

It's All Happening at the Zoo

The Masterclass, by Lance H.K. Secretan.

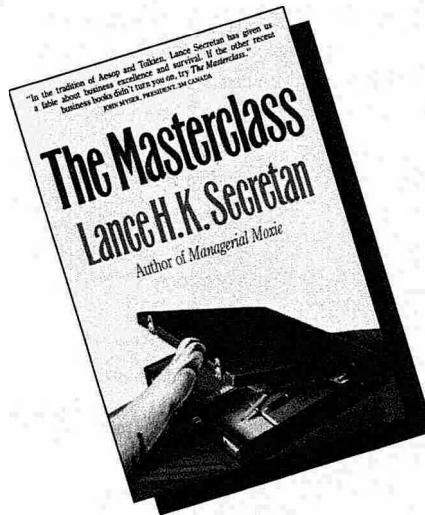
Once upon a time, a young worker was introduced into a successful and prestigious organization. His orientation and training period included meeting the leader and key managers, and learning from experts in various divisions. They taught him about the organization's concepts of leadership and quality, about the importance of pleasing external and internal customers, and about how teams work together in different parts of the organization.

That may sound like pretty standard stuff. Hundreds of books talk about corporate culture, teamwork, quality, leadership, and customer service. But this book is different. In *Masterclass*, the organization is a zoo, the young apprentice is a chipmunk, and the leader of the organization is a rare white tiger named Moose.

Secretan weaves together a series of modern fables that trace the chipmunk Tamias's travels through the Zoo-Community. "The modern zoo provides a useful metaphor for us all," says Secretan in the introduction. "It consists of a group of managers, scientists, professionals, volunteers, and administrators—and thousands of creatures."

Moose, a real-life white tiger at the Metro Toronto Zoo, helped to inspire the book, says Secretan.

"One day as I was musing with Moose, I mentioned that I was working on a new book that would describe three elegant and deceptively simple principles that could eradicate stalled careers, retirement on the job, and geriatric corporations. I told Moose that these three concepts—Mastery, Chemistry, and Delivery—were so powerful that they could put fire into organizations, turning bureaucratic treadmills into motivational engines of entrepreneurship and beauty.



"Moose . . . made the pithy observation that the organizational dynamics of zoos (which he called Zoo-Communities) resemble those of any other enterprise. 'Metro Toronto Zoo employs 230 staff and more than 4,000 animals, like me, who make them look good,' he told me." According to Secretan, it was Moose's idea that they work together on the publishing venture.

Moose's management philosophy—Moose's Moxie—forms the core of the book. Its tenets include the following:

■ **Moose's Law of Meetings.**

Customer satisfaction is inversely related to the amount of time spent in meetings.

■ **Moose's Law of Mission.** The only purpose of organizations is to meet customers' needs.

■ **Moose's Law of Creativity.** Innovation results from building on new ideas, not criticizing them.

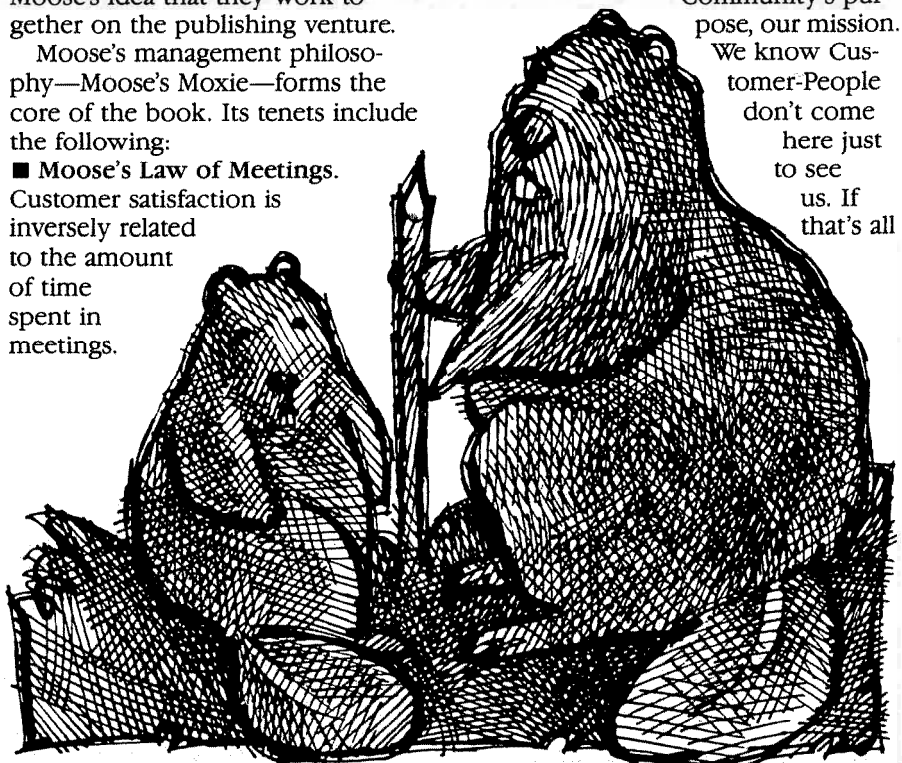
■ **Moose's Law of Listening.** The need for honest listening rises with seniority.

