

# Books

## Potpourri

This month we're offering a potpourri of books to choose from. There's no obvious theme linking these books, but an underlying concept connecting them all is change. These books may help keep you and your company on course through the rapid changes occurring in today's business world. Some provide guidance in a basic way; others look at specific areas such as developing teams or implementing electronic performance support systems.

### **Practical Business Genius: 50 Smart Questions Successful Businesspeople Ask**

by *Craig R. Hickman*.

Asking the right questions is critical to finding the right answers. *Practical Business Genius* distills the critical issues that face today's businesses into 50 fundamental questions that every manager (or CEO, president, department head, or first-line supervisor) should ask about his or her company.

These 50 questions cover the "10 transcendent issues that lie at the core of every business: customers, quality, service, advantage, talent, motivation, trust, technology, alliances, and costs."

How individuals and teams deal with those 10 issues largely determines organizational success or failure in Hickman's five key performance areas: strategy, culture, change, effectiveness, and results.

"You can think about and apply the 50 questions any way you want," says Hickman. For example, you can use the whole agenda or certain parts of it in a highly structured setting such as a formal retreat or strategy session, or you can simply

browse through the questions during a long weekend away from the office.

"However you decide to use this book, front to back or back to front or even sideways, you'll eventually want to put all 50 questions together, leaving no corner of your company, division, department, function, or team unexamined."

Hickman has created a pick-and-choose format that allows a busy executive, immersed in the day-to-day turmoil of running a business, to step back, take a deep breath, and ask the crucial questions that can determine the ultimate outcome of his or her business.

As an added tool, the "acid test grid" enhances the pick-and-choose quality of the book. Hickman lays out the questions in grid format, cross-matching the 10 business issues and the five performance areas.

The format used throughout the book for each question:

- ▶ a scenario of a situation from a company such as DuPont, Microsoft, Heinz, the Gap, or Kellogg
- ▶ the key question
- ▶ that particular company's answer to the question
- ▶ several suggested right answers
- ▶ an example of how a specific company applied the right answers.

The answers may not work for you, but they'll get you thinking about and dealing with the vital issues facing your organization.

Craig R. Hickman is co-author of *Creating Excellence*, *The Future 500*, and other books. He manages Cannon Hickman Johnson, an international investment firm.

*Practical Business Genius: 50 Smart Questions Successful Businesspeople Ask*. 272 pp. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 908/469-4400, \$22.95.

Circle 245 on reader service card.

*The concept of change links many of the books in this month's column. The books cover business management, career development, participative management, the HRD field, and electronic performance support.*

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#### My Team Mates assesses:

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## Books

### Readers' Recommendations

More and more training and HRD professionals are reading books to help supplement their professional development and to help them solve their training problems. We at *Training & Development* would like to offer you the opportunity to share your information with each other. What are the most helpful books you've read this year, and why would you recommend them to others?

Call the "Voice Mail" line at 703/683-9590; reply by letter to *Training & Development*, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; or fax your response to Theresa Minton-Eversole at 703/683-9203. Responses received by September 1 may be featured in the December "Books" column.

Please provide your name, your company name and address, and a phone number with your response.

### The Doom Loop System: A Step-by-Step Guide to Career Mastery

by Dory Hollander.

Are you feeling anxious, unhappy, or disappointed in your job but don't know why? Have you reached your career goals, only to feel frustrated and bored—maybe even miserable?

*The Doom Loop System: A Step-by-Step Guide to Career Mastery*, by Dory Hollander, helps identify the reasons for job dissatisfaction and offers a tool to help you evaluate your own position in the doom loop.

Chapter 1 explains the doom loop. The doom loop can be plotted, much like a bell curve, on a simple matrix. Beginning at the bottom left of the matrix as you start your career (when you might feel anxious and uptight, but still challenged), it moves up and slightly to the right as you gain experience in the job (happy and satisfied), and then moves further to the right and heads downward after you have mastered the job and are beginning to lose interest in it. (bored and frustrated). The downward curve comes when you've been in the same position for

too long (unhappy and miserable).

The tool shows you at a glance where your career strategies and weaknesses lie. It can help you pinpoint problem areas in your present job and help you plan or adjust career goals based on your strengths.

Chapters 2 to 4 show you how to use the doom loop. First, Hollander explains career "capstones" and how to choose them. "A capstone is a targeted career success position that you're not likely to reach for another five to eight years from the time you choose it."

