

WORTH MENTIONING
A List of New Books Compiled by
The Management and Government Information Center (MAGIC)
Chinn Park Regional Library
703-792-4880

Summer 2007

Indicates titles relating to the FISH Philosophy



LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT

12: The Elements of Great Managing by Rodd Wagner, 2006

The twelve concepts alluded to in the title—as well as the supporting statistics—are based on an extensive Gallup poll studying employee engagement in all facets of operations. A basic tenet emerged: “Hardworking supervisors who care can motivate even the most cynical employee.” In effect, the study seems to reflect that “front-line managers matter more than senior leaders.” They not only can drive better bottom-line results but also improve the lives of employees. Wagner dedicates a chapter to the twelve basic elements that evolved.

365 Foolish Mistakes Smart Managers Make Every Day: How and Why to Avoid Them by Shri L. Henkel, 2006

The title is somewhat misleading, since it does not include the word *new*. The book is intended to guide new managers to success and to help them avoid many common pitfalls. Henkel notes that each of the 365 enumerated mistakes “...clarifies what new managers do wrong, and suggests ways to correct those mistakes...” The principles outlined include three major topics that all managers need to understand: “proper communication, delegation, and motivation.”

Applebee’s America: How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community by Douglas B. Sosnik, Matthew J. Dowd & Ron Fournier

The authors believe that in an era of technology, terror, and massive social change “...it takes a deft touch to connect with Americans.” They claim to have cracked that “code,” though. They propound that successful leaders, even those from disparate fields, have more in common than not. And, yes, the Applebee’s of the title refers to the dining chain Applebee’s International, one of the corporations included in the extensive research. The authors’ point is that “...whether you’re promoting a candidate, a product, or the Word of God, the rules are the same in Applebee’s America.”

Ego Check: Why Executive Hubris is Wrecking Companies and Careers and How to Avoid the Trap by Mathew Hayward, 2007

This book’s theme is framed in the contemporary context of a major company crashing due to a CEO’s impropriety. It is a familiar theme, where a high-profile executive “...measures success solely by extrinsic praise and rewards...” ignoring signs that overconfidence has seeped into the decision-making process. Hayward tracks various examples, carefully distinguishing

between false and authentic confidence, while acknowledging that successful leaders must be highly confident.

The First 90 Days in Government: Critical Success Strategies for New Public Managers at All Levels by Peter H. Daly and Michael Watkins with Cate Reavis

The **MAGIC** staff is always pleased to come upon a title in the leadership genre that pertains strictly to managers in the public sector. **First 90 Days** is such a book, and uniquely focuses on the new public managers who will confront special challenges: “higher public profiles, more stakeholders than ever, volatile political environments...” The authors’ intent is to provide a road map for addressing these challenges, while successfully building a career.

The Go Point: When It’s Time to Decide, Knowing What to Do and When to Do It by Michael Useem, 2006

In essence, Useem demonstrates how to master “being decisive.” But he does so in a historical context. The author analyzes significant historical events to reveal “...why some decisions were flawless, perfectly on target, and others utterly disastrous” (e.g., Lee’s sending Pickett on the suicidal charge at Gettysburg). Useem contends that we make choices that justify our past choices. “Not only do we make these errors, we make them reliably.” However, since these are predictable errors, they are also preventable. That is the basis of his treatise.

Great Employees Only: How Gifted Bosses Hire and De-Hire Their Way to Success by Dale Dauten, 2006

According to Dauten, if you have the right staffing, then you “...can minimize day-to-day managing and focus on the big issues...” Indeed, his leadership formula is: “90 percent hiring (and de-hiring); 10 percent inspiring; and 0 percent management.” He discusses 48 “insights” that will help you to emulate the tactics of gifted bosses. The author believes that this book is particularly relevant to the manager whose goals are greater than his staff, but needs to evolve to a higher level of performance.

