

The Bookshelf

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

It seems as if facility officers are never done with performance issues. We're always looking for resources that help us deal with some of the more difficult parts of the job: people. Internal people, our human resources, demand a lot of attention because there's so much money invested in them beyond salary and benefits. External people, through contracts, require a lot of thought and care in advance to specify outcomes correctly. Both require constructive tools to direct the organizational focus in order to avoid other costly outcomes. The first book reviewed this month reiterates the helpful guidance some APPA members have already implemented. The second review provides a look at software designed to make refinements to contracts with designers and contractors easier, more collaborative, and integrated. Regardless of your needs, internal or external, these references should be helpful.

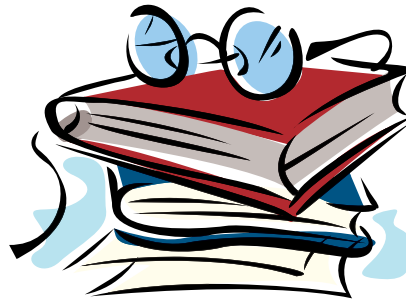
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Discipline Without Punishment:

The Proven Strategy That Turns Problem Employees into Superior Performers, second edition, by Dick Grote, New York, 2006, paperback, \$19.95

Perhaps you have an employee who is performing below acceptable standards. You have talked

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to him about it, but seen no real improvement. Now what do you do? You know that bad apples can and do infect good ones and you *should* do something. But, you also know that nothing can ruin a working relationship faster, or de-motivate an employee quicker, than starting down that road of progressive discipline.

As Dick Grote, author of *Discipline Without Punishment* points out, our culture's long-held reliance on punishment-based corrective action processes may not necessarily be serving us well. For a variety of reasons, he says, our traditional progressive disciplinary action processes often end up being used as mechanisms to "build a case" against employees rather than to actually help and motivate employees to improve their performance. Employees see even the most benign corrective interventions as threats to their job, which often result not in long-term improved per-

formance, but feelings of resentment and frustration.

Instead of focusing on punishment as a way of discouraging the repetition of an unacceptable behavior (or at least, from getting caught doing it again), Grote suggests we focus on helping the employee take increased responsibility for their behaviors and the effect they have on others and the operation. The goal is that they will make different choices in the future not because they want to avoid additional punishment, but because they actually want to. After all, would you prefer a work force that is working to avoid punishment or one that is working to do the right thing?

Discipline Without Punishment effectively uses checklists, scripts, real-life examples, and clear practical descriptions of detailed processes and tactics for dealing with all sorts of performance concerns, including those involving attendance, performance, and even general conduct. It also includes useful—and usable—advice on topics such as: documentation; when to have a witness present; what to say when you see unacceptable behavior but cannot or do not want to address it at that moment; how to counter common defense mechanisms; identifying when it is time to separate; and even how to handle the separation when necessary.

The approach described by Grote does at first glance have some similarities with traditional progressive disciplinary systems. A verbal reminder of expectations and impact, followed by a written reminder when necessary, mirrors the traditional sequence of a verbal reprimand followed by a written warning. A paid-day-off with direction to consider whether the employee can and wants to do what is needed to be

successful in their job followed by an appointment upon return to share a specific commitments and plans to do so; these are reminiscent of the traditional unpaid suspension as the final step prior to involuntary termination. The real difference between the two disciplinary approaches has to do with the burden of responsibilities. Traditionally, it is management's responsibility to ensure people perform to standards. According to *Discipline Without Punishment*, it is the employee's responsibility to decide whether they want to opt into the organization by meeting standards, or essentially opt out by choosing otherwise. Management's role is simply to help them make an informed decision. Now, *that's* something.

—Reviewed by: Suzanne Drew,
Director, Staff Development and
Management, University of
Nebraska - Lincoln

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AIA Contract Documents, version 2.0.5, the American Institute of Architects, 2006 (software) prices vary, AIA members receive 28-38% off list price.

Contracts can be a pain if one doesn't work on them regularly. One of the reasons for this is the amount of information needed to complete the documents; then there are the project/site/contractor/owner specific issues to address. Omission of key information can lead to questions, misunderstandings, and increase the likelihood of a lawsuit. Use of generic documents may not help solve the problem, they may make it worse by creating a false sense of security. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has provided model contract documents for the design and construction industry for decades. These contract documents are recognized as a standard for the industry and are used by architects, engineers, contractors, subcontractors, attorneys, and owners to record agreements between parties for



The AIA Contract Documents software virtually eliminates the transferability problems by taking advantage of databases, editing histories, and electronic storage of information.

capital construction projects and consulting services.

The AIA makes their documents available for a fee. Individual documents cost between \$6 and \$10 each with individual forms costing \$0.50 each in paper form. These documents can only be used once and the information is not easily transferable because it is paper based. The *AIA Contract Documents* software virtually eliminates the transferability problems by taking advantage of databases, editing histories, and electronic storage of information.

Since receiving a review copy of the software and testing it, I've also had an opportunity to receive several draft documents created by the software. The power of the software lies in its ability to share development of the document between parties. Instead of multiple revisions requiring retyping of special terms and conditions, the software takes advantage of the power of MS Word to track changes, accept, and modify changes, and to copy common language from other documents.

These drafts can be shared directly between users of the software or can be converted to Adobe PDF (portable document format) files for sharing or printing of final versions. All AIA documents are available in this software.

Additional power lies in individual project databases that maintain architect, engineer, owner, and contractor information including address, phone numbers, and primary contacts. For those who do repeat business with different firms, shortcuts available through this software help reduce input errors. Change orders, pay requests, etc. can be easily completed by drawing on this data. In addition, this 'database' feature is particularly nice for the various project forms because the project history can be readily accessible and maintained.

An auto-fill feature within each document does reduce chances for errors. The use of technology to reduce errors is a valued feature. One concern I noticed is with the generation of change orders. Ideally, there would also be an auto-fill feature between documents such as the contract and previous change orders when developing subsequent changes. This is not present so user coordination with previous changes is essential. Granted, some changes may not be accepted in sequential order but since there are several overrides available elsewhere in the system, an auto-fill feature between the contract and subsequent change orders would be nice.

Regardless of your involvement in the development of contracts and contract terms, the software version of the AIA documents is a valuable tool for facility managers who do a lot of business with capital construction. 🏢