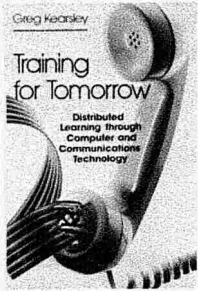


Bookshelf



Ttraining for Tomorrow—Greg Kearsley

As the little red schoolhouse has given way to the acreage of modern-day elementary schools, so chalkboard training techniques are being outmoded by the promise of high-tech training. With emphasis on the benefit of in-

dividualized instruction, "distributed learning" takes the capability of communication and computer technology, and brings it to bear on the training enterprise, whether in the living room, the classroom, or the workplace.

More than just widely distributing the place where learning occurs, training over the wires means the accessibility of education to people at all ages. It's the learning that is "fundamentally independent of time and space," and a technical way to take advantage of the theories of lifetime learning. Directed at both trainers and educators, and at those designing training and deciding on the allocation of training dollars, Kearsley's book aims at clarifying the hows of distributed learning and the technologies behind it.

Kearsley argues that the costs of centralized learning are too great and

decentralized learning enables each student to access the training when it is most appropriate for him or her.

Technology has altered not only the place in which learning occurs but the style—individualized instruction can now be the rule. Moreover, learning can be removed from the classroom but still retain its interactivity. Computer-based instruction and video techniques can provide drills, tutorials, and simulations as well as group conferencing.

But while the costs of travel to traditional training centers may seem excessive, the costs of setting up a distributed learning network are not small. Indeed, Kearsley says that distributed training frequently costs two to ten times as much as classroom instruction to develop and implement. In pages devoted entirely to the costs of traditional versus distributed training however, Kearsley tallies the costs and savings of distributed learning and finds that it comes out ahead.

Chapter by chapter, Kearsley details

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the technologies necessary to making distributed learning work, how to design and maintain an effective system, and how to decide if it's all the right move. 121 pages. \$19.95. Addison-Wesley, 6 Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867.

CAREER VEER

HOW TO POSITION YOURSELF FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

WILLIAM C. HOUZE

Career Veer: How to Position Yourself for a Prosperous Future

—William C. Houze

Which employees are maintaining their value to the company? The cluster specialists. It's not being a jack of all trades and it isn't being trained to perform one specialized function. Rather, Houze says the successful employee, whether in labor or management, is one who "works effectively, at reasonable technical depth, in a small number of technologies, crafts, or markets *having one or more unifying relationships.*" Rather than focus on the right career path, success-minded people, Houze writes, should attend to their role in the company.

Houze provides examples from a variety of different job levels. For example, the nonsupervisory worker in a mechanical field will not only know how one machine operates, but will be the person "capable of troubleshooting and performing all *mechanical* work required in the installation and adjustment of factory equipment." Similarly, the sales force supervisor not only can make critical sales come through, but also is accomplished at selecting and training an effective group of subordinates.

Becoming a cluster specialist doesn't mean changing jobs; it means changing the approach to your career. And there are other warnings Houze offers. Don't

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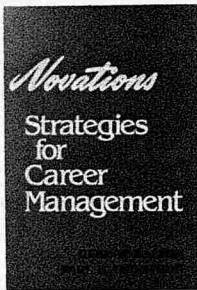
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rush to convert a hobby into a new business venture or lose sight of the planning aspects of the career move over concern with placing yourself within the right emerging trend.

Houze provides background analysis about the economy and the changing state of employment. He also offers a number of case studies; examples of individuals whose careers may or may not be ripe for "veers." Unfortunately, Houze provides us with too much colloquial chatter and his message can be hard to extract from the folksy style. He seems at times to dwell too much on saying it cleverly rather than providing the substance up front. To be helpful to those looking for new life in their work worlds *Career Veer* would benefit more from less talk about what a cluster specialist looks like and more about how to become one too. The cluster specialist could be a motivating paradigm. 270 pages. \$15.95
McGraw-Hill, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.