How to Recognize and Reward Employees: 150 Ways to Inspire Peak Performance by Donna Deeprose, 2007

Published under the auspices of the American Management Association, this is another of many current books reflecting the need for better management of the contemporary workforce. The author’s underlying premise is not new: it is not just the money or benefits you offer talented employees but the total “rewards package.” Deeprose’s guide offers 150 types of rewards for a multitude of situations, covering both formal and informal rewards systems. In the process, she discusses the need to confront new issues such as company loyalty, organizational integrity, and work/life balance

Know-How: The 8 Skills that Separate People Who Perform from Those Who Don’t by Ram Charan, 2007

The author believes that too often people are chosen for leadership roles based on superficial personal traits; that the appearance of leadership is mistaken for reality. “Personal attributes are just one small slice of the leadership pie.” In effect, Charan contends that “know-how” is the substance of successful leaders; i.e., the skill to know what they are doing. On pages 273-274 the author summarizes “The Eight Know-Hows” on which the book is based.

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations by Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, 2006

The authors argue that organizations fall into two categories: traditional “spiders” with rigid hierarchy and top-down leadership, and the contemporary “starfish” trend that relies on “...the power of peer relationships.” Brafman and Beckstrom highlight the success of the latter. This book, then, is about what happens when there is no one in charge. They proceed to discuss how “...the forces of decentralization have created a new set of rules.” These new organizational “rules” are conveniently summarized on pages 201-208.

BUSINESS

Changing How the World Does Business: FedEx’s Incredible Journey to Success by Roger Frock, 2006

Frock reveals in detail FedEx’s tumultuous early years, and how its founder (Fred Smith) effectively created “an entirely new industry.” The author acknowledges, though, that it wasn’t just the corporate leaders, but also resourceful and resilient employees. They built upon Smith’s original concept and achieved success through “flexibility, creativity, and commitment...” Frock describes it as “a case history of courage and tenacity,” that created a completely new concept of customer service.

The Mormon Way of Doing Business: Leadership and Success through Faith and Family by Jeff Benedict, 2007

This book is not an expose’ of Mormon business leaders nor the Mormon church itself. Rather, the author “...examines what makes these executives tick and reveals their habits and secrets to success.” Benedict stresses the “...importance of not getting caught up with the status, money, and power...” a theme which parallels **Ego Check**, *supra*. He recites lessons, values, and ethical guidelines that can help anyone make it to the top.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer Service from the Inside Out Made Easy by Paul Levesque, 2006

Levesque cuts right to the heart of the customer/employee quotient, examining how it shapes viable customer service. In doing so, he actually touches on a basic business principle: “creating wealth by filling some basic human need.” He believes, though, that as day-to-day pressures mount, leaders gradually begin to focus on solving problems rather than filling customer needs. “Customer focus is a set of shared beliefs—and not a set of ritualized procedures.” The author, therefore, stresses transforming the organization’s innermost core.

Exceeding Customer Expectations: What Enterprise, America’s #1 Car Rental Company, Can Teach You about Creating Lifetime Customers by Kirk Kazanjian, 2007

The author explores Enterprise’s unbending determination to keep its customers happy—whatever it takes. He dedicates a chapter to each of the eight core values by which each employee lives. Indeed, Enterprise’s key appears to be its workforce. Enterprise hires smart people; trains them from the ground up; and then empowers them to “...act as entrepreneurs and are compensated accordingly.” The company realizes that for “...employees to provide outstanding customer service, they must be both committed to their jobs and properly incentivized.”

Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business by Danny Meyer, 2006

Meyer is a long-standing restaurateur and proprietor of New York City's revered *Union Square Café*. It may appear odd to see a book of this genre included in a **MAGIC** book list. But that is the author's indirect point: his recipe for successful customer service is called "enlightened hospitality." And he believes that it is applicable at all levels of any given organization. Meyer states that the most important application begins with employees, and then "...in descending order of priority..." to customers, the community, suppliers, and investors.

CAREER ENHANCEMENT

Climbing the Ladder in Stilettos: 10 Strategies for Stepping up to Success and Satisfaction at Work by Lynette Lews, 2006

The title for this book is intended as a metaphor for the challenges women face in today's working world. Lewis describes the basic steps women need to take "...to get you to the top..." while still finding "...new strength, joy, and satisfaction in the job you have now." The author proposes ten "strategies" for achieving that goal, and has organized the book's chapters around those steps. Lewis concludes: "Regardless of how we describe it, climbing the corporate ladder is simply this: a real challenge."

