Clarion Review

Business & Economics

OCEANS BEYOND: In Search of the Enlightened Organization

Lloyd Tosoff
CreateSpace
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Suspense, drama, irony, humor—these are not words typically associated with business books. All of them, however, apply to *OCEANS BEYOND: In Search of the Enlightened Organization*.

What distinguishes this business book from a slew of others on the topic of organizational management is the simple fact that Lloyd Tosoff's text is downright readable and entertaining. In virtually every chapter, the author tells a short story. All of these vignettes take place in different work environments and depict managers and subordinates in a variety of situations. Each story sheds light on a particular personnel issue or management challenge, and each has a realistic quality that business managers and employees can relate to. In fact, many readers will likely think, "I know someone like that" or, "I've faced a similar situation."

The primary purpose of the stories is to make readers aware of "the countless forms of dysfunction that undermine the well-being of organizations and the people who work within them." Tosoff suggests that North American corporations have an average life span of only about forty years, and he thinks this is due, in part, to "the lack of awareness around how to manage the prime resource of the organization—*people*."

In Part I, which Tosoff humorously titles "Dysfunction, the Mini-Series," each of the ten stories illustrates one of the top ten reasons why organizations fail, according to the author. One story, for example, cuts to the heart of corporate malfeasance. It is about an executive who manipulates a vendor's representative into lowering prices previously established by contract. In doing so, the executive gets a tidy payoff for himself. He also involves a subordinate in a highly unethical action related to the contract. This relevant and timely example demonstrates a "pattern of deprivation and deceit," offered by Tosoff as one of the top reasons why organizations fail.

The stories in this book are believable, engaging, and on-target. But *OCEANS BEYOND*

is not just a collection of miscellaneous business scenarios. Tosoff uses the vignettes as teaching moments as he poses questions, makes observations, and draws conclusions. The overall effect is that the book, while being highly readable because of its realism, is also inspirational—Tosoff offers valuable advice designed to move an organization forward. He includes practical information such as “rules for choice” along with tips for understanding “the emotional spectrum.” He explains the differences between a dysfunctional and an optimal business life cycle, and he offers advice on how executives can shift the perception of an organization.

Including over three decades of the author’s management experience translated into an action manual, *OCEANS BEYOND* exceeds the standards of a typical business book. While the book appears to be directed primarily to executives and managers, anyone within the corporate structure can benefit from reading it.

Barry Silverstein