■ **Moose's Law of Leadership.** A successful team with one hundred members has one hundred leaders.

■ **Moose's Law of Assets.** Superior organizations possess only two major assets, employees and customers. All other assets automatically follow.

Tamias the chipmunk will learn Moose's laws through the course of his apprenticeship. But the chipmunk is no dummy. Before the formal orientation begins, he arranges an informational interview to get some background on the zoo and its philosophy. Mandy the mandrill teaches him about the true mission of the organization:

"Everyone here knows the Zoo-Community's purpose, our mission. We know Customer-People don't come here just to see us. If that's all



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they wanted, they could go to museums where they could get a closer look at natural history. Do you know what our real Mission is? *We sell smiles.*"

From Brunel the beaver, *Tamias* learns about the importance of having and using the right tools.

"A tail is not just a tail," Brunel tells Hoover, the young beaver he is mentoring, as *Tamias* watches and listens. "It's a rudder when you are swimmerizing. It's a prop when you are tree-cut-downing. It's a counterweight when you are transporterizing a load of mud, helping you to walk semi-erect . . . It's a heated nursing platform when you are par-entizing. It's an alarm when you slapperize it against the water surface. . . ."

Use of the language may not be the beaver's strong point, but understanding the tools of his trade is more important for building dams.

The second day of *Tamias's* training begins with a conference held by the Arctic wolves. The wolves have an image problem; *Tamias* can understand why. They howl in a scary way, and everyone knows they kill and eat other animals. Even among their own work group, they always seem to be fighting.

The wolfpack is giving the conference in order to come up with some solutions to its bad reputation. As visitors talk, the problem becomes clear: other work teams just don't understand the social hierarchy members of the wolfpack operate under. They don't realize that the wolves' bravado with each other is only a game, or that their howl is part of a sophisticated communication system that helps to unify team members while allowing individuals their own "space."

Tamias learns that he must keep an open mind about others. He realizes how unfortunate it is that the wolfpack has such a bad image, because others at the zoo have much to learn from the maligned team. Its commitment to team excel-

lence is incredible. Its training methods are highly successful.

The polar bears teach the chipmunk about the Itch and Scratch Model of customer service: whatever the Customer-People are itching for, you've got to satisfy them. For example, the Customer-People are itching to smile, to have fun, and to entertain their young; the polar bears scratch that itch by displaying their swimming and running skills and showing off.

No fable is complete without a villain. Nemesis the snake ("one mean meter of copperhead") keeps slinking up to *Tamias* to recruit the bright young apprentice for his own team.

"We should s-s-start to behave like the large organization that we are," hisses Nemesis. "We're too quick to change and not careful enough about rules, procedures, and s-s-seniority. We s-s-should be more s-s-sensitive to our members' needs and pander less to Customer-People.

"Mastery is inconsistent and hard to manage and control. Order, formalization, proceduralization and s-s-systemization are the keys to continuing s-s-success."

In the end, of course, *Tamias* has to choose between Moose's team and Nemesis's. You'll have to read the book to find out which way he goes.

Secretan's prose is imaginative and clever; black and white illustrations by David Shaw set the tone. And if you're skeptical about whether a white tiger can help write a book, Secretan and his collaborator (Moose) have an admonishment for you:

"It is important that we set aside our prejudices in order to consider fresh approaches objectively," he says. "Moose would suggest to you, 'If your mind is empty, it is always ready for a new idea, a different perspective; it is open to everything.'"

That's good advice to remember in business, too.

Secretan, president of The Thaler Corporation, is a consultant and speaker on mergers, company image, corporate strategy, and human resources training—and, presumably, an animal lover.

