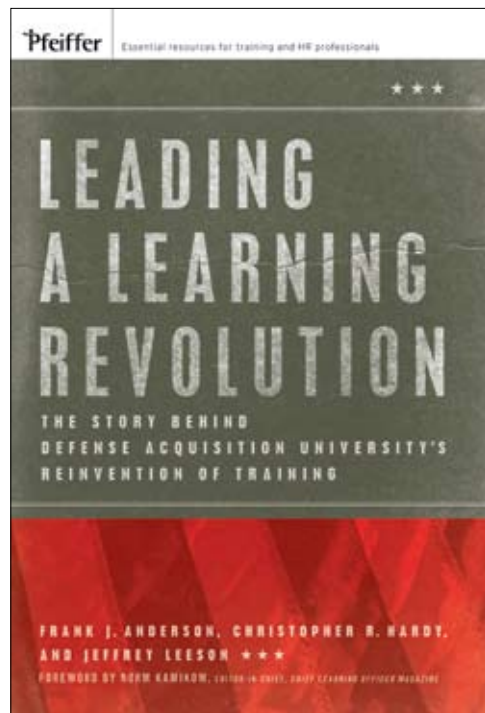


THE BEST DEFENSE...

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 Leading a Learning Revolution: The Story Behind Defense Acquisition University's Reinvention of Training

By Frank J. Anderson, Christopher R. Hardy, and Jeffrey Leeson (Pfeiffer, 320 pp., \$40)

Reviewed by Nancy Seebert



This book is the first-hand account of a major “revolution” that occurred within the Department of Defense training division across a six-year period, and two of the authors are the ones who actually led that transformation. Frank J. Anderson is president of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), while Christopher Hardy is the DAU strategic planner.

Their main driver? Performance.

The DAU was transformed from a one-dimensional training organization focused on one-dimensional training, into a multidimensional corporate university that won the 2004 BEST award from ASTD. And Anderson, due to this triumph, was also named 2004 Chief Learning Officer of the Year, and 2006 Leader of the Year by the Corporate University Best-in-Class Awards.

The book begins with a clear statement of intent: “By following the simple process and best practices in this book, you can either improve or transform nearly every important facet of an existing learning enterprise.”

DAU is a government training institution for the 128,000 civilian members of the Department of

Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics workforce. They describe their mission as providing practitioners with “training, career management, and services to enable the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics community to make smart business decisions and deliver timely and affordable capabilities to the warfighters.”

What a mission! The U.S. federal government is “the single largest purchaser of goods and services in the world,” spending upwards of \$279 billion per year. We may recall the cost overruns and media information about \$800 toilets and \$400 hammers in the 1980s. At that time, there were major variations in policies and procedures, including education and training. As a result, there was a great deal of

ambiguity on oversight, management, and training.

Throughout a longer than six-year period, Anderson restructured the DAU into a unified institution with one leader and a direct line of authority.

They used a corporate university framework and centralized most functions at the four major sites around the country. They looked at all aspects of training and increased web training from 627 students in 1998, to 77,582 in 2006. In addition, they developed new performance support tools and added a career management function that decreased turnover dramatically.

“Alignment is the single most important action a learning enterprise should take to optimize performance,” according to the authors. “If there’s one thing to gain from this book, it is a thorough understanding of alignment.” One of the most profound statements for me is when the authors write, “The main thing is not what the university values. The main thing is what our customers, our stakeholders, and our leadership value.”

Another major point discussed is the importance of having an individual who understands the business side. Sheer knowledge of adult learning, training and development, and so forth is not enough if one wants success.

Each section is divided by process steps that build on each other, and the narrative writing style makes each point easy to follow. Additionally, at the end of each chapter, there is a bulleted “key takeaway” list.

Appendices include a detailed DAU performance plan with objectives, targets, and accountabilities. There is also a document detailing the performance plan results for 2006.

The book provides an abundance of information. Included is a list of organizations with whom DAU benchmarked before transforming, which will be helpful to any organization, large or small. The authors explain how web-enabled architecture can be implemented, as

well as how to effectively measure and evaluate performance to demonstrate the return-on-investment and success of the project.

The book could be a little less lengthy and incorporate fewer acronyms. And it also could have gone a little deeper into how to apply their work to nongovernment and smaller organizations. Many of the opportunities available to an organization with a multibillion-dollar budget do not translate. The text does, however, offer a good framework for all.

