

BOOK REVIEWS

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The two books chosen for this issue's topic are timely, revolutionary, and necessary reading for everyone preparing individuals to enter the work force of the future. Hammer and Champy (1993) outline the rationale for and offer stories of success from companies that had to completely rethink their processes to meet the ever-changing demands of new environmental influences. I found this book fascinating in the way parallels could be drawn to adult service providers. This book will be to the business community of the 1990s what Thriving on Chaos by Tom Peters was to the business world of the 1980s. Covey (1989) researches successful business managers and presents a unique discussion about the habits commonly associated with these individuals.

REENGINEERING THE CORPORATION: A MANIFESTO FOR BUSINESS REVOLUTION

Michael Hammer and James Champy

New York: Harper Business, 1993, \$5.00, 223 pp.

The supplemental print on the cover of this book reads, "Forget what you know about how business should work—most of it is wrong!" I chose this book after being intrigued by an article by these authors in *Fortune*. There appeared to be elements of truth in the article that made sense about the business world of the near future. Companies who were falling behind in meeting customer needs and satisfaction found that nothing short of a complete overhaul of how "things get done around here" had to occur before positive outcomes were achieved. As a dabbler in the business literature, I found this book exciting to read. I will share some insights about how the readers of this journal can apply the principles of reengineering to their own agencies/companies as well as better understand the work culture into which they are helping people with disabilities enter.

General Highlights

- A brief summary of the way in which companies achieved success is contrasted with the new processes needed to keep them competitive.
- Scenarios of reengineering methods used by companies including Hallmark, Taco Bell, Bell Atlantic, and Capital Holding highlight uniquely different strategies to react creatively to current challenges.
- The empowerment of teams and front-line workers to make quick decisions in response to customer needs is a sharp departure from traditional chain-of-command procedures.
- The authors offer no "how to" steps for reengineering a business but rather suggest a set of guidelines that prepare a team to think in more innovative ways to completely restructure the process of how a service is offered.
- A strong theme throughout the book is the need to reinforce employees for performance that promotes the vision of the company and distinguish between incentives in the form of bonuses and promotion to a "next level" of advancement.
- Reengineering is not for companies that want to improve by 10% the quality of how activities are accomplished. Reengineering is a complete overhaul and questioning of why that activity needs to be done in the first place.
- Information technology is a tremendous enabler that contributes to a rethinking of how processes are developed to address a specific need of the company.

Specific Areas of Excellence

- Business reengineering means starting all over, starting from scratch. Specifically, it is "the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed" (p. 32).
- There is no longer any such notion as the customer; there is only this customer (p. 18).
- Reengineering is not the same as downsizing, reorganizing, quality improvement, or total quality management (pp. 48-49).

- Common themes encountered in a reengineered business process:
 - Several jobs are combined into one.
 - Workers make decisions.
 - The steps in the process are performed in a natural order.
 - Processes have multiple versions.
 - Work is performed where it makes the most sense.
 - Checks and controls are reduced.
 - Reconciliation is minimized.
 - A case manager provides a single point of contact.
 - Hybrid centralized/decentralized operations are prevalent.
- Workers are expected to be generalists who complete several parts of processes that previously had been under the total control of specialists. "Generalists supported by integrated systems can do the work of many specialists" (p. 93).
- Employees are expected to work for the customers, not their bosses.
- Inductive problem solving must now replace more traditional deductive problem solving.
- The Wayne Gretzky School of Technology: he was exceptional "because I go where the puck is going to be, not where it is" (p. 100).
- Employees who will do well in a reengineered business are "people who are comfortable with change, tolerant of ambiguity, and serene in adversity" (p. 108).
- "Question assumptions" (p. 145).
- The vision is what a company believes it wants to achieve when it is done, and a well-drawn vision will sustain a company's resolve through the stress of the reengineering process (p. 154).
- When everyone in the organization feels responsible for the success of the total enterprise and knows how they can contribute, empowerment is achieved (p. 168).

Areas in which this publication can be enhanced

- I am uncomfortable with the adoption of the term *case manager* to describe the principle contact between the company and the customer. In human services there is a trend to personal-

ize this title, to move away from viewing clients as "cases." Instead, there are "individuals" with "support needs."

- The book does not address the nonprofit realm of business. Subsequently, the profit margin is one tell-tale measure of success. Do these principles apply to government agencies? Tom Peters in his classic *Thriving on Chaos* ended each chapter by describing how the content applied equally well to private- and public-sector businesses.
- Management staff in human service agencies can look at the guidelines established in this book against which to judge the methods currently underway in their strategic planning process.

