

and provides in-depth training in this specialized skill. Smith helps readers understand and overcome common barriers to storytelling, provides a story-structure template and a story elements checklist, and includes chapter summaries and exercises—all of inestimable value to anyone who wants to be an effective corporate storyteller.

Paul Smith is the consummate storyteller, but he is also a generous, sharing teacher who imparts a great deal of wisdom in his book. This is a highly readable volume that should benefit managers everywhere.
(August) BARRY SILVERSTEIN

What to Do When There's Too Much to Do: Reduce Tasks, Increase Results, and Save 90 Minutes a Day

Laura Stack

Berrett-Koehler
Softcover \$15.95 (192pp)
978-1-60994-539-8

Much has been written about increasing productivity in the workplace, but Laura Stack's book addresses a different sort of challenge: How to do less and achieve more. The reality is that economic conditions have pushed employers to operate their businesses with a lean-and-mean mentality, so the average worker is often stretched to the limit. That's why Laura Stack's premise, "to help you achieve more impactful results, not necessarily more results," will resonate with workers.

As with most business books, this one offers a specific plan of action. The "Productivity Workflow Formula" is a six-step process developed by the author to help any worker achieve greater efficiency: (1) Determine what to do. (2) Schedule time to do it. (3) Focus your attention. (4) Process new information. (5) Close the loop. (6) Manage your capacity. Stack says that, by following this formula, a worker should be able to save about ninety minutes a day, based on her experience with clients of her consulting firm, The Productivity Pro.

Chapters delve deeper into each of the six steps. Stack includes plenty of examples, helpful productivity tips highlighted with a clock icon, and a summary at the end of each chapter. The author has the ability to zero in on key time-wasters and make recommendations for overcoming them. For example, in the chapter entitled "Focus Your Attention," Stack pointedly discusses how best to control and eliminate both external and internal distractions. She also offers insightful advice about multitasking, procrastination, perfectionism, negative self-talk, socializing, and "slipping the electronic leash" (how to avoid becoming a slave to email, cell phones, and other electronic technology).

Throughout the book, the author maintains a positive outlook, encouraging the reader to

employ "ruthless task reduction" in order to cut out extraneous work and focus only on what is most important. She is an accomplished writer whose authoritative yet informal style should have a calming effect on the frazzled worker.

Stack offers the reader complementary material, including tip sheets, group discussion worksheets, and a self-assessment tool, all available online. She ends the book with a call to action of sorts: "You're not a machine, so don't try to be one. A decent work-life balance and plenty of rest are required for any human being to thrive productively." Ultimately, this seems to be sage advice for employer and employee alike.
(June) BARRY SILVERSTEIN

You According to Them: Uncovering the Blind Spots That Impact Your Reputation and Your Career

Sara Canaday

T & C Publishing
Softcover \$19.95 (193pp)
978-0-9846591-1-1

After years of being a consultant and coach assisting employees in identifying blind spots and behaviors that may inadvertently be holding them back from reaching their career goals, Canaday shares her experience in a book that is part case study, part workbook, and entirely practical.

This valuable self-help book is geared specifically to employees who believe they are exhibiting a strong work ethic, yet are disillusioned by stalled career paths—particularly managers and mid-level employees who have been striving to advance to the next level in their fields but continually find themselves being passed over for those positions. Canaday seeks to identify these obstacles and suggest adjustments that will help readers reach their professional goals.

The author frames each chapter in terms of a potential perception gap: a positive way to look at a trait or behavior alongside a negative way the same action may be interpreted by coworkers and employers. Using actual case studies from her own consulting practice, she clearly illustrates the potential problems and offers concrete evidence to show how the employees successfully changed their behaviors.

Advising readers to conduct their own "perception analysis," she notes, for example, how a highly educated employee can be perceived as both well qualified, and elitist. In another example, she shows that being high-energy and driven is not always considered a positive, especially when those employees are deemed to hold unrealistic expectations of others who work for or with them.

At the end of each chapter, a Perception 9-1-1 section summarizes the key points and offers realistic advice, followed by detailed exercises to assist readers in assessing their own strengths and weaknesses. Tips focus on developing "emotional intelligence," or intangible leadership skills such as being more self-aware and being more tuned in to the reactions of others, including reading their body language and other nonverbal cues.

Rather than presenting weak spots as something employees should seek to conceal, a strong theme that runs throughout the book is the need to enlist the help of coworkers and friends who can provide needed feedback.

In this straightforward guide, Canaday empowers readers by encouraging them to identify their potential weaknesses in order to implement a plan to change. To achieve workplace success, she advises readers to engage in perception analysis not simply as a quick fix for a single problem or flaw, but as a constant, ongoing process.

(August) MARIA SIANO

