

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

I've read several books this summer. I don't review them all, because I read for enjoyment, too. That means that not everything I read is technical or work-related.

Although most of what I read is nonfiction, I will occasionally divert my attention with a thriller or mystery. I've been reading a lot of history lately and it is fascinating stuff. I now find that history I thought was boring in my youth can be exciting in the hands of a good writer. Events from hundreds of years ago can come to life when the writer is good at his craft. Even if you don't read the books reviewed in this column, I hope you're able to immerse yourself in a good book, and get away from the frustrations of work and life.

MEANINGFUL: THE STORY OF IDEAS THAT FLY

Bernadette Jiwa, Perceptive Press, Australia, 2015, 176 pp., hardcover, softcover, and Kindle.

We're in a service industry. We measure our success, in part, by customer service ratings about the cleanliness of rooms, the completion of maintenance work requests, and the beauty of our campus. We also ask questions about how our employees interact with the larger campus and with individuals. But is this what our customers want? Do we really know? What have we done to test our perceptions of good customer service?

Bernadette Jiwa looks at several products or services that have been created over time in *Meaningful: The Story of Ideas that Fly*. Some of the products she examines were evolutionary, gradually changing in response to customer needs, while some were disruptive and provided an entirely new product or service. In some cases, the examples in *Meaningful* seem analogous to the concepts in *Who Moved My Cheese?* (Bookshelf, May/June 2000) but from a different perspective. Rather than helping you to merely react to changes, Jiwa provides a recipe for developing new ideas, creating disruption, building new markets for products or services your customers don't yet know they need, and generating new



opportunities for success.

Jiwa's recipe is relatively straightforward; she explains it with a figure-eight loop representing four phases of product development. You can enter the "eight" from the "customer" or "company" half of the loop at the "story," "insight," "product," or "experience" sections. Move through the loop and touch the other sections, then repeat. It's a great deal like the PDCA cycle (plan, do, check, act), but focused on product development and on finding new ways to meet customer desires.

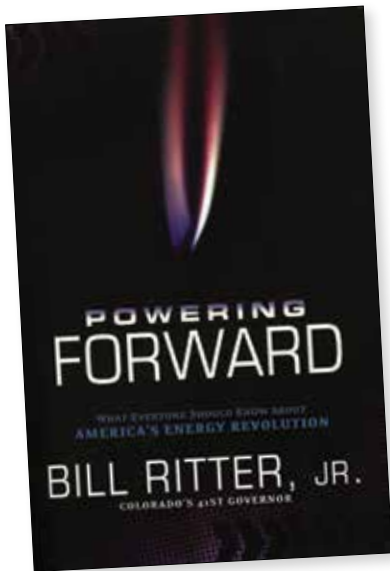
It's essential to understand this loop as a continuous process. Products or services that stop after a single circuit receive some benefits,

but they don't last. A great market or product last only as long as you are a unique provider or competition is limited. Successful providers are constantly checking the market and finding new disruptions.

Meaningful is an easy read. The examples are nicely documented and tied to the figure-eight cycle. While many facility officers don't view their organization as at risk to disruptions, I'd argue that it's only a matter of time. Rather than discover that time has come, it would be wise to read *Meaningful* and determine how to manage your own disruption and reinvention.

POWERING FORWARD: WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AMERICA'S ENERGY REVOLUTION

Bill Ritter Jr., Fulcrum Publishing, Golden, CO, 2016, 231 pp., softcover.



There are a lot of books, articles, essays, and opinions about the future of energy and how quickly the world must move in order to avoid—or temper—the drivers of climate change, such as excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Thus the former governor of Colorado, Bill Ritter Jr., who had led the effort to make changes in his four-year term, has written *Powering Forward*.

Ritter founded and leads the Center for the New Energy Economy at Colorado State University, so this looks a great deal like the text for a course or two. But beyond the potential for this to be a college textbook (rather affordable compared to some I've seen), it

is also a nice reference for a campus sustainability officer or someone in need of convincing.

In a manner typical of an attorney, Ritter's first several chapters lay the groundwork for the need to deal with our energy thirst in a different way. He focuses on climate change issues as reflected in extreme weather conditions and shifts in the range of pests. Colorado is an excellent reflector of these changes, having been ravaged by devastating floods and pine bark beetles, to name two. There is plenty of recognition of things accomplished and attempted in the Colorado statehouse as well as things undone—in other words, a little more politicking than I'm comfortable with.

Regardless, the arguments are presented in a compelling manner. There are some good graphs and diagrams (generally drawn from standard references) that support those arguments and highlight trends. But there aren't too many, so the book is a little less technical than one might expect. Nevertheless, it is heavily footnoted with over 600 references.

Some unique suggestions are presented, many of which have been recommended by facility officers for years. It's a relatively positive, upbeat discussion about climate change and what needs to be done to prevent reaching the CO₂ tipping point. It is also balanced with clear recognition that throwing money at different solutions is not the best approach, and that there is no silver bullet to address the challenges of slaking our thirst for energy, predominately from fossil fuels. *Powering Forward* is not your typical climate change text, but it's worthy of your time. I'm happy to have it in my library. ☺

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