



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

**Rising to leadership is the theme of this issue,** and focus of the books reviewed this month. I certainly hope there are parallels between the message delivered in the classroom at the Institute for Facilities Management and the two books below. They are both manageable in size, and beneficial for those who aspire to a leadership role.

I am appreciative of Suzanne Drew's work on this column (no longer with the University of Nebraska) due to her strong leadership skills. I'll miss working with her, but hope to provide you with additional examples of her insights in upcoming book reviews while in her new role at a private corporation.

—TW

*Reviewed by Suzanne Drew*

### **REINVENTION: HOW TO MAKE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE THE BEST OF YOUR LIFE**

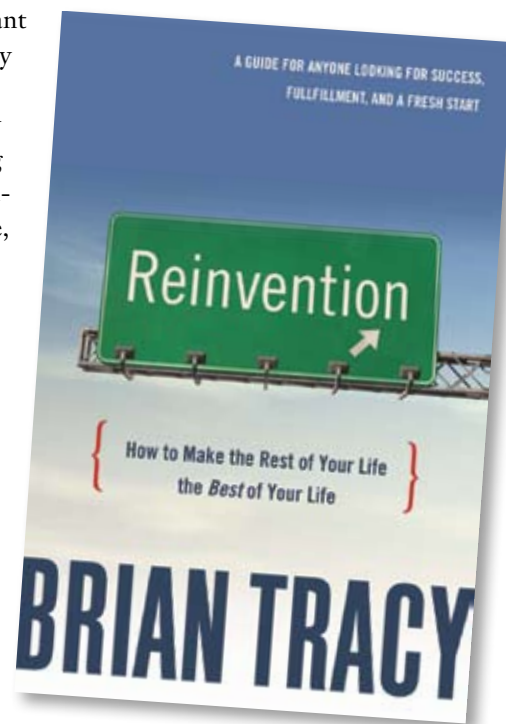
By Brian Tracy, AMACOM, New York, 2009. 215 pages, hardcover, \$21.95

**H**ere's something to think about: Within the next two years, 72 percent of people working today will be in different jobs in the same or different company and have different responsibilities requiring different talents and skills to achieve different results. Whether change is something we seek or hope to avoid, it is inevitable. In *Reinvention: How To Make The Rest Of Your Life The Best Of Your Life*, author Brian Tracy provides some good advice, a handful of exercises, and a framework to follow to help anyone gain control of and make the best of changes in circumstance.

As luck would have it, soon after I began reading this book a friend of mine called to say she had lost her job: a victim of the economy, closer to retirement than college graduation, with a set of skills in which she was losing

confidence. While this book is relevant and useful to anyone dealing with any change, it is particularly well-suited for people changing jobs, voluntarily or otherwise, and so I began drawing upon it and referring to it in our conversations. We discussed for example, the six stages of regaining control (based on the six stages of grief) and how you work through them. She was able to take comfort in the fact that the turmoil and distress she felt was normal and transitory.

We talked about what she is best at and those things she'd like to learn. We talked about what she wants out of the seven main areas of life described in the book: business and career, family and relationships, health and fitness, financial independence, knowledge and skill, social and community involvement, and spiritual development and inner peace. Thinking these things through seemed to help her keep perspective and avoid becoming immobilized by immediate circumstances. I even drew on the



plans to respond to and take advantage of ever changing environments, expectations, opportunities, and threats. In this book, he shows how the same analysis and process help individuals

**THE AUTHOR REFERS TO A STUDY OF OLDER PEOPLE, MANY PAST THEIR 100TH BIRTHDAY, WHO WERE ASKED WHAT THEY WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY IF THEY COULD LIVE THEIR LIVES OVER AGAIN.**

book's exercises and suggestions for goal setting and action planning during our discussions, which again seemed to help her regain a sense of control and focus on the future. Essentially, she and I worked through much of the first three chapters of the book, and eventually, I bought her a copy of her own.

Author Brian Tracy talks about how he helps corporations create strategic

do the same. His writing is quickly and easily read. Most topics cover about a page and his exercises are equally short and sensible. His stories are engaging and repeatable.

