

Recharging Your Life

You Don't Have To Go Home From Work Exhausted! The Energy Engineering Approach, by Ann McGee-Cooper with Duane Trammell and Barbara Lau.

For really big things to happen in your life, it takes really big and sometimes outlandish dreams. People who allow themselves to dream and be frivolous and childlike from time to time have a much higher chance of actualizing those dreams, say the authors of this new book:

"If we choose the safer route, to lower our goals and only hope for realistic, sure possibilities, we limit our lives to the mediocre and rob ourselves of the chance for a really big win and all the excitement that goes with it."

You Don't Have To Go Home From Work Exhausted! is an imaginatively written book in which the authors uncover many of the mental and physical sources of energy loss—as well as the sources of renewal.

McGee-Cooper, Trammell, and Lau offer dozens of methods for increasing energy and creativity levels and for maintaining productivity at work and home. Before collaborating on this book, they tested their techniques on some 3,500 corporate executives, employees, and spouses in "Energy Engineering" management sessions. The result? A unique examination of brain hemisphericity, learning methods, creativity, ergonomics, stress management, and whole-brained approaches to time management.

Drawing on role models of

famous high-energy people—such as Thomas Edison, Martin Luther King, Walt Disney, Margaret Mead, Georgia O'Keefe, Winston Churchill, and Liz Claiborne—the authors debunk long-held energy myths:

- Getting seven to eight hours of sleep a night is the only way to restore daily energy reserves.
- The chaos of a messy desk indicates a careless slob.
- The main source of energy is physical health; loss of energy is a necessary part of getting older.

On the contrary, they set forth a plethora of true-to-life, Energy Engineering principles. For example:

- Being passionate about your work and taking a "whole-brained attitude" about life can generate energy and creative thinking.
- Taking several 2- to 10-minute "joy breaks" during the day can ward off mental fatigue and increase concentration.
- Some people need the clutter of many projects in motion to get their juices and energies flowing. Working amid the chaos of a messy desk may mean that your brain processes visually, not that you are a careless slob.
- Some of the healthiest people, regardless of age, are those who give themselves "permission" to explore, risk, and test the limits, to believe in the impossible, to rest when their bodies tell them to, and to be consumed with the present instead of worrying about past actions.

■ Traditional time-management rules are unproductive and ill-suited for nearly half of the workforce. Discovering your brain dominance is a key to determining your most productive work style.

You Don't Have To Go Home From Work Exhausted! shows how passion and dreams can beget energy and help recapture the vitality of childhood. In creatively titled chapters, the authors delineate the balance between work and play and expand traditional definitions of fun. They show how to avoid energy traps that can lead to exhaustion. Some of those traps include duality, perfectionism, life in the fast lane, and burnout.

Half-brained duality versus whole-brained integration

Chapter 7—subtitled, "Resolving Your Mental Civil War"—describes the problem of dual, and often conflicting, brain hemispheres—the creative right side versus the exacting left side. McGee-Cooper and company outline the benefits of adopting a work style that recognizes duality and supports your own brain dominance.

Take, for example, the sales rep who likes to "shoot from the hip" in bidding for a job, versus the more methodical estimator who would rather say nothing until she knows the exact cost of completing the job.

"Can you see the right-brained values of sales (speed, spontaneity, big-picture thinking) . . . flying in the face of the left-brained values of the estimating department (accuracy, rules, planning, unwillingness to release figures until they have been carefully checked and double-checked)? For a company to be successful, both these groups need to appreciate the unique problems and values of the differences they represent. By working together and seeking whole-brained, cooperative solutions, a synergy of brain integration can be achieved."

The authors show how people can learn to recognize the inevitable duality within themselves and learn to respond effectively to each side in a way that doesn't make them feel they have two halves—the "rebellious child" side and the "merciless master" side.

The perils of perfectionism

Another energy trap is that of perfectionism. For those detail-driven people who find themselves floundering among the time-consuming nits and picks of everyday life, the authors offer three cures:

- Harvest the good, or apply the 96 percent versus 4 percent assessment rule (focus on the 96 percent of your actions that were positive, rather than on the 4 percent in which you made mistakes). Figure out what went wrong, what you can learn from your mistakes, and what you need to do—if anything—to correct them.

■ Put a high value on “failing forward.” Thomas Edison’s claim for how he came up with so many patents was that he “dared to make more mistakes than ten other people put together” and that he learned from each of them.

