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Manager Mechanics: Tips and Advice for First-Time Manager

Eric P. Bloom
iUniverse (September 2009)
Softcover $16.95 (157pp)
978-1-4401-3349-7

New managers have to deal with so many thorny issues that they may sometimes wonder if it's worth it. In his excellent book, *Manager Mechanics*, Eric Bloom addresses these issues with honesty, insight, and humor.

One refreshing aspect of the book is Bloom's style. Management is too often treated as a serious and formal responsibility. While Bloom takes the role seriously, he writes about management in a friendly, engaging, and witty manner. He guides and reassures the fledgling manager, using humor and colloquialisms to enliven the text. He also discusses such harsh realities as moving from team member to team manager.

Bloom also does an admirable job of reducing each topic to its essential key elements. His chapters are thorough but short, and he uses words economically. The result is a fast read that neither threatens nor overwhelms the reader.

Despite Bloom's brevity, however, *Manager Mechanics* is filled with good advice. Chapters three and four, for example, address managing a team in detail—contrasting the "good stuff" with the "bad stuff." Bloom is at his best when he describes the "seven types of difficult employees," playing off the well-known Seven Dwarfs: Sleazy, Grumpy, Lazy, Brainy, Tardy, Dummy, and Troubled.

Bloom discusses management realities, office politics, hiring, layoffs and firing, the importance of a budget, "management no-no's," and personal growth. Each chapter is divided into easily consumed sections and summarized by key points at the end.

In most of the chapters Bloom includes "Food for Thought"—several scenarios that allow the manager to role-play challenging situations. For example: "You have a lazy employee in your group who does the minimum amount of required work. Other people in the department are complaining that he is not doing his share. What do you do?" These scenarios should be particularly helpful to new and inexperienced managers.

Bloom writes, "this book took twenty-five years and four months to write." He actually wrote it in four months, but it is based on twenty-five years of business experience. In fact, "Manager Mechanics" is also the name of the professional development firm Bloom operates.

Bloom's time was a worthwhile investment. He has created a business book that, like a mentor, should have lasting value for anyone faced with the challenge of becoming a good manager.
(December 22, 2009)

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