Live & Learn
BOOK CLUB

WHICH BOOKS SHOULD BE KEEPING LEADERS AND MANAGERS AWAKE AT NIGHT?
EDGE REVIEWS SOME OF THE MOST INTRIGUING TITLES AROUND

How to Get On with Anyone

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

Author Catherine Stothart
Price £12.99 Pearson

Find out how to engage with others on their own terms

Catherine Stothart's book, *How to Get On with Anyone: Gain the confidence and charisma to communicate with ANY personality type*, is a must-read for any manager, leader or anyone working closely with others. It provides a practical and insightful interactive toolkit that helps the reader to understand their own personality style, and gives tips on how to engage with others on their own terms.

The book sets out models and thinking structures that enable the reader to identify their personality type and the personality types of colleagues. It defines approaches for working well with others, drawing on their styles and preferences. It also guides the reader to manage interactions with different individuals.

Practical frameworks and exercises provide an excellent toolkit for encouraging a deeper understanding of oneself. Applying the book as a toolkit, the reader is taken through a series of activities that enable them to understand their strengths, style and challenges when it comes to communicating with others, based on four archetypal personality sets: energisers, mobilisers, navigators and synthesisers. This helps the reader to reflect on how their personality style impacts others. Stothart makes excellent use of supportive case studies and practical examples to support the reader in learning how to adapt to meet others on their own terms.

Additionally, Stothart emphasises the false narratives that our brains often incorrectly manufacture

FRAMEWORKS AND EXERCISES PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT TOOLKIT

about other people's intentions, motivations and actions. Her book supports the reader to build emotional intelligence through learning about the styles of others and how to approach them. The book is laid out in three parts. Part one focuses on understanding your own style and how you respond to, or initiate, interactions. Part two explains how to recognise personality styles in others. Part three then focuses on how to apply these styles in work and life. Each section offers pragmatic and effective advice. ◼

Reviewer Dr Arwen Wilcock is research manager at the Institute of Leadership & Management

Mind Tools for Managers

⭐⭐⭐☆☆

Authors James Manktelow
& Julian Birkinshaw
Price £21.99 Wiley

A précis of techniques and best practice tips

Mind Tools for Managers: 100 ways to be a better boss is a comprehensive list of tools and techniques used by managers and leaders. It covers the usual topics: knowing and managing your-

The Strengths Book

⭐⭐⭐☆☆

Author Sally Bibb
Price £9.99 LID Publishing

Give yourself the gift of strengths

The extraordinary Copernican shift from talking about problems and weaknesses to talking about solutions and strengths is one that I can recall in developing my own practice. This compact volume is dedicated to

self; managing tasks; getting things done; working with people; and managing other people. The book also has a section on commercial awareness. All leaders have some responsibility for ensuring their organisation delivers a good return that allows for reinvestment. So they need to understand the wider environment in which the organisation operates.

The tools and techniques outlined are the result of 15,000 business people sharing what they felt was most important. So content is based on practitioner views rather than an academic perspective.

I approached the book as a resource that picks out some familiar techniques used in other models. These include the GROW method of coaching and John Kotter's eight-step change model. I roped in some colleagues to check other prescriptions, such as managing projects using agile methodology. Our opinion was that the authors provide a good, pared-down description and links for people to learn more.

This easy-to-read book is accessible to a wide audience. I felt slightly disappointed by the lack of detail in some chap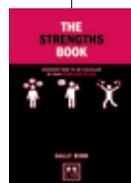ters. It would have provided greater value if it had focused on fewer tools and techniques, but given each a bit more space.

Reviewer Christine Elgood MBA designs management games and business simulations and is managing director of Elgood Effective Learning

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that revolutionary shift, and if you are not familiar with working with strengths and positive language, then it is well worth a read.

The book is divided into five parts: looking at what strengths are, identifying them, developing them, applying them, and a catch-all 'what else?'. The section 'Identifying your strengths' is, in my view, the strongest, with useful question frames and tools to explore someone's positive approach to themselves and the world. The author also invites the question: can you have too much of a good thing?

