



## BOOK REVIEWS

### ORGANIZATION RENEWAL

By Gordon L. Lippitt  
Appleton-Century-Crofts

The winds of change are blowing along the whole front of interpersonal affairs. While some organization leaders are actively guiding their enterprises through the turbulence, others find themselves driven. A surprising number seem unaffected by the changes. Soon the wind will die down, they seem to feel, and then things will go back where they were.

The times call for renewal agents — individuals who can appraise the strength and direction of the forces and who can help their organizations to ride the winds until new equilibriums are established.

As this review is being written, an announcement for the ASTD Organization and Management Institute has come in. Seven questions are raised: "What's happening to the organization; what's happening to the individual; how do people react to work complexity so as to achieve organizational results; how does one develop man-manager relationships in today's environment; what motivates the individual in the new organizational environment; how should the knowledge worker be managed; and what is the role of the renewal agent in organization change?"

These are the issues to which Gordon Lippitt addresses himself in this book. He proceeds, deliberately and thoughtfully, to study each one (although not in this order) and to derive some useful answers. He outlines, then elaborates with formal listings, the varied aspects of personality and behavior; and he tells how human energies can be mobilized in pursuit of a goal.

Lippitt shows respect for the intelligence of the reader but does not presume too heavily upon prior knowledge of the newer behavioral ideas. Consequently, the book has the added virtue of being a short encyclopedia of social psychology. One misunderstanding which many present-day trainers hold is cleared up, which is the distinction between learning theory and the situational variables affecting the training process.

Lippitt describes a condition of existential pragmatism which he called the "E concept." This stage mediates between the two polar views of Douglas McGregor's "Theory X and Theory Y" and is felt to be more nearly akin to reality that either X or Y, conceptually useful though they are. He also emphasizes the suitability of the existential, or pragmatic, manager, who concerns himself with actually working on problems and practical ideas.

Another term used in the book is the situational confrontation model. Three phases of change are described, which the author calls confrontation, search, and coping. Confrontation involves a facing-up to the tangled web of relationships, issues, problems, challenges, values, and potentialities within the organization.

Search is a complex process. It uses four elements, receiving, processing, understanding, and acting on ideas, to reduce to manageable scope the often enormous problem of unlikeness between entities.

Coping becomes a mutual attempt to solve, to know, to empathise, and to understand, the challenges facing the organization.

These phases work differently at different stages of the organization's life. The author finds that in each stage — birth, youth, and maturity, the act of coping requires a different strategy.

The author is a skilled and practiced behavioral scientist. He had a part in the development of the laboratory method of training and has applied his ideas to a number of organizations. For the past five years he has been a director of the American Society for Training and Development and is at this writing its national president.

It appears very logical to Dr. Lippitt that the training director is the one to perform as the organization's renewal agent and also, that if this occurs the role of the training specialist will become greatly enlarged and the profession will rise in status. Four basic qualities are required: the person must be a planning leader, an information and communications link, a learning specialist, and a consultant to management.

Whoever takes on this task will make use of the human resources of the organization by motivation, skill development, and goal-direction. The individual must be aware of his own capabilities, and must be able to guide the forces needed to accomplish the task of bringing planned and programmed change to the organization.

On one point only does this reviewer presume to differ with Dr. Lippitt. This is where he says, in a casual aside that the differences between teacher and trainer are 'trivial.' If this were indeed true, industry would not have any difficulty in recruiting competent training specialists. This reference is doubly puzzling because the very area in which these two professions differ most markedly is in the field of promoting organizational change.

As we know, there is a large, active, and articulate segment of our culture today that is dissatisfied with the world as it is and would rather destroy than restructure it. This is true not only in the colleges and the cities but also, one can assume, in industrial organizations.

As a note of reason, or perhaps better, as an antidote to unreason, this book by a broadly experienced trainer who knows his way around the turfs of education, industry, and consultation, has a timely message for the organizational planner.

S.B.M.

## THE AGE OF DISCONTINUITY

By Peter Drucker

Harper & Row, Publishers, New York and Evanston

\$7.95

383 pp.

Peter Drucker discussed "The Challenge to Education and Training in the 70's" as the keynote speaker for the 24th National ASTD Conference in New York last May. Since then, he has completed a new book whose pages imply at least seven propositions of immense interest to training directors.

However, this book is not primarily about training. Its theme is that our society is shifting from an industrial base to a new foundation of knowledge and its applications. Drucker's propositions related to training come up in this broader context and are interspersed throughout the persuasive arguments he offers in support of his main thesis.

According to Drucker, we are already living in a knowledge society even though most of us are unaware of this highly significant fact. The technologies with the greatest impact and greatest potential are no longer those which replace muscle power. The most important developments now are related to brain power. They