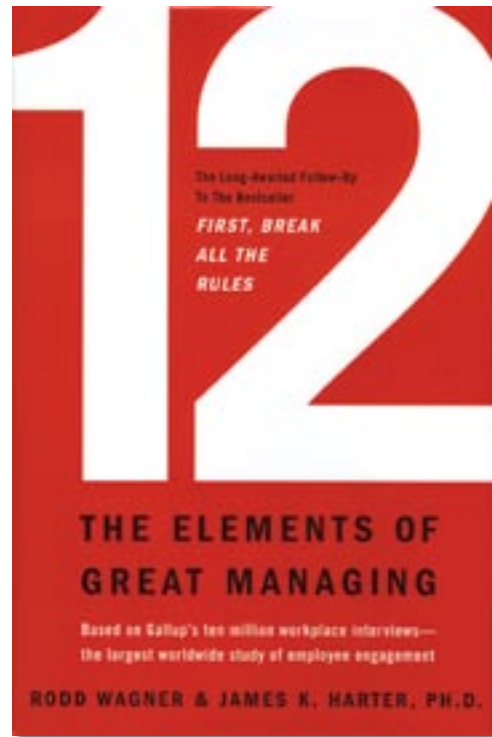


# 12: THE ELEMENTS OF GREAT MANAGING

BY RODD WAGNER AND JAMES K. HARTER.  
 (Gallup Press, 256 pp., \$25.95)

Reviewed by Josephine Rossi



**What do \$300 billion USD, €90 billion euro, and \$3 billion SGD have in common?** They are the Gallup Organization's estimates of the cost of lost productivity due to worker disengagement in the United States, Germany, and Singapore respectively. And if you think that those figures are the exception, think again: Gallup says that its estimates are just as high for the other 111 countries it studies.

But for organizations with managers who inspire, energize, and look out for their employees, those numbers are offset by higher profits and lower turnover and absentee rates. Great managers beget productive employees and Gallup's new book, *12*, explains how companies can create both.

The heart of the book is the idea that people neither were created to fit corporate strategies, nor have evolved to do so. And when it conflicts with human nature, office policy will not be successful. The authors prove that through their depictions of the 12 elements that highly engaged organizations have in common: Each description reveals hidden truths about human nature on the job.

Although not new—they were first introduced in Marcus Buckingham's 1999 bestseller *First, Break All of the Rules*—each element is derived from more than one million employee and manager interviews and is explained in its own fact-laden chapter. Detailed case studies from various industries, including hospitality, manufacturing, science, and agriculture, illustrate each element. Combined with related research in such fields as psychology, neuroscience, and sociology, those real-life examples transform seemingly mundane information into an entertaining and enlightening read for all workers.

*First* readers who already are familiar with the dozen elements (which I can't

list because of "proprietary" issues) may be tempted to overlook this sequel. But they would be missing out on a wealth of fresh insights and nuances. For example, in a discussion about the importance of having a mentor at work, the authors also point out that formal, company-mandated programs often are not effective because they force interaction that needs to develop naturally. They add that companies tend to focus only on young new hires even though there's no data to indicate that having a mentor is less important for senior employees.

Taking their already credible assertions to the next level, the authors support their findings with recent outside research. This not only boosts their argument; it makes for a more compelling call to action.

In one case, an entry about team member contributions and accountabil-

ity is peppered with neurological findings about employees seeking revenge on their slacker colleagues. The authors document a study in which participants spent their own money to “punish” a perceived freeloading team member. They write that getting even “provides relief and satisfaction to the punisher and activates reward-related brain regions.” Simply put, workers will hurt themselves to sabotage a co-worker who isn’t pulling her weight. Could there be a blunter wake-up call to managers who overlook incompetent or lazy employees?

*First* readers also may remember that Gallup skips over the topic of compensation when assessing employee engagement. The authors say that’s because the subject is too emotionally driven: “Pay is a status-laden, envy-inspiring, politically charged monster.” Wisely, they do taunt the beast by devoting a supplemental chapter to it in *I2*.