For those trained in solutions-focused, appreciative inquiry, or another positive psychology approach, the text will be basic. The section on 'How are strengths formed?' is particularly superficial. There is no acknowledgement that 'strengths' might be a form of self-authoring; that we are the stories we tell about ourselves. In this way of thinking, the coach is inviting the client to retell their story of deficit into one of strength. The premise seems to be that we are engaged in some form of brain surgery. While that may be true at the molecular level, it's of little use at the macro and meaning-making level. That said, the book works well as a toolset. If 'strengths' is a new concept to you, then it will be useful.

Reviewer Jeff Matthews is a leadership coach who writes for 'Edge'. See page 75

Digital Transformation

Author Lindsay Herbert
Price £21.60 Bloomsbury

Help your organisation become digital-first

This is a practical guide to taking your business into the digital age. The author poses a great question to focus your mind: why does your business exist? By focusing on the core purpose of your business, you can bring in digital technology to help it achieve its objectives.

In *Digital Transformation*, the author provides a walk-through of her BUILD model, developed through her own experience of digital transformations. She also researched, and conducted interviews with, a host of companies to prove the model and gain further insight. As a result the book includes pull-out snippets from leading brands to support the model.

Because it's a guide intended for a purpose, it won't be of much interest to those not undertaking such a transformation. As it can read like an academic text, it's a book to dip into rather than reading cover-to-cover.

Reviewer David Price MInstLM is an author of books on entrepreneurship, leadership and management

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Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook

★★★★★

Author Harvard Business Review
Price £22.99 Harvard Business Review Press

The 17 skills that leaders need to stand out

Much has been written about skill shortages in modern organisations. The problem is attributed to the workforce but in reality may be more a function of management, and bad management at that.

Leaders hold the key to unlocking potential, both in themselves and in those they lead. *Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook: The 17 skills leaders need to stand out* provides leaders with the toolkit to develop their competence in 17 areas across five critical activities of the organisation. Not only will this help them to excel personally but, through the process of teaching by example, they will school their teams in new methods and techniques to the benefit of their organisation.

What are the five critical areas? First, in line with the maxim "Know thyself", it is key to develop the mindset of a leader. The leader has to help others to do their best, which entails setting the direction for the team and coordinating the resources needed to meet organisational goals. The ideas in this section will be of value both to new managers and those in need of a refresher to their basic skill-set.

Secondly, it is necessary to build trust and credibility. These, too, can be learned and the *Manager's Handbook* shows how, through building effective communications and enhancing one's personal productivity by managing stress, work-life balance and self-development.

The next focus is on managing individuals by maximising skills to delegate with confidence, giving effective feedback, especially in coaching and developing employees, and reviewing performance.

The fourth area of personal development is to manage teams. Team leadership can be learned, as can the ability to foster creativity and have the team produce positive solutions to intractable problems. This section deals with hiring and keeping the most able and talented people.

LEADERS HOLD THE KEY TO UNLOCKING POTENTIAL, BOTH IN THEMSELVES AND IN THOSE THEY LEAD

Finally, there are the skills needed to manage the business – from developing strategy, through to mastering financial tools and developing business cases.

In summary, the *Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook* is the latest worthy instruction manual to be mined from this publisher's archive of innovative management thinking. Managers searching for guidance on leading their teams need look no further.

Peruse this book, practise its precepts and perform more effectively.
Reviewer Don Mason is a leadership and development coach

Open Source Leadership

★★★★★

Author Rajeev Peshawaria
Price £21.99 McGraw Hill Education

Uncovering leadership authenticity, conviction, energy and intuition

The world is spinning faster than ever before. Business borders continue to fall, and the way we now work, transact and interact is markedly different from even a decade ago. Yet we're still reliant on leadership models from the industrial age.

Open Source Leadership makes a case for redefining leadership as we know it, moving beyond surface skill-sets and competencies towards uncovering leadership authenticity, conviction, energy and intuition.

This book, the product of research from a survey covering 16,000 people in 28 countries, explains how the open source approach can bring wondrous results. We learn how to create minimum supervision, maximum performance workplaces, and crowd-source new ideas from within.

Open Source Leadership turns everything you know about leadership on its head. But if you're interested in inspiring and retaining your people, and maximising efficiency, maybe it's exactly what you need.
Reviewer Professor Andrew Sharman is an international strategy, culture and leadership consultant and author of several books on leadership and culture change. See www.rmsswitzerland.com. He is chair of the Institute of Leadership & Management