

Bookshelf

■ All About the People

Business school deans have an overwhelming assortment of daily tasks to perform, from setting budgets to acting as the public face of the business school. But many of them find that they spend more time than they expected on an activity that might not have been specified in the job description: helping faculty and staff with problems. In *Managing People*, editor Deryl R. Leaming has gathered ten authors—all chairs, deans, and vice presidents of universities—to discuss how best to deal with the human side of management.

Leaming takes the first essay, aimed at helping deans and department heads understand themselves before they undertake the effort of understanding their staff. A “behavior audit” self-test gives readers a chance to assess their recent actions, their levels of honesty and fairness, and their interpersonal skills. “Let’s assume you have a confrontation with a colleague. Afterwards, you should ask yourself how well you handled your differences. Were you honest? Did you become defensive? Did you keep your dispute on a professional level?” When the answers are “no,” self-improvement becomes the obvious goal.

Other authors contribute chapters such as “Winning Over Your Detractors,” “Handling Conflict with Difficult Faculty,” “Dealing with Troubled Faculty,” and “Improving the Odds of Hiring the Right Person.” The contributors all draw from their own experiences when discussing how to learn to lis-



ten, how to run the most effective staff meeting, and how to combat boredom and disillusionment. Deans and department heads will find themselves nodding their heads at the familiarity of the descriptions—and walking away with helpful advice about how to deal with difficult situations. (Anker Publishing, \$39.95)

■ The Entrepreneur’s Tale

So you want to be an entrepreneur. So did John Lusk and Kyle Harrison, two Wharton graduates who in 1999 decided to forgo the lucrative jobs their schoolmates were pursuing in investment banking and consulting work in favor of setting up their own small business. Their goal was to manufacture and market a computer mouse shaped like a golf club. *The MouseDriver Chronicles* is their story.

And what a story it is! Intimate, engaging, and fascinating, the book takes a look at the most minute details of their struggle to get their innovative product to market. It details how they work their Wharton connections, call on friends and family members for advice and fresh cash, max out their credit cards, deal with their overseas supplier, grow depressed with each unexpected setback, and feel elation

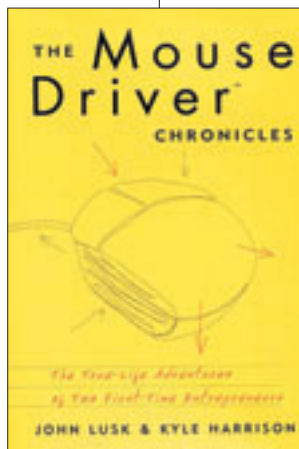
with each small victory. They find themselves obsessed with details of marketing and packaging that it had never occurred to them to wonder about before. “Before we’d started, we’d directed most of our admiration toward entrepreneurs,” they write. “Now we were catching ourselves marveling at the design of half the products we ran across, all the way down to the padding and wrapping materials from the boxes they came in.”

Their plan was to be millionaires within two years. It won’t surprise any reader who gets through the chapter titled “Darkness, Darkness, Darkness, Darkness” that their plan fails. Yet by the time those two years have passed, they have developed a unique product that has started to pull in solid sales and pay them reasonable salaries—and they’ve learned everything about running a small manufacturing business. They’ve had “an experience that exposed our strengths and weaknesses faster than any traditional jobs we might have taken.” In short, they’ve had an

extraordinary education—and the reader has had a marvelous ride along with them. (Perseus Publishing, \$15)

■ Quick Looks

Marketers spend a great deal of time and money running focus groups, conducting surveys, and trying to determine what makes customers buy a certain product. Much of the data they gather is wrong, because marketers don’t ask the right ques-



"WE DESPERATELY NEED IMAGINATION TO TRANSFORM HOW WE DO BUSINESS."

—Gerald Zaltman, *How Customers Think*

tions or because they phrase those questions in a way that guarantees they'll elicit the responses they desire. So says Gerald Zaltman in *How Customers Think*, a book that examines the mind of the customer and how it is affected by

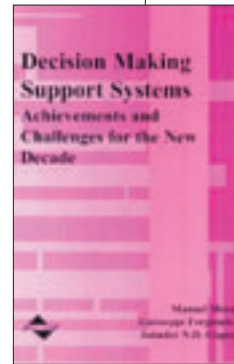
emotions, myths, moods, memories, and metaphors. "We desperately need imagination to transform how we do business," Zaltman writes, and his book provides a stepping-off point for that commodity. (Harvard Business School Press, \$29.95)

Most investment books focus on explaining ways to get rich quick. In *Thou Shalt Not Invest Foolishly*, subtitled *Confessions of a Business Professor*, University of Notre Dame professor Khalil F. Matta takes an



entirely different approach. In it, he details all the mistakes he has made and what he has learned from his flawed approach to investing. Chapter Five leads off with the commandment "Thou Shalt Not Fall in Love" and contains this helpful observation: "It is only natural for investors to invest in companies they like. ... However, problems arrive when they get infatuated by what the company has to offer and ignore other equally important criteria for making the investment decision." Matta carefully details his own experiences with

technology stocks, biotech stocks, foreign markets, and leveraged investments. It's the rare cautionary tale that is actually enjoyable to read. (1st Books Library, \$13.95)



An international assemblage of experts has contributed essays to the book *Decision Making Support Systems: Achievements and Challenges for the New Decade*. Lead authors Manuel Mora, Guiseppe Forgionne, and Jatinder N.D. Gupta hope to dissipate some of the confusion "about the theoretical basis, architectural form, support mechanisms, design and development strategies, evaluation approaches, and

managerial and organizational aspects of decision making support systems." The detailed and complex essays are not for beginners in the field, but the breadth of information offered is impressive. (Idea Group Publishing, \$79.95)

If you're like most people, at some point in your life you will stop and ask yourself: Is this the right job for me? Is this really what I want to be doing for the rest of my life? Changing jobs—even more agonizingly, changing careers—comes with such risk and upheaval that many people are paralyzed by the number of decisions they will have to make.

Herminia Ibarra investigates ways to make the change a little less painful in *Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing Your Career*. She tells stories of people who radically alter their lives—the Spanish literature professor who becomes a stockbroker, the psychiatrist who becomes a Buddhist monk—and describes the small steps they take and the experiments they make before they find themselves firmly on the right paths in their new careers. Anyone who reads it will begin to wonder how he might incorporate new directions into his own life. (Harvard Business School Press, \$26.95)



Book News

Harvard Business School Press and The Conference Board have announced that they will publish a co-branded series of professional handbooks for senior executives. The series is tentatively titled Benchmark Books. Titles will be based on research and analysis conducted by The Conference Board, a New York-based not-for-profit organization that focuses on business and economic research. The series will launch in early 2004 with two titles: *The New Consumer Guidebook* by Gail Fosler, Chief Economist of The Conference Board; and *The Business Ethics Guidebook* by Ronald E. Berenbeim, Director of The Conference Board's Working Group on Global Business Ethics. Other subjects in the series may include corporate governance, managing customer relationships, and executive compensation. **Z**