

The Bookshelf

Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., AIA

This month I present the views of a human resource professional on a book about relationships and collaboration. Add to that a book about health and safety for engineers (and other facility professionals). While these topics are very different, they still fall under the mantle of a facility professional's responsibilities. We affect the lives of everyone on our respective campuses everyday and into the future. These resources will help us develop and protect the people who make us look good.

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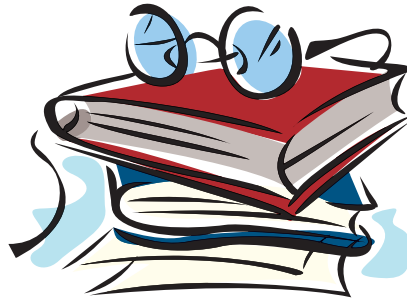
Safety and Health for Engineers, 2nd Ed., by Roger L. Brauer, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 2006, 722 pages, hardcover \$94.95.

Every engineer must be concerned about health and safety, that's the premise for engineering licensure and for *Safety and Health for Engineers*. Because the topic touches on all fields of engineering, the book is both long and dense.

The book is clearly written as a textbook with review questions at the end of each chapter, but it can also be used as a reference book for practicing engineers and safety officials. The author builds the basis for safety within the profession sequentially.

Organized so that each engineering field is clearly identified, with the

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hazards it charged with protecting against, the different chapters and the fundamentals of each field are identified. Practical issues of noise, chemicals, ventilation, explosives, protective equipment, and hazardous waste are addressed in a similar manner. Because of the approach taken by the author, the book is an excellent reference text for engineering students taking the IE exam. That is why it is a good reference for practicing engineers.

Additional chapters on emergencies, facilities, human behavior, procedures and training, safety management, and some interesting appendix materials make this book a must have for a busy facility officer. This is particularly true if there is no dedicated safety officer within the organization.

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Radical Collaboration: Five Essential Skills to Overcome Defensiveness and Build Successful Relationships, by James W. Tamm and Ronald J. Luyet, Harper, New York, 2004, hardcover, \$24.95.

No matter our specific role, we all have to work with and through others. Regrettably, that is where things usually get complicated. James W. Tamm and Ronald J. Luyet, the authors of *Radical Collaboration*:

Five Essential Skills to Overcome Defensiveness and Build Successful Relationships, suggest that there are two types of work environments.

One is characterized by high trust, honesty, and mutual support and is created by employees who listen effectively, seek solutions rather than blame, and welcome feedback. The other is characterized by low trust, high blame, and risk avoidance and is maintained by employees who respond defensively and tend to see conflict as a battle to be won at any cost. The greatest danger of defensive behaviors is that they tend to incite similar responses from those around them, resulting in an ever expanding ripple effect of ineffective behaviors and culture. The solution, the authors propose, is for each person to take personal responsibility for maintaining, modeling, and restoring their own collaborative behaviors.

Their book serves as an easy-to-use and an accessible how-to manual presenting a series of concepts, self-assessments, and specific tactics and techniques to help the reader build awareness of how they interact with others and how to both maintain and reestablish collaborative behaviors and relationships under even stressful situations.

The five skills to build successful relationships mentioned in the title include: being aware of one's own behaviors and how they are perceived by others, the importance of speaking and hearing the truth, the often underestimated range of choices we have in how we act and react, being aware of how people want to be treated and perceived and how they respond when they think they are not being treated or perceived in those ways, and finally, how to use interest-based

collaborative negotiation and problem solving in conflict situations.

Many of the concepts in the book are based on the research behind the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation or FIRO theory, created by Dr. Will Schultz, when asked by the U.S. Navy to try to understand and predict how groups work together, particularly in stressful situations. In his research, Schulz found that people, regardless of culture or situation, want to feel significant, competent, and likable in varying degrees. Chances are, the authors say, if we look at why someone reacts defensively, it is probably because they fear they are at risk of being ignored, humiliated, deemed incompetent, or otherwise rejected. Knowing this, the authors propose, we have a key to leading them back to a more collabo-



orative and effective mode of interaction and problem solving.

It is true that there are already many resources available to provide advice and guidance on effective communications and collaboration skills. And, given the challenge of actually doing it consistently well in all matter of situations with all sorts of people, that is

probably a good thing. *Radical Collaboration* is a good addition. It covers a broad spectrum of concepts succinctly and well, and the assessments and exercises make the information accessible and easy to transfer to the work site. Additionally, each copy includes a unique code number that allows the reader to take the FIRO Element B assessment on-line and receive a personal profile that provides information on key characteristics that influence one's ability to collaborate. 📖

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