I give this three cups of coffee.

***Nancy Seebert** is program manager for Workforce Development for Providence Health and Services in Portland, Oregon, is on the ASTD Cascadia Board of Directors, and is a member of the ASTD Chapter Recognition Committee; Nancy.Seebert@providence.org.*

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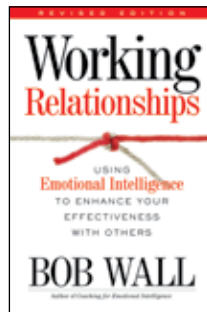
Working Knowledge

T+D EDITORS DISCUSS THREE NEW TITLES COVERING A SPECTRUM OF WORKPLACE ISSUES.

Working Relationships: Using Emotional Intelligence to Enhance Your Effectiveness With Others

By **Bob Wall**
(Davies-Black Publishing, 231 pp., \$20.95)

In this revision of the 1999 first edition, Bob Wall uses updated examples from his and others' experiences to illustrate the application of emotional intelligence (EQ) in the workplace. According to the author, EQ trumps brainpower in terms of clarifying vision and values, and developing more successful relationships, teams, and communications.



Wall begins by giving an overview of what is meant by EQ, and covers some of the challenges that make it such a necessary tool. Core points of focus include developing effective teams and cultivating one's personal influence, with the ultimate goal of fulfilling collective organizational and personal aspirations.

Using case studies, field evidence, and more than 30 exercises and implementations, Wall gives readers opportunities to relate key EQ concepts to personal, practical situations. One exercise titled “Working with a Certifiable Jerk” invites us to reflect on workplace rivals, taking into account the author's suggestions for overcoming conflict to strengthen relationships. This is a book for anyone looking to conquer the emotionally charged roadblocks that so often hinder success.

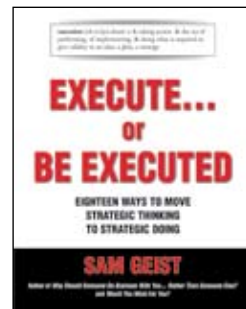
Juana Llorens

Execute...or Be Executed

By **Sam Geist**
(Addington & Wentworth, 172 pp., \$24.95)

Author and 15-year corporate consultant Sam Geist pierces to the heart of our strategy-obsessed learning and performance industry with a simple reality check: “Execution is not part of the strategy. Execution IS the strategy.”

Using workplace research and statistics, Geist contends that excellence in execution is one of the greatest concerns of CEOs today. He examines potential catalysts of the ideas or implementation gap and describes the people, skills, and partners needed to close that gap and achieve strategic goals. Geist writes practically, relaying a straightforward message reinforced with examples from successful corporations like Google,



Starbucks, and Apple. He concludes each chapter with a one-sentence summary, and a section called “rate yourself,” which acts as a springboard for personal reflection and practical change.

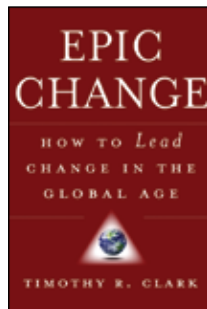
Finally, Geist shares his relevant personal and professional learning experiences through each section's collection of “marketplace lessons.” This book is an excellent training resource because each chapter focuses on a different facet of strategy execution and can stand alone as a distinct teaching tool.

Ann Pace

Epic Change: How to Lead Change in the Global Age

By Timothy R. Clark
(Jossey-Bass, 272 pp., \$29.95)

Business advisor, scholar, and former CEO Timothy R. Clark analyzed initiatives at 53 different organizations—including schools, government agencies, businesses, non profits, and healthcare facilities—to understand what exactly constitutes effective and sustained change. Some of the change processes he studied were institutional mission shifts, new business models, succession planning systems, mergers and acquisitions, and business process redesigns. *Epic Change* documents the patterns he observed and the results he found.



Entitled the “EPIC” methodology, Clark breaks successful change efforts into a sequence of four steps: evaluation, preparation, implementation, and consolidation. The various phases involve leaders overseeing completion

of technical tasks, as well as preparing and enabling employees to move forward productively as a cohesive workforce (or, “the human factor”). Employees need motivation to make change possible. Clark encourages setting measurable and communicable goals to give employees confidence for the future. He also suggests that leaders be credible and transparent in their behavior, and demonstrates how these qualities can lead to success.

Aparna Nancherla

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