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BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Your Turn: 26 Weeks to Become a Competent Manager
Beryl Cuckney
AuthorHouse
978-1-4389-2981-1
Four Stars (out of Five)

In *Your Turn*, executive coach and management trainer Beryl Cuckney turns her attention to the newly minted manager because, she writes, "People are promoted into responsible positions with little support. They just work harder and harder, hoping to deliver the right results."

Rather than write a standard book on management principles for the novice manager, Cuckney uses a novel and engaging technique: She divides the book into twenty-six "management briefings," which are intended to lead the reader through a twenty-six-week, hands-on training program. Each chapter is a self-contained module with a brief discussion of the topic, several questions designed to facilitate interaction with the new manager's manager, a page for taking notes, and a section the author calls "FROG," which stands for "First, Resources, Others, Go," representing four areas the new manager needs to consider in making a decision.

The management briefings range from the most basic ("Dress and speech," "Holidays, sickness, and other absence") to challenging ("Empowerment and delegation," "Motivating and understanding people"). The advice in each briefing is delivered in language suitable for any type of manager in any industry. In "Managing Conflict," for example, Cuckney writes, "There is no such thing as a difficult person, just a difficult situation… . Conflict means that two or more people have opposing views about something. This is a normal everyday occurrence." Questions the author advises discussing with the reader's manager include: "From your experience, what is the hardest thing about managing conflict?" and "If I am in conflict with the way we work together or work you give me to do, how should I let you know?"

The final briefing in the book ("How am I doing?") is a self-assessment test across nine specific areas: common sense, originality, management, people, ethics, tools, empowerment, nosiness (inquisitiveness), and tenacity. The reader is instructed to write down scenarios for each and decide on a score that indicates whether the skill has been used at all, a little, or a lot. The author concludes the book with several "suggested management projects" to be tackled over

the course of a six-month period.

Some budding managers may find Cuckney's writing style a bit too elementary. Others may have difficulty convincing their managers to participate in the half-hour sessions the author suggests for each of the twenty-six weeks. Still, *Your Turn* achieves a worthy objective: It provides new managers with a convenient, easily readable book that guides them through the most important issues they will face.

Barry Silverstein