

Books

The Future of White Men and Other Diversity Dilemmas

by Joan Steinau Lester.



It's true. Everyone is represented under the umbrella "diversity." In fact, most of us are part of several groups that are minorities in one way or another. And most of us do our best not to hurt or offend others. So why do we still have a hard time getting along and making our way through the social obstacle course we confront daily?

Joan Steinau Lester offers her viewpoint about this perplexing question and the effects of discrimination in her book *The Future of White Men and Other Diversity Dilemmas*.

Essentially, the author says everyone suffers from some form of discrimination at some time in their lives. Conversely, she adds, everyone reaps benefits from discrimination against someone else at some point. This has gone on for generations—no, centuries—and will probably continue. But being more aware of cultural nuances can make our lives a little less uncomfortable and a little more equitable as we try to cope in an ever-more-diverse workplace—where the rules are always changing.

The first thing Lester advises is that people rid themselves of the guilt they feel when they realize the challenges other groups face because of them—or because of a group with which they are associated. "We are not liable for the past. We simply need to take action in the present," she says.

The next step toward valuing

diversity, she adds, is to acknowledge who we are in all of our multi-layered complexity. Language and the way it is used greatly affect the way individuals and groups view each other. One instance in which this is apparent is in the use of names.

According to the author, taking away the names by which individuals and groups identify themselves is one form of taking power from people. So an excluded or undermined group that takes control of its name asserts more control over its destiny.

"Let us all reclaim our power to name. As we create our language we create ourselves. Let us create ourselves in the most beautiful images we can imagine."

Finally, Steinau Lester reminds readers that actions speak louder than words. Here she discusses how to handle certain organizational policies that exclude some employees. Examples of policies she explores include holiday time-off policies, family-oriented benefits policies, sexual-harassment policies, reward systems, and wheelchair-accessibility policies for offices and meeting sites.

She also suggests that readers practice being allies with others to sharpen their awareness and build respect for others' differences.

"Being an ally takes lots of forms. We are allies whenever we intervene, however subtly, using whatever power we have to move the situation forward.

"In order to stretch this way and not pop, we need to be able to relax. If we make a mistake, so what? Most people will appreciate our intention. And if they don't, remember, the same thing has probably happened to them before and they lived through it. We will too. We simply will have learned something."

This month's books address a variety of topics, with something for everyone.

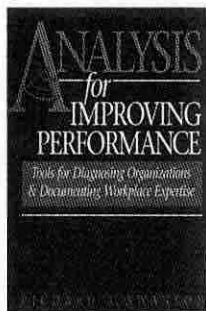
Joan Steinau Lester is cofounder and executive director of the Equity Institute, a company that helps public and private organizations address diversity issues.

The Future of White Men and Other Diversity Dilemmas, by Joan Steinau Lester. 164 pp. Emeryville, CA: Conari Press, 510/596-4040; \$17.95 (U.S.), \$23.50 (Canada).

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Analysis for Improving Performance: Tools for Diagnosing Organizations and Documenting Workplace Expertise

by Richard A. Swanson.



In his latest book, *Analysis for Improving Performance*, Richard Swanson describes a two-part analysis approach that can help to ensure that corporate programs to spur performance improvement remain cost-effective and improve performance.

The book is divided into four parts. In part 1, Swanson builds a sound case for the need to conduct a thorough front-end analysis before implementing any performance-improvement effort. In part 2, the author examines the first phase of his analysis approach—performance diagnosis. Here he outlines the steps that managers or developers need to perform to

- ▶ assess the organization's needs and the status of its support systems
- ▶ analyze necessary worker skills, knowledge, and attitudes
- ▶ specify performance requirements and evaluation standards
- ▶ produce a viable, comprehensive performance-improvement design.

Part 3 describes step-by-step how to document workplace expertise using such tools as job descriptions and task inventories, as well as techniques such as procedural, systems, and knowledge-task analyses. And in part 4, Swanson explains how to manage the work of performance-improvement analysis.

Augmented by exercises, examples, and graphics, this book provides beginners, as well as seasoned

professionals, with easy-to-follow instructions for performing front-end analysis.

"The fundamental premise of [the book] is that systematic and thorough workplace diagnosis and documentation provide the true basis for improving performance at the organizational, process, and worker levels. In managing the work of analysis for improving performance, like any other human activity, you should use your judgment about how to handle individual situations.

"Defining the performance requirements is half the battle. [Also] choose the right tools and the right partners. Benefits should exceed costs. This book is about mastering the work, not mastering the worker."

Richard Swanson is the director of the Human Resource Development Resource Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and is the founding editor of *Human Resource Development Quarterly*.

Analysis for Improving Performance: Tools for Diagnosing Organizations and Documenting Workplace Expertise, by Richard A. Swanson. 300 pp. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. This book can be purchased through ASTD Press, 703/683-8100. Order code: SWAF. Priority code: BXM. \$31 for ASTD members, \$33 for nonmembers.

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HR Words You Gotta Know! Essential Human Resource Terms, Laws, Acronyms, and Abbreviations for Everyone in Business

by William R. Tracey.



