

WORTH MENTIONING
A List of New Books Compiled by
The Management and Government Information Center (MAGIC)
Chinn Park Regional Library
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Winter 2008



Indicates titles relating to the FISH Philosophy

MAGIC compiles **Worth Mentioning** from a variety of literary sources. The staff recognizes, though, that the list is not inclusive. If you have read a noteworthy book, and believe that it might be of general interest to subscribers, we invite you to submit the title to magic2@pwcgov.org.

MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP

Damage Control: Why Everything You Know About Crisis Management is Wrong by Eric Dezenhall & John Weber, 2007

Dezenhall and Weber disdain the usual advice about damage control. They believe that common crisis PR is self-serving. The authors contend that "...conventional public relations is enamored with 'reputation management'...that serves little purpose than to give people in tough situations the illusion of control..." They base this conclusion on the observation that an organization in crisis is a collection of individuals looking for cover. The authors, therefore, offer a case study based guide on "telling ugly truths." Aside from their contrarian strategies, Dezenhall and Weber discuss factors that doom crisis management as well as critical survival features.

Don't Just Do Something, Stand There! Ten Principles for Leading Meetings that Matter by Marvin Weisbord & Sandra Janoff, 2007

This book's theme is: you can make every meeting count. In outlining their approach for accomplishing that objective, Weisbord and Janoff make the unusual observation "...that low expectations work in your favor." Most participants want to be heard and make a difference, but adjourn feeling the opposite. The authors state that this phenomenon can be negated by managing the structure of the meeting, not the behavior of the participants. They have refined ten principles for controlling a meeting's structure and ultimately making every meeting matter.

The Hands-Off Manager: How to Mentor People and Allow Them to Be Successful by Steve Chandler & Duane Black, 2007

Chandler and Black hypothesize that today's employees "...are highly independent, individual professionals with their own fully developed ideas." As a consequence, they are not responsive to the old hands-on management styles. Yet the majority of managers "...unknowingly kill the human spirit by their old-school micromanaging and critical judgments." The authors believe that this book offers a new vision for all managers within that context. In effect, they encourage managers to coach and mentor employees "...rather than hovering over their shoulders and goad them into action."

It's Okay to Be the Boss: The Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming the Manager Your Employees Need by Bruce Tulgan, 2007

Tulgan advocates the opposite of **The Hands-Off Manager** (above), to the point that his sardonic sub-sub-title is: *Fight the Undermanagement Epidemic*. The author even takes umbrage at genre classics such as Marcus Buckingham's **First Break All the Rules**. But it is really a cautionary tale of how the pendulum possibly has swung too far, creating an undisciplined workplace. He believes that "...there is a

shocking and profound lack of daily guidance, direction, feedback, and support for employees.” It is categorized as a false empowerment approach. Instead, Tulgan pointedly observes: “Somebody *is* in charge and employees will be held accountable.” The author presents a guide that challenges managers “...to spell out expectations...”

Leadership Made Simple: Practical Solutions to Your Greatest Management Challenges by Ed Oakley and Doug Krug, 2006

The authors' goal “...is to simplify many of your complex leadership challenges into a usable, understandable and actionable framework.” That framework is their trade-marked *Framework for Leadership*. In essence, the elements are: focus on current successes; analyze those successes; continually clarify goals; determine the benefits of those objectives; and establish an action plan. In the process, Oakley and Krug encourage shifting “...participants from a problem orientation to a solution orientation.”

More Quick Team Building Activities for Busy Managers: 50 New Exercises that Get Results in Just 15 Minutes by Brian Cole Miller, 2007

All managers recognize how important it is for people to work together. Most, though, don't have the luxury of instituting time-consuming team-building activities. Miller's intent, therefore, is to provide “...exercises that can be conducted in 15 minutes or less, and which require no special facilities...” He warns, though, that “...you will not resolve long standing issues, major personality conflicts, or deeply embedded obstacles.” However, you will be able to highlight significant team issues, which represents the first step in actually addressing them. The author also recognizes that more and more teams are geographically dispersed, and consequently includes helpful hints for “virtual teams.”

What Were They Thinking: Unconventional Wisdom about Management by Jeffrey Pfeffer, 2007

Pfeffer explores the conundrum of why many organizations make so many missteps, even when led by hard-working, smart, and serious managers. He demonstrates how poor choices arise when leaders: “fail to consider the unintended consequences of their actions; rely on naïve theories of human behavior; and ignore obvious answers.” The author's intent is to challenge conventional beliefs and accepted management wisdom. In the process, he provides guidelines about how to think more deeply and intelligently about critical topics.

In a manner of speaking, *A Leader's Framework for Decision Making*, by David J. Snowden & Mary E. Boone (**Harvard Business Review**, November 2007, pp. 69-76), complements **What Were They Thinking** (above). The authors observe that many executives are surprised when previously successful leadership approaches fail. Their point is: “Good leadership is not a one-size-fits-all proposition.” They believe that “...effective leaders learn to shift their decision-making styles to match...” the context, which the authors categorize as simple, complicated, complex or chaotic. They stress that adept leaders not only identify the decision making “context” but also modify their behavior to match.

