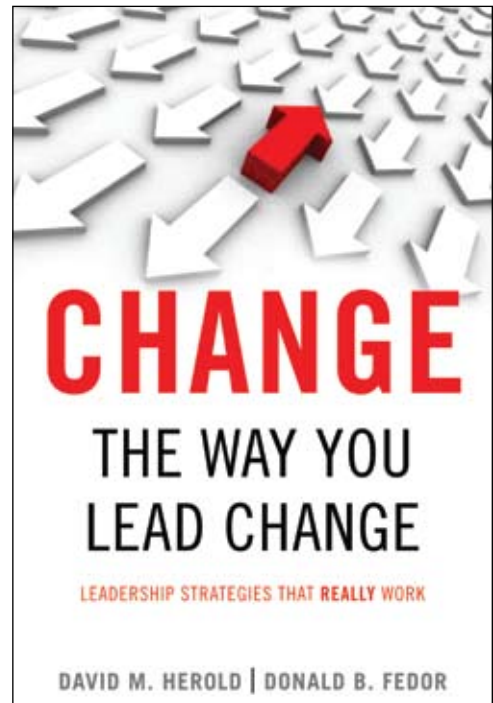


See Change (FOR WHAT IT IS)

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Change the Way You Lead Change: Leadership
Strategies that REALLY Work
.....

By David M. Herold and Donald B. Fedor
(Stanford University Press, 176 pp., \$25)

Reviewed by Nancy Seebert



Both David M. Herold and Donald B. Fedor have extensive backgrounds in organizational development and behavior, in academia and in “the real world.” And the authors note that current “change guidelines” and workflows were either not followed or, when followed, resulted in poor or failed outcomes.

Statistics indicate that “fewer than 20 percent of all change initiatives are really successful. More alarming still for top managers, a survey of 1,087 corporate directors reported in *BusinessWeek* in 2005 that 31 percent of CEOs fired by their boards were removed because they mismanaged change; more than any other cause.”

The authors were uncertain as to why this was happening. So they asked executives to think of a change that didn’t go as well as they would have liked, and to identify the key factor that may have been responsible. As we all know, hindsight is so much clearer. They spent 10 years seeking the answers to this by

examining more than 300 changes and talking to more than 8,000 people.

They found that while much of the advice about organizational change focuses on a few steps applied to a single change, few people actually lived in a “one change at a time” environment. Instead people exist on a “roller coaster of change,” with overlapping changes being driven by different events, led by different executives, and originating from different parts of the organization—all at the same time.

So, I ask the readers of this review—does this sound familiar?

We all talk about change and transition, but rarely look outside the window

to explore the fact that “change” is happening constantly, and we follow the same patterns each time.

We have for years followed a workflow for change. And it is almost impossible for such a workflow to work when change is so complicated. Instead of steps, the authors propose a change framework. The expectation is that leaders must develop better ways of analyzing what they think they want *and* what they know about themselves and others. Only then can they develop a strategy.

The word “change” is used in business literature so much that we often misinterpret what is meant by it. The authors define change as the “demands placed on organizations or organizational subunits that require significant departures from people’s current routines and behaviors and the success of which depends on the support of those affected.”

Instead of just calling a change an event (which is how I learned), it is recognized as being more than that. So many times, we adopt a sense of urgency—that we must “change the way we do X.” The authors believe that while urgency can be a necessity, it is not a sufficient condition for ensuring successful organizational change.

A few of the authors’ concepts resonated sharply, particularly the following: “Although the need to change is often quite clear, *what* needs changing is a totally different and more difficult matter.”

The authors discuss both people’s motivation and capacity for change. These are different items but can be linked together. The model is called a “change framework” and involves various questions at various junctures within the model. The answers to the questions are pointed toward a course of action, and the more complicated pieces can change themselves. Because the process is not linear, it is an easily understood, yet complete model.

The last chapter goes through the process of “putting the pieces together”; however, I recommend that you do not skip to the end, or you will miss the constraints, rationale, and reasons for each piece. Herold and Fedor use excellent, reputable case studies to demonstrate.

When I first opened this book, I was a bit cynical about yet-another-book-on-change. But this book successfully simplifies a complex process to provide more meaningful outcomes. And isn’t that what we all want?