The author refers to a study of older people, many past their 100th birthday, who were asked what they would do differently if they could live their lives over again. The answers, he reports,

were consistent: they would take more risks and chances; they would worry less; and they would take more time to stop and think about what was important to them. And, that is exactly what this book accomplishes: it provides a short and easy-to-use frame work to help you evaluate and prioritize what you really want and value, it provides some words of wisdom and support to ease the worry and anxiety associated with change and transitions, and finally gives some good and direct advice on how to respond to and/or initiate change in your life and career. All in all, it could be a useful friend to have on the shelf if and when you or someone you know might need it.

*Reviewed by Ted Weidner*

### LEADERSHIP ENERGY (E=MC<sup>2</sup>): A HIGH-VELOCITY FORMULA TO ENERGIZE YOUR TEAM, CUSTOMERS AND PROFITS

By David Cottrell, Cornerstone Leadership Group, 2008. Softcover, 108 pages, \$14.95

It is my assumption that most of my leadership consists of leaders or people who want to be leaders. That's one reason why there are many books on leadership rather than a many books on technical issues. Because of that, while I read a lot of leadership books, there are some that are more impressive than others.

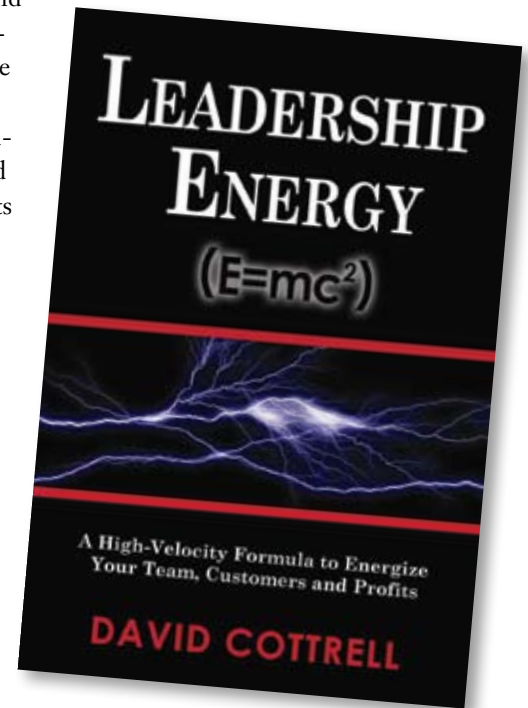
*Leadership Energy* is impressive. I have to admit, when I started reading it that was not my first impression. The title and introduction seem to lean too heavily on Albert Einstein, a great scientist who was not known for leadership, but instead for developing a controversial set of theories for contemporary physicists. The book has at least one quote from Einstein per chapter, some have nearly half a dozen; but these quotes don't make the book, they support it.

*Leadership Energy* opens with a description of the parallelism between  $E = mc^2$  and organizational leadership. The energy of an organization is equal to the mass of the organization (its people) times the leader's energy, i.e., the

reader's commitment to inspiring and maintaining vitality in the organization. Examples are presented in nine brief chapters to demonstrate how energy might flow out of the organization and how it can be maintained or increase with some improvements in the actual leadership activities.

Parallels between the equation and organizational leadership are made throughout the book. Energy is sapped by poor performers in the organization, and increased by the stars and the ones who "get it" (understand the organizational mission and vision). This includes the leader who expected to 'walk the talk.' Examples are somewhat timely: General Motors didn't have good energy; Southwest does as do Starbucks, Cirque de Soleil, and Chik-fil-A. That doesn't mean they always succeed, but they certainly do better than others given the same setting.

As I reflect on the past year (when I had to respond to a customer base that was extremely dissatisfied with a service



energy needed to keep the organization successful (E). This book does an excellent job of describing what is needed to have high energy and be successful. It's

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delivery team in my organization), I see many parallels of things I've done in the past year to respond and to lead a better team. It hasn't been easy. I've had sleepless nights, self doubts, and disappointments. However, as the author says, these things are not easy; they are essential for success.

As I look at the many higher education facility organizations I've known, the challenge hasn't been the people (m), who have been generally good and committed to the organization. It has been the leaders (directors, managers, and supervisors) who didn't maintain the "c<sup>2</sup>" leadership

good because it is clear, doesn't spend a lot of time making a point, and is of a length that will allow many busy leaders to read it in an hour or two and still get the message clearly. §

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