■ Do at least one thing imperfectly every day. By simplifying your hairstyle and dress, by delegating follow-up tasks to other people, by leaving voice mail messages and learning to write less-than-perfect business letters, you can add time to your day and reduce the stress of perfectionism.

Life in the express lane: the addictive roar of the crowd

For those of us trying to balance life in the fast lane, the authors suggest we gain perspective by watching children’s behavior. At first glance, children seem to be constantly in motion like fast-lane adults. But if you look more closely, you will find that they insist on “doing things at their own pace. Just try to hurry children through meal time or their morning routines and see how difficult it is for them to speed up and how their nature intuitively tells them to behave.

“In addition, children frequently switch from intense physical activity to more restful play. And young children are also much less competitive than adults. They don’t push themselves to hurry through activities, either. In fact, they usually don’t feel a compulsion to finish everything they begin.”

For adults for whom fast-lane living has become addictive as well as consuming, the key, says McGee-Cooper, is not curbing your ambitions. Rather it is learning to cool your engines by using all your gears and pacing yourself throughout the day and week. Learning “the art of switching gears” can help you refuel your energy reserves when necessary.

The cure for burnout: learning to refuel your tank

To avoid burnout, the authors offer four energy-building steps:

■ Observe what gives you energy and what drains your energy. Get in touch with your brain dominance

and your energy clock, and plan your day accordingly.

■ Block unnecessary energy loss. For starters, let go of guilt and worry. Instead of fretting over a traffic jam, get a cellular telephone, bring favorite tapes along, or draft a letter while you wait.

■ Link right-brained and left-brained tasks and responses. If you’re left-brained, put things in your office that will add color and unusual tools to routine duties—brightly colored folders, large paper clips, family photos, or handmade objects from children. Wear something colorful on a day you have to do a dreaded task. Right-brained people can design their offices to aid organization. Color-code your files according to handling priorities, or organize work for different clients in large, clear-plastic boxes.

■ Revive energy by slotting regular energy breaks into your work day. “People usually hit a productivity peak at a certain point each day (over a span of a certain number of hours worked), then their efficiency, carefulness, motivation, and creativity steadily wane.”

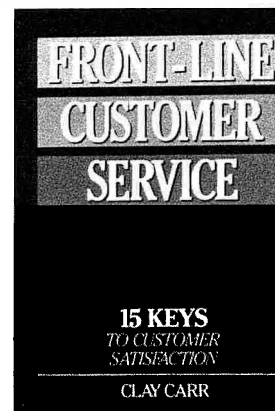
An energy break might be calling a friend, scheduling a game of racquetball for after work, or taking five minutes to close your eyes and think relaxing thoughts.

Reader-friendly

A lot of *You Don’t Have To Go Home From Work Exhausted!* has been said before: We’ve all read or heard of books on imaging, imprinting, charting your energy cycles, the power of positive thinking, and designing creative work spaces. Yet rarely do they all come together in such an innovative, well thought-out, and entertaining package.

On top of content from which we all can learn and benefit, the authors provide imaginative illustrations, typography, and book design. Plenty of action-oriented checklists will help readers gauge their own learning and working styles. Self-assessments, pros and cons lists, summaries, and on-your-own assignments also help make this book personal and reader-friendly.

You Don’t Have To Go Home From Work Exhausted! The Energy Engineering Approach. 349 pp. Dallas, TX: **Bowen & Rogers**, 800/477-8550, \$29.95.
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Unhappy Customers Are a Golden Opportunity

Front-Line Customer Service: 15 Keys to Customer Satisfaction, by Clay Carr.

How often do you consider the fact that every organization has customers? In fact nearly every employee has customers, be they internal, external, supervisory, or subordinate. In some way, we all give and expect customer service at one time or another.

Yet good customer service isn’t always what we think it is, says Clay Carr in his book, *Front-Line Customer Service*. “You don’t sell products or services or even benefits. You sell value or you don’t sell anything at all.”

From the perspective of the service provider, Carr outlines a complete program for turning dissatisfied customers into committed ones, while at the same time lowering costs and increasing customer benefits and profits. His book outlines 15 sure-fire principles for creating customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

In Chapter 1, Carr covers the basics of customer psychology. How do customers respond when they’re dissatisfied? Understanding the dynamics and implications of such situations is crucial to surviving in any business environment, he says.

Often, Carr says, you'll never even hear from dissatisfied customers; they'll just stop showing up or sending in orders or referring clients to you. Consider these startling facts and figures:

- Ninety-six percent of all dissatisfied customers won't ever complain to you about the way you treated them.
- Ninety percent of them won't be back to buy from you.
- Each person in that 90 percent will tell at least nine other people how dissatisfied he or she is with your company.
- Thirteen percent will tell 20 or more other people how poorly you treated them.

