Clarion Review

Business & Economics

The No-Drama Manager: A Commonsense Approach to Being a Better Manager

Eldon N. Spady
CreateSpace
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Eldon Spady's *The No-Drama Manager* is a breath of fresh air because most books written for business managers have become increasingly formulaic. They frequently seem to be comprised of generalized tips written by expert consultants who haven't managed people for decades, or they dole out superficial advice overlaid by some clever acronym designed more to entertain than to inform. Both approaches leave the reader unfulfilled and hungry for specifics.

Spady was a hands-on manager who ran departments, divisions, and companies. In some cases, he was tasked with turning failing companies around. In this compact volume, Spady not only gives readers a perspective on what it is really like to be a manager but he also shares relevant examples of everyday management challenges—often from a manufacturing plant floor—that bring his book to life.

Spady gets right to the heart of the matter with his opening statement: "Drama in the work place is like spinning tires on an icy road: There's a lot of non-productive action; some heat and noise, but very little progress. As a manager you don't need non-productive action; what you want is progress, with as little drama as possible." Indeed, management at many companies is ensconced in drama, and Spady's recognition of this fact sets the stage for a book that offers plenty of pointers for keeping a cool head. Spady preaches a management style that combines calm and confidence with healthy doses of humorous self-deprecation, respect for subordinates, and old-fashioned honesty.

Chapters are short, punchy, and enriched with numerous anecdotes. Each one offers a little commonsensical jolt with a closing statement in all capital letters. Spady ends a chapter entitled "Keep It Light" with the maxim: "THE KEY IS: DON'T TAKE YOURSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY, BUT TAKE WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH DEAD SERIOUS." Another chapter, "Don't Try to Make Chicken Soup Out of Chicken Manure," advises: "IF

YOU HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT GOING TO WORK, MAKE THE CHANGES NECESSARY AND GET ON WITH LIFE."

Spady's advice is neither sensational nor heretical; there is nothing here that should surprise anyone who recognizes the value of sound management practices. Rather, what makes this book memorable is the simple, straightforward, heartfelt manner in which the author expresses his views, and the way he weaves in stories to reinforce his perspective.

It is likely that new and experienced managers in any corporate setting would find much to gain from *The No-Drama Manager*. If Spady's book serves to help managers increase productivity while learning how to reduce or even eliminate the drama, he will have succeeded where others have not.

Barry Silverstein