A capstone is not a profession or occupation. It's a specific job within a profession or occupation and can be anything, including a senior vice-president of HRD, a pit boss at a casino, a director of marketing, or a religious radio broadcaster.

Choose a career capstone that captures your excitement and passion about something. You should see it as a "stretch" position that demands your continuing professional development.

Hollander tells how to map a course of action to reach your capstone. In order to design an operating plan, you have to be on a first-name basis with the following:

- ▶ Your capstone profile describes the skills and credentials anyone would need to hold this capstone.
- ▶ Your career mosaic catalogs all the skills you have already acquired through various paid and unpaid work experience.
- ▶ Your target mosaic pinpoints the skills you still need to acquire to attain and succeed in your capstone.

Hollander explains that you'll need to keep creating and then re-creating challenges and excitement in your work, and that you'll need to make smart job choices at critical junctures. You'll be faced with many course-setting decisions. Hollander includes job aids for skill analysis and an explanation of how to use matrix mapping to bring you closer to your next capstone.

The next seven chapters deal with crises you may encounter on the road to your capstones, including first-job decisions, first-career disappointments, job loss, unexpected opportunities, discontent before reaching a capstone, doom upon

reaching a capstone, and political skills as survival skills.

*The Doom Loop System* uses case histories, job aids, strategies, and diagnostic tools to help you in your quest to reach your capstones.

Dory Hollander is a licensed psychologist who heads a St. Louis-based career-consulting firm.

*The Doom Loop System: A Step-by-Step Guide to Career Mastery.* 402 pp. New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 212/366-2000, \$22.95.

**Circle 246 on reader service card.**

### **The Change Riders: Managing the Powers of Change**

by **Gary D. Kissler.**

Downsizing, acquisitions, mergers, plant closings.... When change strikes your firm, you need to find a way to position your people to take advantage of the situation, rather than be overcome by it. Like a bronco buster who pits human intelligence against the strength of a wild horse, you must not try to master the animal (change), but rather to exploit its strength to achieve your goals. *The Change Riders* shows you how.

The book begins with a review of an array of social, political, marketplace, and organizational issues from the 1950s to the present:

- ▶ the impact of Japanese imports on our economy
- ▶ the change in the demographics and education of the U.S. workforce
- ▶ the cynicism resulting from the Vietnam war
- ▶ the corruption of politics in the 1970s
- ▶ the recent events in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The book explores the changes faced by managers and offers lessons, examples, and guidelines for dealing effectively with change. Some of the issues discussed:

- ▶ shifting management paradigms
- ▶ the value of offering severance "benefits" as well as placement, counseling, and retraining services
- ▶ the connection between "change stress" and illness
- ▶ the effect of change on employee loyalty
- ▶ employee involvement during times of change

### **Ordering Information**

For more information on any book listed in this column, circle the corresponding number on the reader service card and drop the card in the mail.

If you'd like to telephone a publisher, see the phone numbers listed here and on the reader service page. And please be sure to say that you read about the book in *Training & Development!*

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- ▶ the effect of organizational change on productivity and quality
- ▶ the need to reexamine unquestioned assumptions—to change the status quo
- ▶ the need for blueprints and road maps in managing the effects of change.

Kissler examines the importance of keeping employees informed of organizational changes, in open and productive settings. When even top performers are questioning their job security, it's the responsibility of managers to maintain productivity and quality levels.

Woven throughout the book is material taken from an internal study completed for a *Fortune* 50 company that was downsizing its manufacturing and distribution plants. The resulting lessons, data analyses, and managerial insights may be helpful to others in similar situations.

Gary D. Kissler is an associate partner with Andersen Consulting in London, England.

*The Change Riders: Managing the Power of Change.* 314 pp. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. This book can be purchased through ASTD Press, 703/683-8129. Order code: KICR. \$26 for ASTD national members; \$28 for nonmembers.

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# ETHICAL RESULTS

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**Participative Management: Implementing Empowerment**

by Lorne C. Plunkett and Robert Fournier.

This book is written for leaders, supervisors, hourly workers, and union stewards—those who will experience participative management

as a personal as well as an organizational event.

The authors of *Participative Management* believe that the participative management process is a powerful antidote for employee complacency and failure in organizations—that it unleashes the knowl-

edge and skills of the people who are doing the actual work of an organization.