Though not necessarily new or original information, such stats are a no-nonsense reminder of just how important a single satisfied customer can be to overall business success.

Why do customers opt to take their business elsewhere? Some do so because of an abrupt or inattentive attitude on the part of a check-out clerk. Others may decide to mail-order through another outfit because you left them hanging on the telephone or weren't quick enough in responding to them. Still others might decide that your return policy is hopelessly complicated and biased against the customer. There's really no predicting.

Chapter 2 makes clear how a customer perceives "value" and how important it is for you to understand it as well as produce it. A definition: "Value is the benefit that a customer gets from your product or service, minus the cost of purchasing it from you."

Some companies, says Carr, make the mistake of "over-selling" a product or service. A shampoo promises popularity; cars and clothes promise social acceptance; diet centers and exercise books promise attractiveness and sex appeal. So, if the customer's goal is to win a popularity contest, and your shampoo doesn't make that happen, you may be out of a customer. The customer wanted something; you didn't deliver. Too bad for you.

Front-Line Customer Service

highlights 15 keys to customer service success. Here's a sampling:

- "From the point of view of your customers (potential, actual, or former), your only excuse for being in business is to satisfy them."
- "Customers define value in their own terms. If you want to satisfy them, you have to look at your products or services through their eyes—always!"
- "The really picky, demanding customers are platinum opportunities. Keep satisfying them, and you're in business for life."
- "If you intend to deal successfully with dissatisfied customers, focus on saving the customer, not on saving the sale."
- "Your front-line people won't treat your customers any better than you treat your front-line people."
- "To satisfy an unhappy customer, you must add extra value to make up for the value you promised but failed to provide in the first place."

Throughout the book, Carr reiterates the 15 keys to service success. The message is not complex and some of the reiteration gets repetitive. Yet in today's ferociously competitive marketplace, understanding the importance of customer service is invaluable. Carr's style really makes the message sink home.

Several chapters focus on front-line employees and their key role in forging a long-term, loyal customer base. To illustrate, Carr uses everyday as well as extraordinary examples of how to do customer service wrong—and how to do it right. Or, he sets the stage and leaves the solution for the reader to ponder.

Most chapters are followed by "Check Points" to help you apply the ideas and skills to your own company. Many of the points are worth reading and comparing against your present practices.

One chapter unlocks the secrets of getting feedback from customers—how you get feedback, why you don't get it, and what to do when you don't like what you've gotten.

One helpful hint: "Make it easy for the customer to comment." How? Use a postage-paid card; pro-

vide an on-site return box; use a heading that grabs the customer's attention; keep the comment form simple and specific, and ask for enough information to help; and make the customer's identification optional.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on how to change a customer's expectations, particularly when the person's been disappointed. It discusses how to give that little extra "service with a smile" that revives the customer's dwindling sense of value and adds something more to keep the customer coming back.

For example, when a customer doesn't like her hamburger, do you give her another one? No, but you might offer her free french fries. Or if you've done a sloppy job of painting someone's house, do you offer to paint his garage too? No, but after you redo the house, you might add a coat of paint sealant at no charge.

An important part of customer service, says Carr, is making sure employees "have the authority to satisfy customers; are properly selected, trained, and rewarded; and have clear, positive policy to guide them." A good place to start is to provide training on the OLAF skills (observe, listen, ask, and feel):

- Observe the customer. How angry or upset is the person? Is he or she hesitant about complaining? Can you deal with this problem, or should it go to a higher level?
- Listen to the customer. Focus on his or her problem, as the customer sees it.
- Ask the customer for more information about the problem, if you need it. This helps you convey that you care and want to help solve the problem.
- Feel the customer's situation intuitively and begin developing an appropriate response.

The final two chapters focus on specific problems and real-life cases of companies that practice the principles of quality customer service, such as Nordstrom, Marriott, Word-Perfect, and Mazda.

Carr is insightful, intuitive, and gender sensitive. He has written a simple, precise, to-the-point guidebook for charting the murky waters

of when too much "service" is overkill, and when to really pour it on (most of the rest of the time).

The bottom line, he emphasizes, is this: "Dealing successfully with dissatisfied customers is essential to your success; if you don't do it, everything that you do well will suffer."