I give this four cups of joe.

Nancy Seebert is program manager for Workforce Development for Providence Health and Services in Portland, Oregon; Nancy.Seebert@providence.org.

The authors believe that while urgency can be a necessity, it is not a sufficient condition for ensuring successful organizational change.



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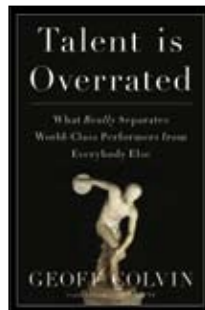
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Talent Is Overrated: What Really Separates World Class Performers from Everybody Else

By Geoff Colvin
(Davies-Black, 302 pp. with CD, \$39.95)

In 1992, a group of researchers in England analyzed 257 young people who had studied music to some degree during their lives. The youth ranged from competitive music school students to those who had played an instrument for at least six months. After rigorous interviews and tests, the researchers discovered only one variable that the high performing youth shared: deliberate practice.

In *Talent Is Overrated*, Geoff Colvin contends that talent—which is traditionally defined as experience, specific innate abilities, and intelligence—is



not the primary means for high performance; rather, high achievers perform well because of practice.

Colvin continues to define the qualities of deliberate practice: it's designed specifically to improve performance, it can be repeated a lot, feedback on results is continuously available, it's highly demanding mentally, and it isn't much fun. While most professionals would hope that they are regularly improving their job performance, many workplaces do not create an environment in which deliberate practice can thrive.

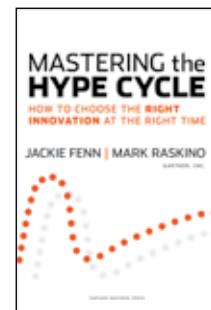
While Colvin's claims are interesting, they are unbalanced, and the book lacks evidence of conclusive research as a basis for his ideas.

Ann Pace

Mastering the Hype Cycle: How to Choose the Right Innovation at the Right Time

By Jackie Fenn and Mark Raskino
(Harvard Business Press, 272 pp., \$29.95)

What is the hype cycle? It's a commonly sung company song. A new innovation debuts with much enthusiasm and expectation. Suspense ramps up, press coverage augments, and the implicit message is to be on board or be sorry. Companies rush to adopt the new idea,



and then when reality doesn't pan out, the idea is dropped as quickly as it was adopted. Perhaps years later, the product or process is finally accepted and integrated into mainstream business.

Fenn and Raskino deconstruct the hype cycle and share their insights on it, based on more than a decade of research. In doing so, they explore its possible causes, its progression, and what managers can learn from it.

Fenn and Raskino also provide a market-tested adoption approach called the STREET process to help managers counter hype-driven tendencies and allow companies to match new trends with current organizational needs. The STREET process broken down is scope (establishing the context for innovation), track (collecting the innovation candidates), rank (prioritizing the candidates), evaluate (understanding risks and rewards), and evangelize and transfer (making it happen).

Aparna Nancherla

Going Lean: How the Best Companies Apply Lean Manufacturing Principles to Shatter Uncertainty, Drive Innovations, and Maximize Profits
By Stephen A. Ruffa
(AMACOM, 263 pp., \$27.95)

There is a growing literature on improving business during today's trying economic times. But theory and conjecture only move you so far. How do some of the world's most visible companies create the strategies that make a difference?

In *Going Lean*, Stephen A. Ruffa spotlights examples from the automotive, airline, and retail industries, offering potent lessons on how companies drive innovation, promote sustainability, and create value in the face of uncertainty. The backbone of the book lies in the well-thumbed ideologies of the Toyota Production System.

Peter Senge's quote, "Today's problems come from yesterday's 'solutions,'" drives Ruffa's point that companies' reliance on stability has worked against long-term interests. And in discussing



the adoption of "lean" principles by Wal-Mart, Toyota, and Southwest Airlines, Ruffa establishes the five characteristics they share, including formulas for attaining dynamic stability.

The next two sections get increasingly specific with examples illustrating issues of "push" versus "pull" in achieving lean results, as well as developing, implementing, and managing a plan of action for companywide change.

Juana Llorens

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