The Masterclass. 150 pp. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Stoddart Publishing Company, 416/445-3333, \$12.95.

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High-Tech Talk

A Handbook of Computer Based Training, by Christopher Dean and Quentin Whitlock.

You see them at the airline check-in counter and at your local bank branch office. They're in your office, and maybe even in your home. Computers seem to be everywhere these days, and in front of many of them are skilled or not-so-skilled operators.

Where do those operators get their training? In many cases, they learn from lessons that appear on those same computer screens, lessons that explain procedures and give examples and practice in the procedures. That's computer-based training, or CBT, and it's also used for training in procedures that don't even use computers. This book deals with how to develop CBT lessons to provide effective and cost-effective training.

"It is not our contention that computer-based training is invariably superior to the more traditional training methods," explain Dean and Whitlock. "Clearly there will be a strong case for this approach in tasks which involve the use of terminals. But even here the use is not always self-evident. In some circumstances a simple, printed performance aid may be cheaper and more effective. In others there may be good reasons for retaining a human instructor."

Nevertheless, CBT is here to stay,

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and many trainers and educators need to know how to use it for the best results. This book provides a link between educational technology and computers.

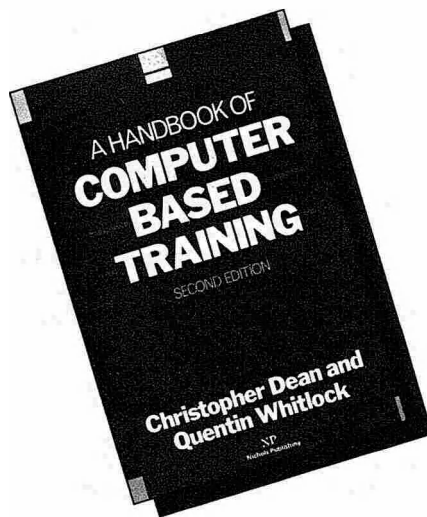
A Handbook of Computer Based Training is not the kind of book you'd want to read from cover to cover. It is designed to answer specific questions or provide in-depth information on particular aspects of CBT. It is a handbook for trainers who are new to CBT; it is also a reference book for course designers who are old hands at the keyboard, and for computer specialists who lack experience in course design.

In the first section, the authors discuss designing learning sequences, with special reference to computer-based training. They give practical, how-to advice on drawing up learning plans, defining and ordering content, and writing frames and transferring them to the screen.

The second part is an introduction to computers and CBT, targeted toward the trainer with no high-tech background. It covers hardware, software, and communications between the user and the machine—and between different machines. A chapter on new developments that affect CBT discusses videodisc technology, expert systems, desktop publishing, and the changing role of work.

The third section is on the nitty-gritty of CBT, from choosing equipment and authoring systems, through putting together a design team and deciding how to structure the training material on the screen. How do you know if CBT could work for you? How does it fit in with your other training technology? What is an authoring system, anyhow? This section answers those questions, and more.

The book includes a glossary of computer and course-design terms, checklists of questions to consider before buying equipment for CBT or choosing to use CBT for a partic-



ular course, and a list of CBT dos and don'ts.

This is the second edition of the handbook. Major changes since the 1984 edition include a new chapter on "Aspects of Screen Design," extra material on managing CBT development and analyzing and sequencing knowledge, and an updated computer section to allow for technological advances in the last five years.

Dean and Whitlock are senior partners of Dean Associates, a consulting firm that provides courseware development and courseware-author training for all media.

A Handbook of Computer Based Training, second edition. 284 pp. New York, NY: Nichols Publishing. This book is available through ASTD Press. Order Code: DEAH. \$38 for ASTD national members. \$40 for nonmembers.

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■ Eyeball-to-Eyeball Management

Coaching for Commitment: Managerial Strategies for Obtaining Superior Performance, by Dennis C. Kinlaw.

A tough-minded manager de-

scribed his philosophy of showing appreciation to employees this way:

"Where I come from, the appreciation you get for doing a good job is that you get to keep your job."

That kind of attitude is on its way to becoming a thing of the past, according to author Dennis Kinlaw. In its place, managers are beginning to realize that managing by control is less effective than managing by commitment.

"All the major strategies that have improved performance in this country over the past ten years have this in common: they all have increased employee commitment to quality and productivity," Kinlaw points out.

Showing employees that their efforts are appreciated is only one of the four activities that helps build commitment among employees, says Kinlaw. The others are clarifying organizational goals and values, making sure employees have the skills and knowledge to do their jobs successfully, and giving employees some influence over their work.