On the other hand, he cautions, if you don't do other things well—such as marketing, manufacturing, and delivery—the best customer service in the world can make everything worse, not better. Good customer service is no replacement for shoddy workmanship; it can, however, make quality work shine and sparkle—and keep customers coming back for life!

Front-Line Customer Service offers plenty of customer service applications to suit all organizational types and sizes—from *Fortune* 500 corporations to "mom-and-pop" operations, from large public agencies to small private practices. An epilogue and an appendix help summarize the main points and speak directly to front-line people. Carr understands what he's talking about and has mastered the art of laying out practical, step-by-step hints and advice.

Carr has also written *The New Manager's Survival Manual: All the Skills You Need for Success* (1989, Wiley), as well as articles on such business topics as quality control, change management, and artificial intelligence.

Front-Line Customer Service: 15 Keys to Customer Satisfaction. 280 pp. New York, NY: **John Wiley & Sons**, 212/850-6418, \$24.95.

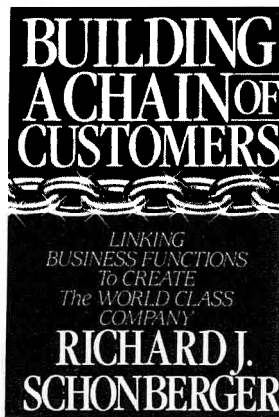
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From Vague Possibilities to Real Opportunities

Building a Chain of Customers: Linking Business Functions To Create the World-Class Company, by Richard J. Schonberger.

"To see where we're going... it is necessary to see what we are escaping from."

That statement is representative of other themes of linkage and connection in Richard Schonberger's



Building a Chain of Customers. That chain, when strong and unbroken, effectively links one department, office, shop, or employee with the next one. Each link becomes a potential source of data, analysis, or function—a means of "unearthing more and better ways to provide for customers' wants—before the competition does."

Schonberger says that the "many links between and within the four main business functions—design, operations, accounting, and marketing—form a continuous 'chain of customers' that extends to those who buy the product or service."

Getting down to the basics of operating a world-class business, he says that every customer has universal wants—better quality, quicker response, greater flexibility, and lower cost. Indeed, he loudly and persistently champions those ends.

The focus here is more on developing the links and processes than on providing actual services. Schonberger eschews the "how-to" approach and takes a much more analytical angle. He uses the book as a forum for his own reflections and as an exploration of accepted and alternative perspectives.

He cites the works, ideologies, and practices of leading authors, accountants, manufacturing experts, and subject matter experts. To name just a few: Tom Peters, C. Jackson Grayson, Robin Cooper, Robert Hayes, Steven Wheelwright, Shigeo Shingo, W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, Kaoru Ishikawa, and Philip Crosby. Ultimately, Schonberger says they all have at least one common battle cry: that

the time for chain-building is now.

Schonberger shatters some traditional business beliefs, such as the belief that quicker responses in manufacturing cost more and bump heads with quality production.

On the contrary, he says, quick response, or just-in-time production (JIT), "slashes delays of all kinds, and cuts the need for staff whose work revolves around delay management. In everybody's JIT toolkit are methods for quick setup, short-flow distances, preventive maintenance of equipment, and materials and tools in precise locations right at the point of use. . . ."

"But working faster and taking quality-threatening shortcuts are not quick-response techniques," says Schonberger. "Slowing or stopping the line to get the quality right is a basic of quick response/JIT. Slowdowns or stoppages are opportunities to permanently fix chronic causes: Make machines run right, improve designs, iron out problems with materials and tools, and eliminate rework and returns. The joint results are quicker response, better quality, and lower cost."

How does quality and JIT manifest itself outside of the manufacturing function? An example:

"Supermarkets in some highly competitive cities have turned to promoting shortest checkout lines, not just lowest prices or freshest produce. Quick response has spawned several whole new industries, such as overnight mail and facsimile copying. Some say that the rapid spread of one-hour photo film processors is the cause of the plunge in sales of instant cameras."

Quality has multiple dimensions, and their importance may vary from company to company. Schonberger lists those dimensions as conformance to specifications, performance, quick response, quick-change expertise, features, reliability, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, perceived quality, humanity, and value.

The author is excited about the increasingly global awareness of such concepts as total quality, continuous improvement, and integrated automation. "After years of stagnancy, our concept of quality is

now in a state of rapid change and expansion. Indeed, in many companies the first step was to reverse a mind-set. Quality had been a negative concept. Now it is positive, forward-looking, and a rallying issue for the entire workforce."

