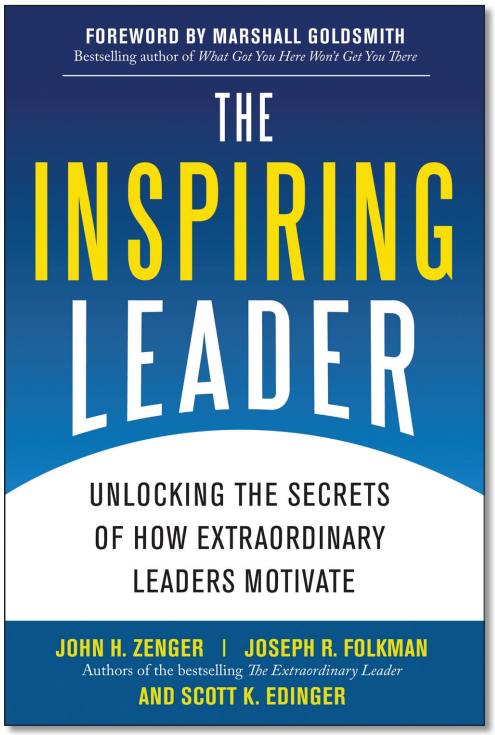
INSPIRATION INFORMATION

The Inspiring Leader: Unlocking the Secrets of How Extraordinary Leaders Motivate

By John Zenger, Joseph Folkman, Scott Edinger (McGraw-Hill, 272 pp., $29.95)

Reviewed by Michael Cohen



This book put a smile on my face in a way that so many other leadership books just don't. John Zenger and Joseph Folkman, along with Scott Edinger, have managed to write a book that contributes valuable insights to the ever-expanding literature on leadership analysis and development, while steering clear of the managerial platitudes that typically hamper books on leadership. How does a leader become inspired? How does a leader inspire others? What steps can a leader take in order to strengthen their ability to lead effectively?

In *The Inspiring Leader,* Zenger, Folkman, and Edinger explore these questions while also providing compelling research data and practical ideas that the reader can use to improve his own leadership skills. The authors' easy-to-read writing style, their sharing of pertinent experiences, and the quotes that are strategically placed throughout the book all mesh together to create a delightfully informative read.

Interested in learning more about inspiration? In the book, the authors admit that in the past they had avoided the topic of inspiration because the concept is often too difficult to measure and define. But this time around, the authors use data from research that they conducted while writing their previous book, *The Extraordinary Leader.*

While the authors previously examined the multitude of characteristics that effective leaders possess, *The Inspiring Leader* targets the one ability that almost all high-performing leaders share with one another: the ability

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to inspire and motivate. By focusing on this one ability, the authors were able to provide readers with specific actions that they can take to be better leaders.

Part 1 focuses on why inspiration is so important when it comes to leadership. The authors back up their claims by comparing attributes of successful leaders with the success or failure of the organizations that they work for. The authors' holistic approach to analyzing the research was evident in that they reviewed not only responses from leaders and managers, but also responses from their subordinates and external stakeholders. While Chapters 2 and 4 contain insight based on empirical data, I think that the authors' use of statistics terminology may be a bit excessive and could prove to be unappealing to some readers. Chapter 3 gives a wonderful overview of some of the advantageous behaviors that an inspirational leader can elicit from his or her subordinates.

Part 2 reads like a practical self-help book. Chapters aptly titled "Creating Vision and Direction" and "Fostering Innovation" give leaders and aspiring leaders alike a developmental roadmap that they can use to become more inspirational. While enough material exists to devote a book's-worth of information to each chapter, Zenger, Folkman, and Edinger do a fantastic job of summarizing the important points and wrapping up each chapter with a worthwhile conclusion.

I found that one of the most powerful revelations that the authors put forward is that if you want to become more inspirational, you have to become more comfortable with emotions, feelings, and moods. Too often, leaders overlook the "soft" side of business, and their subordinates, departments, and organizations suffer because of it.

The best thing about this book is that the authors provide some direction and then allow the reader to chart his own developmental course. The authors' credentials and experiences, along with their extensive research provide them with the credibility and knowledge to be able to write an effective book on such an intangible topic.

