

Notable Books

What's The Big Idea? Creating and Capitalizing on the Best Management Thinking

By Thomas H. Davenport, Laurence Prusak, and H. James Wilson

Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances

By J. Richard Hackman

Toxic Emotions at Work: How Compassionate Managers Handle Pain and Conflict

By Peter J. Frost

Walking the Talk: The Business Case for Sustainable Development

By Charles O. Holliday, Jr., Stephan Schmidheiny, and Philip Watts

Stanford Social Innovation Review
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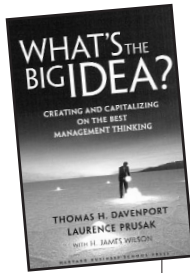
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WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? Creating and Capitalizing on the Best Management Thinking

Thomas H. Davenport, Laurence Prusak, and H. James Wilson

Hardcover: 256 pages, Harvard Business School Press (2003), \$27.50



Rather than focus on TQM, MBOs, Six Sigma, or any other management strategy as a one-size-fits-all solution, this book focuses on how managers can discern and drive the brightest ideas. Relying on years of experience in business and academia, the authors relate backgrounds from people key to importing and implementing new concepts within their own companies. Addressing how ideas take root and how best they might be evaluated, the book also points to what kind of person might be a good “idea practitioner.” Such people, the authors argue, do best in an “idea-friendly culture” that emphasizes trust and candid dialogue – an atmosphere in which employees feel free to examine new ideas without feeling undue pressure to embrace any accompanying hype. In these times, that notion alone may be most economically wise, for nonprofits and for-profits alike.

–Caroline Simard

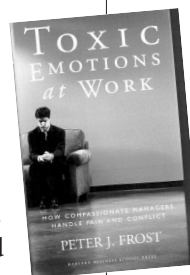
assembling a team and enabling it to manage itself. From the simplistic but possibly overlooked observation that in real life, team members must “know who is actually on the team” to his insightful discussion of competent coaching, the author offers strategies for increasing team success. A Harvard psychology professor, Hackman’s research and case studies form the analytical foundation for this compelling book. Drawing on cases ranging from airline crews to orchestras, his accounts propel the reader between insights. A careful discussion of obstacles as well as key imperatives for leaders make this book both practical and hands-on. Rather than dwell on management styles or leadership characteristics such as charisma or style, it outlines what leaders can do to design and support successful teams. –Jason Baumgarten

TOXIC EMOTIONS AT WORK: How Compassionate Managers Handle Pain and Conflict

Peter J. Frost

Hardcover: 256 pages, Harvard Business School Press (2002), \$27.50

Peter J. Frost, a professor at the University of British Columbia, hails oft-overlooked heroes in the workplace: those to whom peers turn for a compassionate ear and caring advice during times of personal or corporate travail. By buffering the pain around them, such “toxin handlers” can bolster morale and performance. However, Frost warns that such workers risk burning out or becoming toxic themselves, especially if their numbers are few. To address this, Frost urges leaders to recognize such magnets for compassion and institutionalize their good instincts. He makes a

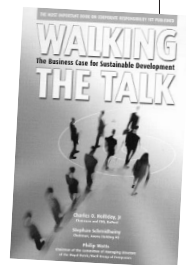


strong case for confronting pain proactively, arguing that organizations need to develop a language for talking about feelings and an overall orientation toward empathy. That sounds good, but where Frost falters is in addressing the corporate hierarchies and behavioral intricacies that make human kindness more rare than it perhaps should be. –Eric Westendorf

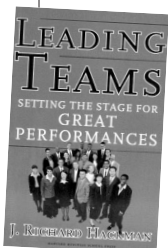
WALKING THE TALK: The Business Case for Sustainable Development

Charles O. Holliday, Jr., Stephan Schmidheiny, and Philip Watts

Hardcover, 288 pages, Berrett-Koehler (2002), \$29.95



In one of the first books about sustainable business practices written by business leaders for business leaders, Holliday, Schmidheiny, and Watts – chairmen at DuPont, Anova Holding AG, and Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies, respectively – argue that fostering environmental and social responsibilities while tending to the bottom line is anything but a zero-sum game. In fact, as vital as sustainability is to the societies in which business operates, so it is ultimately to business itself. The authors argue that globalization and corporate social responsibility can feed into each other with a win-win outcome. To be sure, the industrialists do not advocate unqualified altruism. Rather, they stress that industries would do best to work closely with governments and others to solve environmental and social problems through market-based solutions like emissions credits and trading, for example. –David Gal



LEADING TEAMS: Setting the Stage for Great Performances

J. Richard Hackman

Hardcover: 336 pages, Harvard Business School Press (2002), \$29.95

A leading authority on group and organizational behavior, J. Richard Hackman emphasizes the crucial role a leader must play in