

# BOOKS

GUEST  
BOOK  
REVIEW

## NEW BOOKS ADDED TO PUBLISHER'S OD SERIES

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Nearly 10 years have passed since Addison-Wesley launched the organization development (OD) series in an effort to define the emerging field of OD. Since then, much has happened. There are textbooks and readers on OD; research results are beginning to accumulate; and educational programs on planned change and OD are growing. With this growth, new areas of knowledge and practice central to OD are emerging, enhancing the series viability. Therefore, three new books have been added, and a fourth is in production.

Two of these books, *Organizational Transitions: Managing Complex Change* by Richard Beckhard and Reuben T. Harris, and *Team Building: Issues and Alternatives* by William G. Dyer, have been reviewed for the *Journal* by Norman Lederer, Dean of Occupational Studies at Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, Mich. His observations follow.

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### TEAM BUILDING: Issues and Alternatives

By William G. Dyer

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Several years ago Addison-Wesley inaugurated a series of works dealing with organization development which provided an excellent overall introduction to what was, at that time, an emergent field of managerial inquiry. Since the time that the series has begun about 10 years ago, organization development has "taken off" as an area of academic and professional interest, with innovations and new

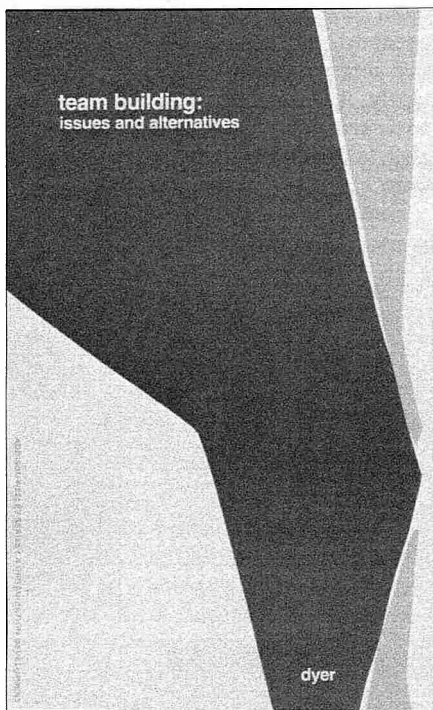
techniques germane to the field appearing on the scene in an almost constant succession. The editors of the series, therefore, decided with the blessing of their publisher to resurrect the series, adding to it volumes dealing with aspects of organization development missing from the earlier

istrators do anything tangible to achieve! The fact is that building an effectively operating team is one of the most difficult and time-consuming aspects of the work of a manager. This is the case whether the team-building effort takes place in a new organizational setting or one of long standing.

Sensitivity to individual difference and the ability to subsume these differences successfully within a team structure is an art not easily acquired by those managers whose response to resistance to change is either to ignore it or to attempt to demolish it through threat and intimidation. However, without an active and effectively cooperating team, the manager can achieve very little in the way of organizational advance. The effort therefore must be undertaken, and it is most useful to have Dyer's book on hand to act as a handbook, pointing out snares and delusions that might entrap the person seeking to construct an organizational team.

In his succinctly written and excellently arranged text, Dyer provides ample cogent advice on the manner in which the job of devising an effective team should be undertaken. Not only does he supply examples of testing procedures conducive to setting the proper tone for team cooperation along with lists of points to keep in mind, but he also illustrates his theory by the use of excellent case studies which provide dramatic indications of the way other organizations have succeeded or failed in the team-building effort.

He describes, in admirably clear fashion, the use of team develop-



*Team Building: Issues and Alternatives*, by William G. Dyer; Addison-Wesley, 1977; 139 pp; \$4.95.

volumes in the series.

*Team Building: Issues and Alternatives* by William Dyer, professor of Organizational Behavior at Brigham Young University, undertakes to provide guidance in the crucial area of team-building, planning and operation . . . an aspect of managerial activity that many pay "lip service" to as a worthy goal but which, in actuality, few managers or admin-

ment as a data-gathering, diagnostic, action process, with hints on when to use outside consultants in implementing procedure rather than resident managers. Various goal and design options are included, which are so devised as to fit most of the organizational team-building efforts that organizations might be inclined to employ to use as a means of breaking through managerial roadblocks.

Perhaps one of the most useful sections of Dyer's book concerns his discussion of "the abilene paradox," which he defines as the awareness of the reality that "the inability to manage agreement is a major source of organization dysfunction." His resulting discussion on agreement-management deals in brilliant fashion with the fact that the underlying consensus on problems, not articulated, constitutes a devastatingly destructive influence on the forward movement of organizations toward desired goals.

Dyer's book supplies a handy guide for managers to aid them in working their way through the maze of psychological and pseudopsychological approaches to team-building, while providing hints as to the pertinent employment of managerial teams in problem-solving and long-range planning endeavors. His book is well worth reading, especially in this age when managers are expected not only to produce but also to be constantly aware of the humanity of their subordinates.

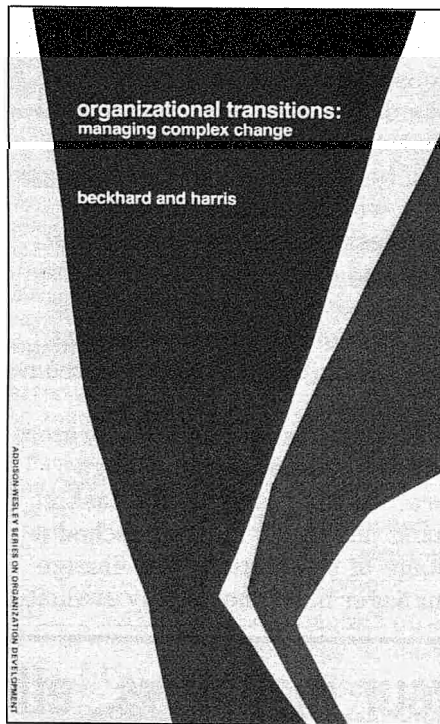
## ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITIONS:

### Managing Complex Change

By Richard Beckhard & Reuben T. Harris

The ways and means of effecting change in a relatively painless fashion in an organizational structure is evidently a lost art among managers and administrators. Case studies come to light on a regular basis indicating instances in which corporations and non-profit institutions alike undergo wide-ranging and deeply rooted alterations in their *modus operandi*, or even their reason for existence with devastating results

for personnel involved, and, all too often, with disaster for the organization. Beckhard and Harris of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology undertake in their stimulating work to provide a guide and handbook suggesting methods by which relatively smooth transformations in corporate organization and direction can be

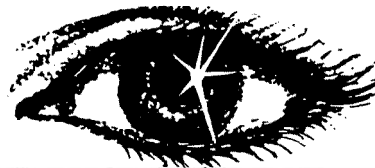


*Organizational Transitions: Managing Complex Change*, by Richard Beckhard and Reuben T. Harris; Addison-Wesley, 1977; 110 pp; \$4.95.

achieved. Their work is a worthy addition to the "Addison-Wesley Series on Organizational Development."

The authors address their book primarily to managers of change in large, complex organizations and to organization and management consultants, with a decided emphasis on reaching the former in their arguments. They emphasize quite rightly that betwixt the initiation of the process of organizational metamorphosis and the accomplishment of desired goals of effectiveness lies a gray, murky area known as the "transition state." It is during this "transitional state" that the organization's goals of moving forward are either implemented with a minimum of stress or sabotaged . . . with the latter taking place through employee resistance, the incompe-

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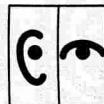
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