BUSINESS

Chasing Cool: Standing Out in Today's Cluttered Marketplace by Noah Kerner & Gene Pressman, 2007

Kerner and Pressman explore America's ongoing search for “...the ever changing concept of cool.” They systematically parse the successes and failures of brand identification of the last few decades, and conclude that “...brands are effectively developed when companies take substantial risk.” In effect, the authors believe that emphasizing long-lasting relevance trumps a fleeting preoccupation with “what's hot.” Their philosophical conclusion is: “We believe that cool is not the outcome of a chase but rather the province of a tasteful visionary who maintains a personal, authentic point of view.”

Doing What Matters: How to Get Results that Make a Difference—The Revolutionary Old-School Approach by James M. Kilts, 2007

Kilts exposition is based on his experience as CEO of three major corporations: Gillette, Nabisco, and Kraft. He reveals a system for success that is both cutting-edge and back-to-basics. His intent is to guide the reader to "...plan for identifying and tackling what's important and ignoring the rest..." The author believes that his approach—*Doing What Matters*—is not just techniques, but a new "...mind-set for taking complicated problems and making them simple."

The Halo Effect...and the Eight Other Business Delusions that Deceive Managers by Phil Rosenzweig, 2007

In essence, Rosenzweig basically translates *The Halo Effect* as how performance "...shapes the way we perceive strategy, leadership, people, culture, and more." Moreover, he argues that *The Halo Effect* is delusory, causing errors of logic and flawed judgments that distort reality. In other words, the author explores the delusions "...that distort our understanding of company performance; that make it difficult to know why one company succeeds and another fails."

Revolt in the Boardroom: The New Rules of Power in Corporate America by Alan Murray, 2007

This book is about the dull sounding subject of "corporate governance," but without being arcane. It is based on the author's observations as a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* covering a string of firings of high-profile CEOs which began in 2005. They were "...tossed out of a job against his or her will by forces too strong to resist." Murray claims that the "...firings signaled widespread rejection of an old way of doing business." It is an ongoing transformation of the corporate boardroom with directors struggling to understand the changed rules of corporate power.

The Upside: 7 Strategies for Turning Big Threats into Growth Breakthroughs by Adrian J. Slywotzky, 2007

The underlying philosophy of this book is: "Your moment of maximum risk is also your moment of maximum opportunity." Slywotzky's intent is to demonstrate how you can recognize those moments, transforming them into real "upside potential." He also believes that these moments are becoming more frequent and obvious in business. This has set a trend for executives to identify "...strategic risk management as the crucial discipline for the first decade of the twenty-first century." The author describes these efforts as "no-surprises management."

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Managing Knock Your Socks off Service by Chip R. Bell & Ron Zemke, 2007

The authors base their advice on a trenchant conclusion: "consistently treat customers like they're unique and special." They acknowledge that it is not a startlingly new concept. But what they point out is new is "the gradual erosion of personal care and attention in the service experience." Their equation for correcting this drift can be summed up: great service equals leadership in action. At that juncture it becomes customer service of truly genuine and arresting value.

WORKPLACE

45 Things You Do that Drive Your Boss Crazy: And How to Avoid Them by Anita Bruzzese, 2007

Bruzzese reveals the most common complaints from bosses about what their employees are doing wrong—from copying the wrong people on an important e-mail to blogging about your job to resisting change instead of embracing it. She bases her advice on "...letters from outraged managers as well as mystified employees..." The author believes that part of the problem is "...employees often have the mind-set that...that everyone spends time goofing off..." She hopes that her research, by correcting that attitude, will not only help with career advancement but also maybe save your job.

Send: The Essential Guide to Email for Office and Home by David Shipley & Will Schwalbe, 20

This book shows how to write the perfect email, whether you are merely an infrequent user or are a high volume producer. The authors also describe the numerous times when email can be the worst option; e.g., when you should call, fax, or just show up. They seriously note that an email can be a potentially career-ending bombshell. Whatever the impetus, Shipley and Schwalbe's succinct advice is: "think before you click." "And when we are more thoughtful and careful with email, it's remarkable the effect that it can have on our lives."

Manage Your Energy, not Your Time, by Tony Schwartz (**Harvard Business Review**, October 2007, pp.63-73) parrots the emphasis of the best selling **Cut to the Chase (Worth Mentioning** Autumn 2007);i.e., focus your effort. Schwartz notes that "time is a finite resource, but energy is different." Energy has four wellsprings that can be renewed: body, emotions, mind, and spirit. The author carefully describes how to establish rituals that will build energy in these four key dimensions. He cautions, though, that the "...rituals succeed only if leaders support them." As a result, "...both companies and their people grow in value."

ET CETERA

Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under any Conditions by John Kotter, 2007

In fable style, Kotter relates how to do well in an ever-changing world. It is a tale of resistance to change and the necessity for sometimes heroic action; and of seemingly intractable obstacles and the clever tactics for dealing with those obstacles. Kotter outlines his Eight Steps that will facilitate change in any group, especially when that group fails to see the need for change. He conveniently summarizes those steps on pages 130 and 131. Tools for making change happen are further identified at www.ouricebergismelting.com.