

MEDIA REVIEWS

Reviewed by Bill Ellet for *Training Media Review*

Girding for Trial By Fire

The dramatic foundation of this video set consists of a theater company preparing a production of *Hamlet*. The director serves as the manager, and the actors are the employees. The principal characters occasionally use the Bard's words to suggest advice for new managers.

The first video, *Surviving the Slings and Arrows*, marches through the essential duties of a manager who wants to keep the job. A novice manager should know how to be astute in hiring and understand the meaning of equal employment opportunity and the boundaries to enforce concerning harassment. He or she should also know how to terminate fairly and legally and manage performance.

The second video, *To Lead or Not to Lead*, examines the skills needed to lead people, not just manage them. All of the skills selected are important: effective communication, coaching, conflict management, time management, and leadership. Along the way, the cast performs a double play. Like many videos these days, the content is pared down ruthlessly.

The producer probably has good reason for sticking to the basics: New managers are different from their predecessors. They're much younger and have far less on-the-job or life experience to draw on. The promotion to manager is usually trial by fire. These new managers don't have time to sit in a classroom for hours, and many aren't going to be given much time to prove themselves capable.

The ensemble of experts, practitioners rather than theorists, checks in regularly to diagnose interactions and suggest fixes. Their comments overlap to a degree, and some of the speakers are stronger than others. Still, the voice of seasoned practitioners helps fill in the gaps.

The leader's guide provides handouts that aren't slide-like repetitions of the video but small essays with detailed explanations of each topic. The guide has ques-

A Manager's Guide

★★★★1/2	Holds viewer interest
★★★★	Acting/Presenting
★★★	Diversity
★★★★1/2	Production quality
★★★★1/2	Value of content
★★★★	Instructional value
★★★★	Value for the money
★★★★1/2	Overall rating

tions you should ask before and after viewing the tape, suggested answers, and role-play directions. It also contains outlines for live training sessions and self-study.

Recommendation

The set is a primer for new managers that sticks to the essential topics. The producer keeps things moving and doesn't clutter the message. The videos should help new managers hit the ground at least walking, instead of just hitting the ground.


Video Details

A Manager's Guide, video, 2001, 2 tapes, 25 minutes each, Quality Media Resources: 800.800.5129, www.qmr.com. Purchase US\$425. Other material: leader guide, handout masters, and reminder cards.

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RATINGS KEY

★★★★★
★★★★1/2
★★★
★★1/2

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Above average

★★
★1/2
★

Average
Below average
Poor