

The Bookshelf

In this issue, we present two books that address a variety of issues. As campus administrators focus on preparing for the next academic year, we advise they take time read a book that will help create solutions.

Coaching, Counseling & Mentoring: How to Choose and Use the Right Technique To Boost Employee Performance, Second edition,

by Florence M. Stone, AMACOM, New York, 2007, 223 pages, hardcover, \$24.95.

Reviewed by Suzanne Drew, FMP

The best managers

seem to know exactly when and how to say just the right thing to their employees. In *Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring: How to Choose and Use the Right Technique to Boost Employee Performance*, author Florence M. Stone provides practical advice for supervisors on how to identify and meet—effectively and efficiently—the ever changing needs of employees.

Key is spending time with employees on a regular basis just to ask how things are going. This regular coaching provides an opportunity for timely feedback, encouragement, and problem solving that results in more productive and confident employees and provides the manager invaluable

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“...practical advice for supervisors on how to identify and meet—effectively and efficiently—the ever changing needs of employees.”

information regarding operations, establishes a level of trust that benefits everyone involved, and helps him or her decide how and when to act.

Since overreacting to less than expected performance can be as harmful as failing to take adequate action, distinctions are drawn between various responses. For example, nonjudgmental feedback and probing questions can help a good performer stay motivated and on-course as part of a coaching session. Helping an employee acknowledge and take ownership for closing a gap between expectations and outcomes describes a sometimes necessary esca-

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lation into counseling. Finally, for situations involving misconduct or repeated failures in spite of counseling, there is the traditional disciplinary process.

Is the problem passive-aggressive behavior? Focus on the specific verbal and physical behaviors, their impact on operations, and the clear expectation that the behaviors stop. Naysayer? Challenge them to come up with a workable solution. Peer or supervisor? Focus on the impact the behavior has on the success of a shared goal or effort.

The author also notes that coaching interactions can inform the manager on how best to support their strong performers, as strong performers do not require less managerial attention than others, only a *different* type of attention. By acting as a sounding board, advocate, broker, and cheerleader on issues of career development, organizational resources, and culture, the mentoring manager helps the employee, but also yields more corporate information, greater loyalty, and a more innovative and cohesive team.

Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring lays out clear rationale—as well as helpful instructions, descriptions, scripts, and resources—for holding regular “checking in” conversations, addressing less than satisfactory performance appropriately, and helping strong performers become even stronger. When done effectively and efficiently, as prescribed by the authors, these interactions truly can be the best use of time for everyone involved.

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Leading Change Toward Sustainability; A Change-Management Guide for Business, Government and Civil Society, by Bob Doppelt, Greenleaf Publishing, Sheffield, UK, 2003, 260 pages, softcover, \$24.76.

Reviewed by Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., AIA


There are annual

conferences for higher education on the issue, it is in the news, and there is increasing pressure from students/faculty/staff, but why do we seem to have difficulty becoming more sustainable? *Leading Change Toward Sustainability* opens with sev-

eral scenarios where organizations attempted to enact sustainability but failed, and the reasons why they failed. Doppelt explores several reasons, including lack of administrative buy-in, lack of grass-roots buy-in, lack of understanding of the time commitment, attempts to change the process without changing the organizational structure appropriately, and so on.

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Read in part while I was attending, and speaking at, the Smart and Sustainable Campus Conference this spring, I became reoriented on what was needed to increase my university's sustainability. It is not about no-strums, combining the successes of others as presented at a conference, or even talking about sustainability more frequently. Those approaches

“This management focus fills an important gap for those organizations desiring to become more sustainable.”

simply result in the failures described above. So how does this book succeed?

The author has identified a “wheel of change toward sustainability” which parallels many change techniques for management. The wheel has seven spokes that must be addressed to ensure the change toward a sustainable organization—a checklist. The author describes each item on the checklist in separate chapters providing examples, steps and sub-steps, and a final checklist of actions, which must be accomplished to complete the spoke. Most of these are standard management change practices with a focus on sustainability.

Many facilities organizations have completed several of the spokes identified. We have design guidelines which may help “adjust the parameters” of designers and clients; mandatory procedures that “restructure the rules of engagement;” and strategic plans which “alter the goals” but we still have four other spokes to complete: “change the dominant mind-set,” “rearrange the parts”, shift the information flows,” and “correct the feedback loops.” These are not always obvious nor are they all within the control of the facilities organization.

Leading Change Toward Sustainability is written in a way to permit an organization to hopscotch among the seven spokes, avoiding those completed (assuming they have really been completed) and tackling those which are incomplete. It is a good source for development of a sustainable program, while not answering the detailed elements of the LEED program or other sustainability initiatives. This management focus fills an important gap for those organizations desiring to become more sustainable. 🙏