"Anyone who is responsible for supervising the work of others must be directly involved in the processes of recruiting, screening, hiring, training, developing, compensating, motivating, disciplining, and rewarding his or her staff. To do that, managers and supervisors must be able to communicate with the HR manager, his or her staff, and each other

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using a common vocabulary. [And they] must understand and commit to the underlying concepts, principles, and practices symbolized in its terminology."

Haven't been keeping up with the recent, rapid changes in HR lingo and laws? No problem. Non-HR managers can refer to William Tracey's comprehensive glossary, *HR Terms You Gotta Know!* to bring themselves up to speed with the field when they need help.

The book provides explanations for more than 1,100 alphabetized, cross-referenced entries, including more than 200 acronyms and abbreviations, more than 900 terms, and 83 important employment-related laws. Among the myriad of issues addressed are compensation, benefits, health and safety, and performance appraisals as they relate to the HR function in business, industry, government, education, and non-profit organizations.

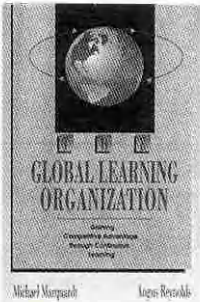
"Armed with *HR Words You Gotta Know!* [managers] understand the basics of employment laws so [they] can avoid compliance tangles, help [their] staff solve problems, boost productivity, and communicate effectively with the HR department."

William Tracey is president of Human Resources Enterprises of Cape Cod, an international consulting firm located in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

HR Words You Gotta Know! Essential Human Resource Terms, Laws, Acronyms, and Abbreviations for Everyone in Business, by William

R. Tracey. 166 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699, \$17.95.
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The Global Learning Organization: Gaining Competitive Advantage Through Continuous Learning
by Michael Marquardt and Angus Reynolds.



This book is everything you've read or heard about learning organizations and everything you've read or heard about global competitiveness, all rolled into one. In their book, *The*

Global Learning Organization, Authors Michael Marquardt and Angus Reynolds have packaged together everything from conceptual framework to actual programs to a comprehensive collection of readings and resources to help firms transform themselves into global learning organizations.

The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 describes nine forces that are influencing organizations to change the ways they think and operate. The authors also examine the key principles of learning, train-

ing, and knowledge, and present 11 organizational and six global components that make up their global learning-organization model.

Part 2 identifies the major obstacles to and challenges of becoming a global learning organization. The authors describe the stages of development for such organizations and provide strategies for building a global learning organization. They also explore the skills and attributes of leaders and learners within such organizations.

Part 3 presents 16 real-world case studies of successful learning organizations and shows their particular strengths with regard to the authors' global learning-organization model. In part 4, the authors expound on the possibilities for future structuring and operations of global learning organizations.

Finally, the book contains a chart that lists the strengths of the companies mentioned. The chart enables readers to benchmark their own companies against the best.

"The subject of the global learning organization is a challenging, but also complex, still-evolving concept and practice. Our interactions with people and organizations new to the concepts of learning organizations and globalization show that the sub-

ject can be overwhelming.

"We have done our best to demystify the topic and to make it as interesting and as powerful as it has proven to be for the successful corporations."

Michael Marquardt is a professor and program director of overseas HRD programs for George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Angus Reynolds is an instructional technologist for EG&G Measurements and lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Global Learning Organization: Gaining Competitive Advantage Through Continuous Learning, by Michael Marquardt and Angus Reynolds. 311 pp. Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin Professional Publishing, 800/634-3966, \$25.

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"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

The Service Quality Handbook, edited by Eberhard E. Scheuing and William F. Christopher. 550 pp. New York, NY: AMACOM, 800/262-9699, \$75.

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Benchmarking: Action Plans and Legal Issues. 176 pp. Waterford, CT: Bureau of Business Practice, 203/442-4365, \$27.50.

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Training and Development Yearbook—1994/1995, edited by Richard B. Frantzreb. 628 pp. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 800/372-9400, \$79.95.

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The Promotable Woman, 2d edition, by Norma Carr-Ruffino. 554 pp. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 415/595-2350, \$19.95.

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Positive, Motivational, Life-Affirming and Inspirational Quotations, compiled and arranged by John Cook. 445 pp. Newington, CT: Rubicon Press Books, 800/356-9315, \$19.95.

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Team Zebra: How 1,500 Partners Revitalized Eastman Kodak's Black and White Film-Making Flow, by Stephen J. Frangos and Steven J. Bennett. 225 pp. Essex Junction, VT: Oliver Wight, 800/343-0625, \$22.

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The Economist Intelligent Unit Global Manager: Recruiting, Developing, and Keeping World-Class Executives, by Michael Moynihan. 216 pp. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 800/262-4729, \$29.95.

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Cycle Time Management: The Fast Track to Time-Based Productivity Improvement, by Patrick Northey and Nigel Southway. 208 pp. Portland, OR: Productivity Press, 800/394-6868, \$29.95.

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Quality Is Personal: A Foundation for Total Quality Management, by Harry V. Roberts and Bernard F. Sergesketter. 169 pp. New York, NY: Free Press, 800/257-5755, \$19.95.

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Managing People in Changing Times: Coping With Change in the Workplace—a Practical Guide, by Robert Burns. 205 pp. New York, NY: Paul & Company, 212/564-3730, \$24.95.

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