“Participative management’s goal is to tap the unique resources of each of those individuals, create a collaborative learning experience, and produce results that are far greater than the sum of the individuals. The benefits far outweigh the risks and problems. The destination for any organization is always worth the cost of the trip—no matter how you measure success.”

In the nineties, profitable and efficient companies are managed not from above, say the authors, but from within. The firms that are destined to thrive are those in which everyone—from senior vice-president to entry-level employee—have critical and personal stakes in corporate success.

The book focuses on key issues for senior managers that should be addressed early in the process if participative management is to yield significant benefits:

- the need for a road map
- the effects of participative management on organizational structure and hierarchy
- resources for a participative management process
- the effects of participative management on decision making in the organization
- the effects of participative management on roles.

As Plunkett and Fournier point out, participative management is not necessarily restricted to the use of teams, but teams seem to be its dominant manifestation. The authors discuss some of the most common and contentious team issues, such as when to use existing teams and when to create new teams.

In addition to discussing types of teams that exist within an organization, the authors examine basic team processes that are required in order for a team or group to be effective in achieving its goals. They discuss such basic skills as identification of group norms including dress and seating arrangements, as well as conflict resolution and leadership style.

The appendix contains tools, examples of success in participative management, and a list of references.

**Additional Reading**

*Creating Shared Vision: The Story of a Pioneering Approach to Organizational Revitalization*, by Marjorie Parker. 125 pp. Clarendon Hills, IL: Dialog International, 708/323-4962, \$14.95.

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*The Best of Customer Service Training*, by American Society for Training and Development. Order code: BOCS. 57 pp. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 703/683-8129. \$19 for ASTD national members; \$25 for nonmembers.

**Circle 252 on reader service card.**

*Keeping Customers for Life*, by Joan Koob Cannie with Donald Caplin. 259 pp. New York, NY: Amacom, 212/586-8100, \$25.95.

**Circle 253 on reader service card.**

*The Best of Workforce Trends Affecting HRD*, by American Society for Training and Development. 118 pp. Order code: BOWT. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 703/683-8129. \$19 for ASTD national members; \$25 for nonmembers.

**Circle 254 on reader service card.**

*Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive* (revised), by David T. Kearns and Denis P. Doyle. 186 pp. San Francisco, CA: ICS Press, 800/326-0263, \$10.95.

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*The Best of Organizational Change*, by American Society for Training and Development. 91 pp. Order code: BOOC. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 703/683-8129. \$19 for ASTD national members; \$25 for nonmembers.

**Circle 256 on reader service card.**

*Communicating at Work: Creating Messages That Get Results*, by Ron S. Blicq. 403 pp. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, 201/767-5000, \$34.60.

**Circle 257 on reader service card.**

*The Adult Years: Mastering the Art of Self-Renewal*, by Frederic M. Hudson. 280 pp. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767, \$26.95.

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*Organizations on the Couch: Clinical Perspectives on Organizational Behavior and Change*, by Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries and associates. 407 pp. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767, \$33.95.

**Circle 259 on reader service card.**

*The Management Skills Builder: Self-Directed Learning Strategies for Career Development*, by Ralph S. Hambrick. 200 pp. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 203/226-3571, \$19.95.

**Circle 260 on reader service card.**

*Breakthrough Selling: Customer-Building Strategies From the Best in the Business*, by Barry J. Farber and Joyce Wycoff. 377 pp. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 201/767-5937, \$21.95.

**Circle 261 on reader service card.**

*The Seamless Enterprise: Making Cross-Functional Management Work*, by Dan Dimancescu. 249 pp. New York, NY: HarperBusiness, 212/207-7581, \$30 U.S.; \$40 Canada.

**Circle 262 on reader service card.**

*Your Own Worst Enemy: How To Overcome Career Self-Sabotage*, by Andrew DuBrin. 241 pp. New York, NY: Amacom, 212/903-8087, \$19.95.

**Circle 263 on reader service card.**

*Neanderthals at Work: How People and Politics Can Drive You Crazy... and What You Can Do About Them*, by Albert J. Bernstein and Sydney Craft Rozen. 287 pp. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 201/469-4400, \$19.95.

