

# Book Reviews

## DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES

By Walter R. Mahler

Addison-Wesley Publishing, Reading, MA 01867

214-page hardback

\$10.95

The author takes the position that diagnostic studies can be useful in training and in personnel development work. Diagnostic studies, he says, are now used to improve both training and personnel results, and efforts to have a well-managed organization.

People seem to think of attitude surveys when the term diagnostic studies is used. However, Dr. Mahler says, the current "state of the art" of diagnostic studies goes far beyond attitude surveys.

The book can be considered a handbook. Implicit in it are three convictions about individuals in the personnel and/or training function: They should 1) use diagnostic studies, 2) use studies more effectively and 3) use a wide variety of studies.

Diagnostic studies refers to an analytical process which begins by the collection of data. The studies in this book, used in many organizations, illustrate how varied situations can be approached from data. Seventeen different studies, both old and new, are discussed.

The case study in the appendix is unique. The author says it is the only study in which data have been secured from the same managerial group, using four different methods. *Its main value is in training.*

Diagnostic studies discussed: The Climate Survey; The Organization Study; The Coaching Practices Survey; The Organizational Characteristics Survey; Force-Field Analysis; The Barometer Survey; Power Conflict Study; Authority-Analysis Study; Decision-Flow Analysis; Employee Performance Survey; Ten/Ten Program; Time Analysis; Developmental Dialogues; Critical Personnel Decisions; Analysis of a Personnel Program; Personnel Role and Relationship Survey, and Data Contribution to Career Planning.

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## ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR CASES AND SITUATIONS

By B.J. Hodge, H.J. Johnson and R.L. Read

Intext Educational Publishers, 257 Park Ave. South, N.Y., N.Y. 10010  
338-page softback

\$5

This casebook's aim is to sharpen decision-making skills by describing a variety of situations in which organizational behavior concepts can be applied to typical problems. The cases, arranged under seven general headings, are followed by suggested discussion questions. The sections are:

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Book Review Editor

*Organization Culture and Social Systems*, designed to show the impact culture can have on the behavior of people in organizations.

*Role and Status*, dealing with the importance of the parts people play in the organization and privileges associated with these parts.

*Authority, Power and Structure*, providing an opportunity to integrate several determinants of organizational behavior into the solution of difficulties.

*Motivation*, designed to provide a broad setting within which to apply concepts and practices that will help harness and direct goal-oriented behavior.

*Leadership*, illustrating the impact of the leadership function.

*Management of Conflict and Change*, dealing with this difficult task facing managers.

And *Philosophy*, providing a setting for understanding a set of values with which to make decisions that provide direction for the organization.

Each of the book's 75 cases, just over four pages on the average, are punchy, well written and well thought out. They are dramatized with much dialogue, and, thus, can be easily used in role playing.

Especially significant are the categories into which the cases are divided. These are the major problem areas in which managers and supervisors have decision-making problems.

## **OBsolescence IN PROFESSIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

by H.G. Kaufmann

American Management Associations, 135 West 50th St., New York, NY 10020

193-pp. hardback

\$11.95

Many books and papers have appeared on professional obsolescence and its sister concept, continuing education. But here is a book written specifically for practitioners who are responsible for dealing with the problem. The author has relied in part on his own investigations of obsolescence carried out over the past nine years. His studies included in-depth interviews with managers, large-scale attitude surveys of professionals, and even long-range research that has followed the same individuals from their first job through mid-career. The results of these investigations have been liberally sprinkled throughout the book.

Dr. Kaufmann says that obsolescence results mainly from:

1. The information explosion and dynamic change stimulated by the knowledge revolution.

2. Personal characteristics, mostly those which are psychological.

3. The work environment and organizational climate.

He says it is first necessary to have a good understanding of why obsolescence occurs before one can prescribe a cure. Prescriptions discussed focus on professional career development. They involve a host of personnel practices and organizational changes. Some of these are widely accepted. Others are still new and untried. However, with the exception of continuing education, the suggested prescriptions have rarely been discussed in the context of obsolescence.

Chapters include: The Challenge of Change; The Definition, Scope and Measurement of Obsolescence; Personal Characteristics, Obsolescence and the Professional Career; Personnel Practices for Controlling Obsolescence; The Work Environment and the Job Design; Organizational Climate; Is Continuing Education a Panacea or Palliative?; and Future Directions.