WORKPLACE

Anxious 9 to 5: How to Beat Worry, Stop Second-Guessing Yourself & Work with Confidence by Larina Kase, 2006

This book offers simple but effective techniques for controlling that anxiety that is unique to the workplace. Kase defines it as "...the feeling you get when you'd rather be doing something else." She believes that this common anxiety can actually "...hold you back from achieving success..." no matter how hard you work. She acknowledges, though, that some anxiety about work is a good thing—a motivating force so to speak. The author carefully defines the difference between stress and anxiety, and then offers ways to confront anxiety-provoking situations.

The Book of Hard Choices: How to Make the Right Decisions at Work and Keep Your Self-Respect by James A. Autry and Peter Roy, 2006

The authors examine that critical situation "...when we must weigh our obligations to our employer against our own ideas about what is right and wrong." These are the *hard choices* referred to in the title; the ones that put your integrity to a test. Through a series of case studies, Autry and Roy reveal the process that various people went through in navigating the ethical gray areas of work life. They frankly note that not all of their subjects made the right choice; nonetheless, "...all of them were forced to examine their values..."

It's Called Work for a Reason: Your Success is Your Own Damn Fault by Larry Winget, 2007

Winget promises to cut through the normal fluff and to challenge the reader personally. His approach is truly iconoclastic: "Teamwork doesn't work;" "We reward the wrong behaviors and focus on the wrong things;" "We are all stealing from our companies and ourselves;" etc. His point is that poor results are the result of poor performance, mainly because there are really no penalties for not doing your job. His blunt advice is that success is simple but "...you gotta serve somebody." In other words, Winget opines that achievement can not be attributed to luck

but to hard work. The reader is forewarned, though, that his style can be considered brusque if not crude at times.

Stop Pushing Me around! A Workplace Guide for the Timid, Shy, and Less Assertive by Ilise Benun, 2006

Benun believes that there are skills and techniques which allow a person "...to come out your shell and become a friendly, assertive person." The author's main suggestion is to catch defensive comments before they escape your mouth. The resultant confidence actually changes the persona that you project. In the process, you will get along better with colleagues and finally be viewed as a team player. This book, then, is for the person who struggles to speak up or has a desire to be heard.

You Don't Need a Title to Be a Leader: How Anyone, Anywhere, Can Make a Positive Difference by Mark Sanborn, 2006

Sanborn demonstrates how trying to be a leader in our daily lives can "...make a positive difference, whatever our title or position." The genuine leadership he describes is with a little "I." But he does not believe that to be a limiting factor, rather it can "...influence the lives of those around us." The *genuine leadership* to which Sanborn alludes, includes: acting with purpose; caring about and listening to others; encouraging the contribution of others rather than personal achievement; and creating a legacy of accomplishment.

ET CETERA

Mindset! Reset Your Thinking and See the Future by John Naisbitt, 2006

It's been a quarter of a century since Naisbitt helped to launch of the futurist movement with his bestselling **Megatrends**. The author's latest work, **Mindset!**, "...is a how-to book that helps people to understand the future." His goal is to help the reader adjust mindsets "...to see the critical shifts that are changing the world." It mainly involves changing attitudes and employing eleven mindsets "...that empower you to understand the trends that are transforming...the world around you." The eleven introduce some thought provoking observations, including: "While many things change, most things stay constant;" "Understand how powerful it is not to have to be right;" "Things that we expect to happen always happen more slowly;" "You don't get results by solving problems but by exploring your opportunities." Note: PWPLS no longer holds **Megatrends**, but it is available via interlibrary loan; contact **MAGIC** for more information.

Rejuvenile: Kickball, Cartoons, and the Reinvention of the American Grown-up by Christopher Noxon, 2006

Noxon explores what he considers to be "...a new breed of adult, identified by a determination to remain playful, energetic, and flexible..." He doesn't attribute it to stunted adolescents, but a term he coined: *rejuveniles*. By this he means "...people who cultivate tastes and mind-sets traditionally associated with those younger than themselves." They are parents, professionals, executives, and trades people. It is not merely a Gen X phenomenon, but what Noxon believes reflects seismic social change in response to dynamic times.

Finally, in recognition of its 25th anniversary, **USA Today** recently published (April 9, 2007; p. 5B) a list of "...25 titles that made an impact on readers and the publishing industry over the past quarter century." The list is truly eclectic, from that bespectacled wizard, **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone** (J. K. Rowling, 1998) to **The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren (2003) to

Tom Wolfe's **The Bonfire of the Vanities** (1987). You can nominate your own choices at usatoday.com.

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