The Inspiring Leader contains subtle undertones of positive psychology, participative management, and organizational strategy in addition to its main theme of practical leadership. As more leaders in today's business environment focus on generating results, this book explains how and why leaders should inspire others to help them achieve those results. I give it three and a half cups.

Michael Cohen *is a human resources professional in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area; michaelcohen5@gmail.com.*

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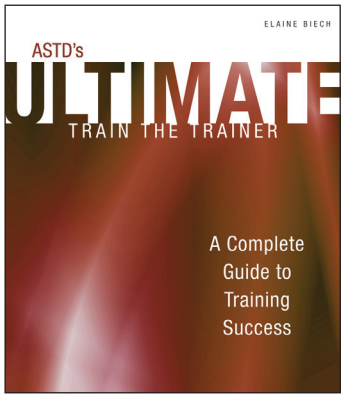

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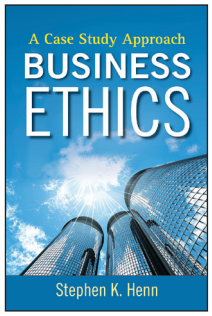
T+D EDITORS WEIGH IN ON THIS MONTH'S MUST-READS.

Business Ethics: A Case Study Approach

By Stephen K. Henn
(John Wiley & Sons, 192 pp., $60.00)

In a time when corporate scandals are rampant and consumer trust is at a historic low, a book about business ethics is like a cold glass of water on a scorching summer day. Stephen K. Henn presents an intriguing approach to business ethics, purporting that it's not about companies doing good, but performing well.



The first half of the book sets the stage with a discussion on the history of ethics, including the first laws of the ancient world, the values of the Greeks, and the code of the military. An explanation of the psychology of ethics ensues with topics such as moral development, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, and group dynamics. Henn finishes by describing how to build an organization's culture and values around ethics through the power of trust, leadership, and positive peer pressure.

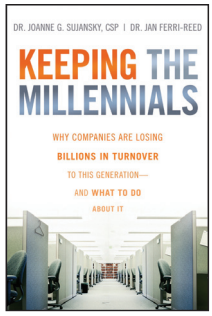
The book blends history, science, and best business practices with a variety of real-world case studies, many of which readers will know well. *Business Ethics* is sure to satisfy any learning professional's thirst for the real answer to today's global business ethical dilemma.

Ann Pace

Keeping the Millennials: Why Companies Are Losing Billions in Turnover to This Generation—And What to Do About It

By Joanne G. Sujansky and Jan Ferri-Reed
(John Wiley & Sons, 240 pp., $24.95)

The latest generation to enter the workforce has stirred up a great deal of buzz in recent years. And for all the stereotypes and broad brushstrokes seeking to define and differentiate Millennials from their Gen X and boomer peers, there are some noteworthy business considerations swiftly approaching the fore. Sujansky and Ferri-Reed offer up several angles for organizations to better understand, communicate with, attract, and retain Gen Y talent and utilize it to the fullest.



Readers can expect a great deal of compare and contrast, though not merely along the lines of technology. Although technology takes a front seat in the book among the elements contributing to the Millennial "cool factor," there is also a strong presence of historical and social context, as well as perspective on the workplace expectations that drive Gen Y workers and that necessitate an innovative set of tools for managing them.

This is a personnel management book primarily, but it spends a considerable amount of time drawing together the overarching business needs that make keeping Millennials onboard so crucial.

Juana Llorens

Strategy for Sustainability: A Business Manifesto

By Adam Werbach
(Harvard Business Press, 224 pp., $25.00)

This book is prefaced with a list called "Nature's Rules of Sustainability." A few of the list items include "Celebrate transparency," "Form groups and protect the young," and "Improve with each cycle." These principles embody the spirit of Werbach's message, which is that becoming sustainable isn't just about saving the planet; it's about saving our businesses.

Business strategy has always been focused on making profits, but Werbach argues that the framework around this goal needs to change. Rather than focusing on fast gains, he challenges businesses to be more flexible in adapting to change, setting their sights on the long term, and attuning themselves with the surrounding world. He emphasizes the importance of creating "North Star" goals that tie success with positive global trends through using the three core tools of sustainability: making information transparent, engaging your company's people, and leveraging customer, supplier, and community networks to solve problems.

Using success stories from companies such as Xerox, Method, and Wal-Mart, Werbach makes a compelling case for the sustainability movement.

Aparna Nancherla

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