Schonberger expands on some world-class ideas set forth by industry leaders—the plant-within-a-plant, work "cells" that unsnarl workflow tie-ups (Harley-Davidson used cells to get its bankrupt operations back in working order), focused support teams, job-specific training, and comprehensive learning-to-learn programs.

"A complete learning program must teach, test, convince, and tie closely to implementation," he advises. "It must be continuous, since evolving technologies, products, and management knowledge are facts of life that affect all businesses. A critical aim is to make everyone an expert in process control and improvement, but the core of the learning program is basic job skills."

Schonberger says that "the path to world-class is straight enough, but many companies that get on the path stray off it too easily. As a result, they are leaping forward in some areas, quality perhaps, and not gaining much in others.

"Companies get sidetracked by their own functions and factions. The functions problem refers to maintaining a functional work life well away from the customer." Examples of employees who are at a distance from the customer include "buyers [who are] shut in the purchasing department and not visiting users or supplier companies [and] managers hiding out in their offices and not out looking for ways to help shop supervisors."

"The factions problem pertains to a fixation on *their way* to become excellent. Faction advocates tend to be well informed, progressive, modern, willing to change, and motivated toward rapid improvement. But they hold to a narrow agenda on what to do or how to do it."

Schonberger mentions some of the path-breaking companies in the quality arena who have dared to do

things differently—Aetna, Hewlett-Packard, Du Pont, Motorola, Westinghouse, and Globe Metallurgical, as well as some of the worldwide quality awards now being awarded, such as the Malcolm Baldrige Award.

Building a Chain of Customers is intended to be "a blueprint for unifying corporate functions."

Schonberger sets the stage for taking action by examining in-depth "the new microcosms that will make up the company of the 1990s—focused teams of multiskilled, involved employees arranged according to the way the work flows or the service is provided." The underlying theme of "shoring up the chain of customers" prevails

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throughout the book.

Building a Chain of Customers is packed with well-documented and diagrammed information. Using real-company and real-technology examples, the author updates the reader on state-of-practice training techniques, such as cross-training for several jobs, job switching among employees, job sharing, process-specific training, and "you-teach-me, I'll-teach-you" training.

Schonberger pays thoughtful and close attention to detail. His tone is conversational but by no means simplistic. He gives enough explanation of particular concepts for the relative novice, but enough detail to capture the attention of the line supervisor, technical trainer, or seasoned practitioner.

He has a knack for showing how "the same simple, common-sense practices can work wonders in industries ranging from textiles to tractors and from TVs to tacos."

In concluding, Schonberger says that the real problem companies face today is commitment.

"To the people who are frustrated by the slow pace of implementation and the obstructions in their companies, I can only say, The ball's in your court. Do your utmost to educate any in your company who will listen, get little fires lit (small projects started) everywhere, and don't stop for sign-offs at every step. You have the knowledge, so you have the power."

"On where to go for help, the rule is simple: Go to the specialists—your own in-company people and the industry backing them up—for knowledge; go to the generalists (who peddle only ideas, not software or hardware) for agenda. You presumably are a generalist, as am I."

In his convincing style, Schonberger somehow makes visible the very real possibilities.

Building a Chain of Customers: Linking Business Functions To Create the World-Class Company. 349 pp. New York, NY: **The Free Press**, 800/323-7445, \$29.95.

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Additional Reading

Human Resource Information Systems: Development and Application, by Michael J. Kavanaugh, Hal G. Gueotal, and Scott I. Tannenbaum. 356 pp. Boston, MA: **PWS-KENT Publishing**, 800/343-2204, \$20.95.

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Maintaining Professional Competence: Approaches to Career Enhancement, Vitality, and Success Throughout a Work Life, edited by Sherry L. Willis and Samuel S. Dubin. 328 pp. San Francisco, CA: **Jossey-Bass**, 415/433-1767, \$29.95.

Circle 184 on reader service card.

Manage People, Not Personnel: Motivation and Performance Appraisal, with a preface by Victor H. Vroom. 267 pp. Boston, MA: **Harvard Business School Press**, 617/495-6117, \$29.95.

Circle 185 on reader service card.

The David Solution: How To Reclaim Power and Liberate Your Organization, by Valerie Stewart. 164 pp. Brookfield, VT: **Gower Publishing**, 802/276-3162, \$24.95.

Circle 186 on reader service card.

The Dynamic Decision-Maker: Five Decision Styles for Executive and Business Success, by Michael J. Driver, Kenneth R. Brousseau, and Phillip L. Hunsaker. 264 pp. New York, NY: **Harper & Row**, 800/242-7737, \$24.95.

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