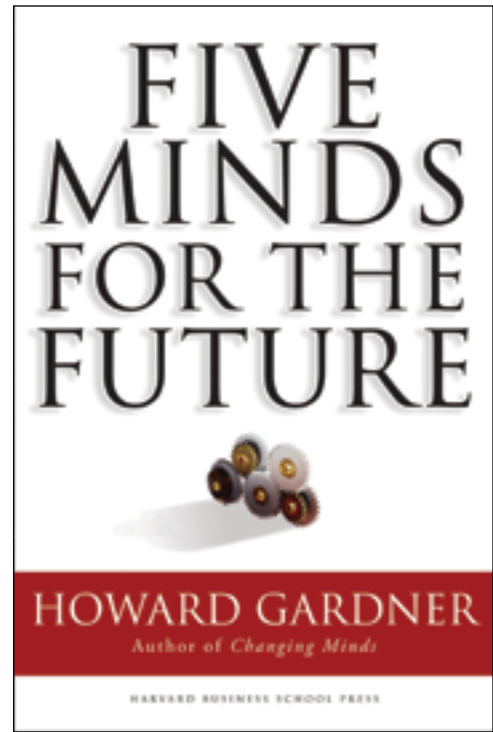


## NOURISHING FOOD FOR (THOUGHT) LEADERS

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 Five Minds for the Future  
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By Howard Gardner  
 (Harvard Business School Press, 204 pp., \$24.95)

Reviewed by Josephine Rossi



So many messages are woven into renowned psychologist Howard Gardner’s new book that it is hard to isolate just one as the reason for workplace learning and performance (WLP) professionals to read it. But those who do will quickly recognize **Five Minds for the Future** as a thought-provoking text that delves into some of the industry’s hottest issues.

Gardner—who writes less like a psychologist than a policymaker—asserts that the world’s educational systems need to adapt their structures and curricula to survive in a rapidly changing environment. He believes the current system prepares students for a world that doesn’t exist anymore. The memorization of facts or formulas, for example, is no longer necessary because now we can access that information in seconds on a computer. Consequently, individuals who do routine work or fail to expand their thinking beyond the capacities of artificial intelligence will become expendable in the future workforce.

Each chapter of the book details a “mind” that Gardner believes will help people build a world in which they not only thrive but enjoy. Unlike his famous multiple intelligences theory of the 1980s, however, this new quintet of minds spotlights more than just cognitive abilities. It certainly makes use of the different intelligences, but it also lends humanistic qualities that equip people to “deal with what is expected as well as what cannot be anticipated.” According to Gardner, the five minds—disciplined, synthesized, creative, respectful, and ethical—need to be developed as globalization and access to information continue to shape how we live and work.

Practitioners should not be discouraged that Gardner's discussion is aimed mostly at the academic community. After reading just a few lines, they will see how his message clearly speaks to those in the WLP field, too.

Gardner compares subject matter knowledge with true understanding. He argues that the regurgitation of information does not demonstrate understanding; rather performance in an uncontrolled and unpredictable environment is a better indicator of comprehension. Similarly, in the second chapter, he stresses the importance of knowing how to synthesize information and calls for more deductive reasoning training. As access to on-demand information proliferates, it will become increasingly vital for workers to know how to wade through the data glut, tease out the appropriate information in a way that makes sense to them, and then communicate it to others. And while he does not directly state them as such, the concepts of informal and just-in-time learning, evaluation, and coaching pepper his elucidations throughout the book.

Those who have read *Changing Minds* will be familiar with Gardner's intellectual tone and subtle style. He writes for the curious reader who has time to mull over his ideas, not a busy professional looking for a quick fix that he can implement immediately. (He seems to be more concerned with theory than practice.) But in *Five*

*Minds*, he does a better job of doling out advice than he has in the past. He arms readers with a plethora of theories about how and why society should cognitively adapt to its environment, and he follows up with illustrations of the best ways to do so. Each chapter addresses the specific challenges that the minds pose for educators and learners, and—as many WLP professionals already know—suggests that leaders play a large role in nurturing employee development.

