leadership development and explains how the barriers deprive many nontraditional managers of the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity.

Part 2 reviews procedures for ensuring leadership diversity, including education, enforcement, and exposure of nontraditional managers. Particular emphasis is placed on management accountability for diversity, meaningful development opportunities, and recruitment practices. The author describes career development methods that work with high-potential nontraditional managers. The methods include rotational assignments, mentors, and professional assessments.

The how-to guidelines provided in part 3 outline the steps companies need to take to ensure success. The steps include the following:

- ▶ Discover (and rediscover) diversity problems in the organization.
- ▶ Strengthen senior management’s commitment to and involvement in organizational diversity efforts.
- ▶ Choose practices that fit a balanced strategy that includes an organization’s entire workforce.



GUEST REVIEWER  
**Philip Harris**

what they are doing. But we know that the pioneers will continue their explorations, and we expect that as they discover new lands, newer and better maps will be drawn for those who come behind them."

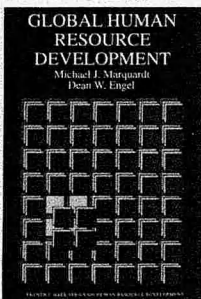
David Osborne is an author and consultant to state and local governments. Ted Gaebler is president of the Gaebler Group, a public-sector management-consulting firm in San Rafael, California.

*Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector From Schoolhouse to Statehouse, City Hall to the Pentagon*, by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. 405 pp. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 800/447-2226; \$22.95 (U.S.), \$29.95 (Canada).

**Circle 246 on reader service card.**

### Global Human Resource Development

by Michael J. Marquardt and Dean W. Engel.



This book is part of the Prentice-Hall series on HRD. Authors Michael J. Marquardt and Dean Engel provide a well-organized, substantive overview of global HRD that can be used by field practitioners in business, government, and nonprofit organizations.

The book is divided into six sections. Part 1, Foundations for Global HRD, is a detailed analysis of how globalization and culture affect the workplace as well as the HRD profession. Topics discussed include the differences between practicing HRD globally and practicing it in a single country. The authors also describe the factors that create culture and the effects that culture has on every aspect of HRD implementation in the United States and Canada, East Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America.

In part 2, the authors identify the major roles of the global HRD practitioner and describe a seven-step global training model. Part 3 examines HRD's role in helping global corporations, public agencies, and associations. Here the

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authors describe and analyze the training and development programs of several of the best global corporations and nonprofit organizations.

This section is particularly useful for HRD professionals who are responsible for conducting global needs analyses, developing leadership and world-class training programs, and maintaining environments of continuous learning for global enterprises.

In part 4, the authors continue to identify examples of global HRD excellence. Here they share some of the creative solutions to HR needs that the authors found in 11 regions of the world. Each of this section's chapters

describes the cultural and environmental factors that affect the featured region's HRD practices.

In part 5, the authors explore career opportunities in global HRD and examine the competencies essential to working in a multicultural setting.

The authors conclude with a discussion of what they believe will be the HRD megatrends of the year 2000 and beyond. While some of these trends are coming to fruition as you read the book, other conclusions may startle even the most well-seasoned HRD professionals. Digesting the food for thought in this book will leave field practitioners hungry for more. So when's the next volume in this series being published?

Michael Marquardt is an author living in Reston, Virginia, and Dean Engel is an author living in Lafayette, California.

*Global Human Resource Development*, by Michael J. Marquardt and Dean W. Engel. 320 pp. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 800/288-4745, \$25.

**Circle 247 on reader service card.**

**"Books"** is compiled and written by Theresa Minton-Eversole. Send books for consideration to Books Editor, Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

### Additional Reading

*Quality Leadership Through Empowerment: Standards of Leadership Behavior*, by Dick Leatherman. 392 pp. Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press, 800/822-2801, \$24.95.

**Circle 250 on reader service card.**

*Health Care Job Explosion: Careers in the 90s*, by Dennis V. Damp. 384 pp. Coraopolis, PA: D-Amp Publications, 412/262-5578, \$14.95.

**Circle 251 on reader service card.**

*The Twenty-Four Hour Society: Understanding Human Limits in a World That Never Stops*, by Martin Moore-Ede. 230 pp. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 800/447-2226, \$22.95.

**Circle 252 on reader service card.**

*Coping With Job Loss: How Individuals, Organizations, and Communities Respond to Layoffs*, by Carrie R. Leana and Daniel C. Feldman. 228 pp. New York, NY: Lexington Books, 609/461-6500, \$24.95.

**Circle 253 on reader service card.**

*"I Wish I'd Said That!" How To Talk Your Way Out of Trouble and Into Success*, by Linda McCallister. 313 pp. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 201/469-4400, \$19.95.

**Circle 254 on reader service card.**

*Communicating at Work: Creating Messages That Get Results*, by Ron S. Blicq. 405 pp. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, 800/288-4745, \$37.80.

**Circle 255 on reader service card.**