Dubbed “An Element Unto Itself,” the section tackles “the problem of pay” from an emotional standpoint and encourages managers to do the same. The authors warn that although higher pay doesn’t ensure engagement, compensation disparities among peers most certainly will kill it.

The most provocative statement in *I2* acknowledges that tenure and connections don’t make a manager: “Enterprises...routinely let dislikeable, insincere, and aloof men and women assume stewardship for a crew of the company’s ostensibly greatest assets.” That no-nonsense declaration rightly places the ultimate responsibility of great management and employee engagement on the organization itself. The same straightforward tone permeates the book and sets it apart from other leadership tomes. It also is the solidifying reason why I give *I2* four full cups of coffee.

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**More on Managing: T+D STAFF WEIGH IN ON OTHER LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT BOOKS.**

**MANAGER MECHANICS: PEOPLE SKILLS FOR FIRST-TIME MANAGERS**

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 BY ERIC P. BLOOM  
 (Capital Books, 155 pp., \$16.95)  
 .....



Answering questions about topics such as dealing with difficult but talented employees and writing good performance reviews, this guide to first-time management contains quick lessons and practical tools. It is written by a senior technology executive and covers a spectrum of management issues, including hiring and firing; determining salary, raises, and promotions; navigating company politics and avoiding career-halting mistakes; balancing budgets and financial planning; working with HR and accounting departments; and planning for a promotion.

Written in short, targeted sections with plenty of examples and illustrative scenarios, *Manager Mechanics* provides thorough coverage of the people skills necessary to be an efficient and effective leader.

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*Aparna Nancherla*

## **MEASURE OF A LEADER: THE LEGENDARY LEADERSHIP FORMULA FOR PRODUCING EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMERS AND OUTSTANDING RESULTS**

.....  
BY AUBREY C. DANIELS AND  
JAMES E. DANIELS  
(McGraw-Hill, 224 pp., \$24.95)  
.....

There are enough books on leadership to connect several continents, so anyone choosing the topic better have something to say. Fortunately, the authors provide some practical advice in a volume that resembles a written pep talk. The book's chapters are brief and can be read independently.



The authors take aim at tired management credos such as “I’m not being paid to be liked.” It is foolish for a manager to think performance will improve if she is not liked or trusted. In the authors’ opinion, a poor leader resembles a prison guard: He is constantly searching for flaws to prove his suspicion that employees are not living up to expectations.

Leaders should think holistically instead of just focusing on immediate performance, which tends to diminish the value of people in the organization. Likewise, a leader should not be overly concerned with perceived episodes of disloyalty because they often are expressions of concern for the organization. The real threat to harmony in the workplace is apathy, which is often a reflection of how management responds to staff input. More importantly, the authors emphasize that learning to lead is a function of trial and error that begins with reading and reacting to the behavior of direct reports.

*Michael Laff*

**WHAT PEOPLE WANT:  
A MANAGER'S GUIDE  
TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT WORK**

.....  
BY TERRY R. BACON

[Davies-Black Publishing, 233pp., \$27.95]  
.....

This book uncovers the truth about what employees want from their bosses. Based on original research from 500 professionals across the United States, *What People Want* reveals insights into the motivations that drive individual behavior. It also explains how to build relationships with co-workers and direct reports by using their seven most important needs: trust, challenge, self-worth, competence, appreciation, excitement, and the ability to develop and sustain an identity of merit.

The author offers hundreds of tips



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and insights, including

- how to treat employees like human beings—not human resources
- what every manager should know about baby boomers and Gen Xers
- the best practices of interpersonal behavior—and why most managers don't “get” it
- what every organization can do to promote people skills
- how to turn common sense into common practice—and keep the best people.

The purpose of this book is to help managers become more effective at managing interpersonal relationships with employees and to help them develop a stronger, more committed team.

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*Paula Ketter*



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