Gardner also is considerate of how these minds of the future play off each other. For an individual to excel creatively, she needs to have mastered her skill (discipline), but she also needs to synthesize the information around her. Yet, too much emphasis on building a disciplined mind thwarts creative efforts. In another example, he explains that sometimes one of the minds (ethics) may trump another (respecting authority).

Anyone seeking an intellectual justification for life-long learning should look no further. In fact, *Five Minds* may be more convincing because Gardner isn't peddling a service or his reputation. His thoughts, however complicated and intricately explained, fuel the questions that practitioners already are asking.

I give the book three cups of coffee.

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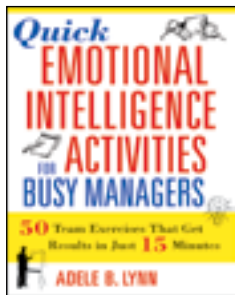
Other IQs

**T+D STAFF INVESTIGATE MORE BOOKS ON INTELLIGENCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE.**

**Quick Emotional Intelligence: Activities for Busy Managers**

By Adele B. Lynn  
(AMACOM, 194 pp., \$17.95)

In an era that demands immediate relevancy, training facilitators want tools that can be used in a matter of minutes. As organizations place greater emphasis on team initiatives, it is as important to know how a colleague may react to a particular situation as it is to know his strengths and weaknesses. This skill, commonly known as emotional intelligence, is at a premium because the isolation of many work stations does not permit co-workers to learn much about their peers.



As its title indicates, this book is not a Freudian analysis of what makes people tick in an office. Instead, it includes dozens of quick team exercises that are designed to build self-awareness while working in groups.

The short chapters are microwavable training materials that any facilitator can use to lead a group after reading a two-page lesson primer. One exercise, “trading places,” calls for the more talkative types to switch roles with the wallflowers. Another invites participants to identify a colleague’s greatest talent in the form of a gift card.

To appeal to the cautious trainer, the exercises are assigned risk factors from low to high.

Michael Laff

**Talent IQ**

By Emmett C. Murphy  
(Platinum Press, 266 pp., \$22.95)

Today more than ever, the fate of an organization depends on its ability to recruit, retain, and, when necessary, replace talent. By the same token, talent management determines the success or failure of an individual’s career, claims bestselling author Emmett C. Murphy.

Drawing from a 10-year multinational study of best practices among talent leaders in 992 public and private sector organizations, Murphy sketches a blueprint of the skills and concepts necessary to succeed in talent selection, management, evaluation, and succession. This “talent IQ,” as the author dubs it, is crucial for making the most of an organization’s abilities from the frontlines of customer service to the inner sanctum of the boardroom.



The book offers an entertaining, albeit choppy, look into the intricacies of talent management. Content is organized into nine chapters dealing with distinct aspects of talent management, which makes the flow of the subject matter at times hard to follow. The numerous anecdotes, from icons such as Dwight Eisenhower and Lee Iacocca to Ben & Jerry’s ice cream company, however, make it a compelling and edifying read.

Jenni Jarventaus

**101 Ways to Improve Customer Service: Training Tools, Tips, and Techniques**

By Lorraine L. Ukens  
(Pfeiffer, 366 pp., \$50)

This book provides a variety of training and development training tips, tools, and techniques that encompass awareness, communication, planning, problem solving, quality, and teamwork.

Because customer service representatives directly influence the perception that customers have of products, services, and the company, they must create a positive image, communicate effectively, and build customer rapport to support the underlying values and beliefs of the organization. The techniques and tips in this book will help customer service representatives stay focused, enthusiastic, and motivated to provide exceptional customer service.



Along with sections divided into the six aspects of customer service, there are appendices that list interventions for service-provider challenges, including internal customers, call centers, and sales. The book also contains a CD of training handouts and tools.

Paula Ketter