The central theme of *Coaching for Commitment* is that employee commitment is the key to superior performance, and that coaching can be a powerful strategy for building commitment. In the first chapter, Kinlaw discusses building commitment, and attempts to define it:

"Commitment . . . is not something that we can observe directly. We infer that [it exists] because of what people say and do. There are at least two kinds of behavior that signal employee commitment. First, committed employees appear to be very singleminded or focused in doing their work. The second characteristic that we associate with committed employees is their willingness to make personal sacrifices to reach their team's or organization's goals."

Kinlaw uses NASA's Kennedy Space Center as an example. After the Challenger accident, he says,

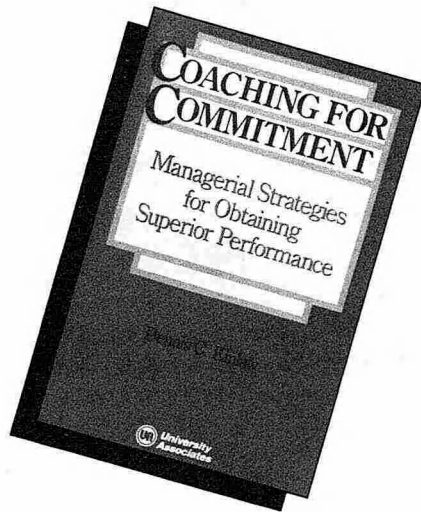
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everyone at Kennedy was focused on launching the next shuttle. The director made it clear that the organization's top 10 priorities were "return to flight, return to flight, return to flight. . . ." When the manager of the Viking Project announced that there would be "no leave until launch," nobody argued. Even when he said that Christmas would be a workday, employees were not surprised. Everyone was committed to the organization's goal of getting the next shuttle off the ground.

Coaching, says Kinlaw, has a central role in building commitment. "Coaching is the process by which managers stay in touch with their subordinates. All the walking around in the world will not help managers to get the best from their employees unless they are walking around as coaches. Coaching is eyeball-to-eyeball management. . . . It is a chance to clarify goals, priorities, and standards of performance. It is a chance to reaffirm and reinforce the group's core values. It is a chance to hear ideas and to involve employees. . . . More important than all the rest, it is a chance to say 'thank you.'"

In the second chapter, Kinlaw answers the question, "What is coaching?" and explains its four functions: counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and confronting. For coaching to be successful, he says, it must satisfy the following criteria:

- It results in a positive change in performance and a new or renewed commitment to self-sufficiency, the organization's goals and values, continuous learning, and a sustained, high level of performance.
- It results in achievement or maintenance of a positive work relationship.
- It is mutual, communicates respect, and is problem-focused, change-oriented, and disciplined.
- It follows an identifiable sequence or flow and requires the use of specific communication skills.



The next two chapters deal with the coaching process for solving problems and improving performance. Coaching, says Kinlaw, must be understood and used as a process. The process must be psychologically satisfying for the employee. In addition, it must be interactive and must proceed through identifiable stages, and requires a set of specific communication skills. Kinlaw gives step-by-step models of the two different coaching processes.

In the last chapter, Kinlaw sums up the role of coaching in superior leadership performance. "Coaching," he says, "is not an option for managers. It is a large part of their basic managerial functions. It is clear that superior managers and superior leaders engage in coaching—and they do it well."

The good news, he says, is that coaching is a skill that managers can learn to do well.

Coaching for Commitment is written for managers—people who have formal responsibility for the performance of others, and those who just depend on others in order to do their own jobs—and for human resources professionals who are responsible for developing, delivering, or marketing programs on coaching.

A special note at the end of the book describes a trainer's package that is available to accompany the text. It includes a trainer's manual, a participant's workbook, interactive videotapes, and other materials.

Kinlaw is a management consultant and president of Developmental Products, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

Coaching for Commitment: Managerial Strategies for Obtaining Superior Performance. 125 pp. San Diego, CA: University Associates, 619/578-5900, \$29.95.

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Additional Reading

The Executive Odyssey: Secrets for a Career Without Limits, by Frederick G. Harmon. 270 pp. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 201/469-4400, \$19.95.

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Optimizing the Organization: How To Link People and Technology, by Emily E. Schultheiss. 180 pp. New York, NY: Ballinger Publishing, 800/638-3030, \$29.95.

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Turning Your Human Resources Department Into a Profit Center, by Michael W. Mercer. 265 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 518/891-5510, \$49.95.

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