Novations: Strategies for Career Management—Gene W. Dalton & Paul H. Thompson

"At least one way of explaining why some professionals were highly valued by their organization throughout their careers, while others, apparently equally bright and well-trained, received progressively lower performance ratings with every passing year." About professionals and the development of their careers in organizations, *Novations* seeks to explain how these careers

sometimes move swiftly and other times get stuck.

Dalton and Thompson present two ideas to make sense of the seemingly whimsical "some make it and some don't" lottery. The first, is that professional careers develop through four stages. Each can be characterized according to the central activity the professional performs, the primary relationship he or she maintains at work, and the major psychological issues for the professional at that stage. For example, Stage I is that of the apprentice whose main activity is characterized by helping, learning, and following direction. This stage is one of dependence. In the final stage, the professional, as sponsor, shapes the direction of the organization and exercises power. Successful career management means advancing from stage to stage based on successful performance and the trust and support of key people. Each stage is discussed in separate, detailed sections.

EXCELLENCE / 85

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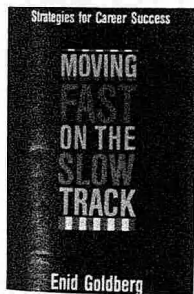
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The second is an adaptation of the legal term "novation." Taking it out of its contractual meaning, Dalton and Thompson focus on the importance of negotiating and coming to mutual agreement with those involved on the new obligations and expectations that come from moving to another stage.

After describing what happens to careers in organizations, Dalton and Thompson turn to normative questions. Clearly not everyone is in the position to aim for a Stage IV slot. Here the issues turn to the individual and the career concerns that lie in the greater context of human potential and in central issues such as personal life and outside pursuits. Thoughtful discussions on the importance of personal interest in one's work and facing conflicting interests in performing tasks of equal personal importance are included. Through numerous examples and a self-assessment guide, *Novations* is more than a guide to career strategies, it's an invitation to think about life planning and the personal meaning of work. 280 pages. \$18.95. **Scott, Foresman and Company**, Professional Publishing Group, 1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025.



Moving Fast on the Slow Track—Enid Goldberg

Fast track/slow track. Unfortunately, it's the same distinction as line job/staff job. But, says Goldberg, although less acclaimed and certainly granted less mainstream glamour, staff positions can be part of very successful career paths in the corporate setting. After outlining a myriad of staff positions commonly found in the corporate structure, whether in administration, communication, community affairs, human resources, or data support, Goldberg moves on to discuss quite frankly the realities, pleasant and



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otherwise, that often attend staff positions.

Goldberg cites the "bothersome" and demoralizing distinctions that corporate firms can impose between line and staff employees of the same rank. Simple differences like that in physical setting or exclusion from the headquarters' building may discourage some potential staff careers. Such may be the concerns of those considering the work.

As a career search book, *Moving Fast on the Slow Track* covers the basics. Chapters include matching the right job to your talents and skills and doing well in the pre-hiring stages of resume writing and interviewing. Goldberg provides self-assessment charts to examine the correlation between various staff positions and the skills required for success in them.

Once in the job, particular worries of staff employees come to the foreground. These include self-doubt over importance to the corporation and fear of job security. In issues such as judging your importance to the business, Goldberg suggests you take a look and see if your function is tied to any profit center or if your supervisor or department manager has access to line or top management.

The focus of *Moving Fast on the Slow Track* is career success. Its recommendations are solid and apply to most careers, line or staff. Because of that, however, it doesn't do more than most career guidance books. Goldberg's specific recommendations to staff people lack depth. Only the newest entrants into the job market, who've little idea that staff positions are a

career option, will find eye openers. Those already in staff positions may hear familiar worries rehearsed and the many examples Goldberg includes could ring true. 190 pages. \$9.95. **Scott, Foreman and Company**, Professional Publishing Group, 1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025.

The Books column is prepared by George F. Kimmerling. Send inquiries and books for consideration to Books Editor: ASTD, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.



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