**Circle 264 on reader service card.**

Lorne C. Plunkett is president of Lorne Plunkett & Associates Ltd., a consulting firm in Ottawa, Ontario. Robert Fournier is head of maintenance at Esso Chemical Canada's PVC plant in Toronto, Ontario.

*Participative Management: Implementing Empowerment.* 273 pp. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. This book can be purchased through ASTD Press, 703/683-8129. Order code: PLPM. \$23 for ASTD national members; \$25 for nonmembers.

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### **Human Resource Development: The Field**

by R. Wayne Pace, Phillip C. Smith, and Gordon E. Mills.

This is a concise, compact, and comprehensive book that introduces readers to the field of human resource development.

"It provides a 'big picture' of its subject, including a definition of the concept of HRD, the future of the field, a history of HRD, its structure, the major roles taken by practitioners, the program areas, the international setting of HRD, and careers and career preparation.

"This book is based on the assumption that human resource development is a professional area of practice whose major goal is to develop the skills of employees at all levels in the organization. Thus, HRD appropriately encompasses the activities and programs designed to improve technical and operations employees, staff support personnel, and salesforces, as well as supervisors, managers, and executives."

The authors' explanations of the jobs of HRD professionals are largely based on visits to hundreds of organizations and placements of HRD interns in more than 500 organizations.

The book attempts to delineate and differentiate the field from other areas of study while acknowledging that human resource academic programs may be administered by a wide array of scholarly departments. The authors argue for ideal positioning of HRD professionals within organizations, but realize these professionals may be located and may function in diverse settings, ranging from personnel to marketing to manufacturing. Therefore, the authors

accept a philosophy of "best fit" as a compromise between the "ideal" and the actual work circumstances.

*Human Resource Development* is written for professionals and students who want to become familiar with HRD planning, training management, and career and organizational development activities and programs. It's especially aimed at people who are just entering the field.

R. Wayne Pace, Phillip C. Smith, and Gordon E. Mills are professors at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

*Human Resource Development: The Field.* 253 pp. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 201/767-5937, \$25.

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### **Electronic Performance Support Systems: How and Why To Remake the Workplace Through the Strategic Application of Technology**

by Gloria J. Gery.

Organizations want to be in the "performance zone." Unfortunately, most organizations are out of it, says Gloria Gery in *Electronic Performance Support Systems*.

"The performance zone is the metaphorical area in which things come together. It is the place where people *get it*, where the right things happen, [and] where the employee's response *exactly* matches the requirements of the situation. It is the place where employees put together all the individual dance steps that they have mastered. The dance, the dancers, and the music are one."

Because of innumerable variables in the workplace—such as an employee's position; company procedures, products, and services; interpersonal skills; and company politics—most employees simply cannot master all they need to know, Gery says. This inability to access the right answers at the right time results in performance problems. In fact, she contends, most companies have performance problems that they hide from themselves and everyone else.

Gery says that we have the means to provide employee support electronically. Technology can pull together the myriad threads of information we need on a daily basis to

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## Books

perform optimally. The threads of information can be universally and consistently available on demand at any time, and in any place, without intermediaries.

We have the technology now. What is needed is the proper mindset and a retooling of paradigms. Old training rules won't work with the new technology.

Gery sites 10 organizations as having embraced the new paradigms: Ziff Technologies, Innovis Design Center, American Express, Amdahl, Steelcase, Intel, Dow Chemical, Prime Computer, AT&T, and IBM. About a third of the book is devoted to case studies, which represent a range of task applications, technological environments, and sophistication. All are based on readily available desktop computer technology.

In addition, the author addresses such practical issues as the following:

- ▶ cost justification
- ▶ management buy-in
- ▶ 16 distinct roles to be played in the creation of electronic perfor-

mance support systems

- ▶ development and implementation
- ▶ tool selection
- ▶ strategy development
- ▶ the philosophy of how the systems will change the workplace.

Electronic performance support systems can give us the tools to weave the threads, dance the steps, and live in the performance zone.

Gloria J. Gery is a consulting editor of the magazine *CBT Directions* and an independent consultant based in Tolland, Massachusetts.

*Electronic Performance Support Systems: How and Why To Remake the Workplace Through the Strategic Application of Technology.* 303 pp. Boston, MA: Weingarten Publications, 617/542-0146, \$29.95.

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*This month's "Books" was compiled and written by Cynthia K Mitchell. Send books for consideration to Books Editor, Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.*

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