Common threads throughout this publication

- Quality is measured from the customer's perspective.
- The reengineering process takes time, involves the company's brightest employees, and is based on rethinking the processes to accomplish the critical functions of the company.
- No two stories are alike for how companies revamped critical processes. There are guidelines, but no answers.

Recommendations of utility to rehabilitation professionals

- Superb! Readers of this journal will get a frank look at the future of how businesses must adapt to cope with the uncertainty that change brings to the marketplace.
- We would do well to heed the advice contained in this book for the methods used to analyze our own efficiency in light of customer satisfaction.
- As we interact with the business community, we become diversity consultants who can add to the changing nature of work environments in our towns and cities. Outside input is essential in the reengineering process. Rehabilitation professionals can provide this expertise in their role as consultants to the business world.

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THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

Stephen R. Covey

New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, \$11.95, 358 pp.

Stephen R. Covey presents a practical guidebook to help people become more effective in their jobs as well as their personal lives. He identifies seven habits shared by those who have achieved both outward success and an inner peace. He makes the point in his introduction that he has met countless "successful people" in the business world who are experiencing an emptiness inside, or lack of satisfaction. *The 7 Habits* provides guidelines to help people blend outward and inward success.

Professionals in the field of vocational rehabilitation will find this book beneficial as a guide to ordering the multiple priorities governing their lives. The demands placed on individuals and organizations are often like being in a maze or in a strange town without directions. Covey provides practical suggestions to put "first things first." After completing the book, readers will have a clearer understanding of personal versus time management, urgent versus important, and the factors that derail us from being effective.

General highlights

- Covey distinguishes between values and principles, calling values "maps" and principles "the territory." Vocational rehabilitation agencies often clash both internally and externally over the issue of whose values or principles are the "right" ones.
- Covey explores the power of paradigms, problem solving, and adopting a new way of thinking to propel us out of ordinary, typical thinking.
- Each habit is explored in depth, with practical advice given on incorporating them into our personal and professional lives. Divided into three headings, the 7 Habits are:

Private victory

1. Be proactive: principles of personal vision

2. Begin with the end in mind: principles of personal leadership
3. Put first things first: principles of personal management

Public victory

4. Think win-win: principles of interpersonal leadership
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood: principles of empathic communication
6. Synergize: principles of creative cooperation

Renewal

7. Sharpen the saw: principles of balanced renewal

Specific areas of excellence

Covey's style is conversational. He offers meaningful quotations to introduce each chapter and presents believable stories to make his points. The book has a different degree of relevance for each person who reads it.

- Managers, administrators, and policymakers will discover new insights on empowerment, delegation, and collaboration.
- The harried rehabilitation practitioner may learn how to bring order to their busy and often overwhelming work loads.
- Individuals can adopt all or some of the habits to improve their relations with team members, subordinates, family members, funders, and coworkers.
- Habit 3, put first things first, is particularly meaningful. Covey introduces a time management matrix in which he distinguishes between urgent and important. He categorizes certain activities by applying his definitions of urgent and important. As professionals in the field of rehabilitation, we are often forced to deal with unimportant, yet urgent activities. Covey's insights on the matter of urgency versus importance should improve one's ability to sort activities and assign priorities using his suggestions.
- Covey offers a significant thought regarding

learning and problem solving. He notes that people who ask others to share how they achieved personal or organizational success, or those who may attend a training session to ask “how do you do it?” are really looking for a pill (“quick fix”) to relieve them of the hard work of solving their own problems and challenges.

Common threads throughout this publication

- A major theme of *The 7 Habits* is personal principles. Covey returns to this idea in every chapter. He believes that time management is a matter of personal management. Each individual must have a personal mission statement that guides his or her actions and serves as an “acid test” when the individual is presented with tough personal decisions.
- Covey uses the idea of personal principles to present his thoughts on management and leadership. He believes in “principled leadership,” delegation through stewardship, and continued learning driven by personal needs.

Recommendations of utility to rehabilitation professionals

- *The 7 Habits* offers a wealth of advice to all readers on how to become more effective. In partic-

ular, rehabilitation professionals can learn how to prioritize their busy schedules, focus on the important activities, and serve their customers in the most effective manner possible.

- Rehabilitation managers can incorporate Covey’s thoughts on delegation, moving from “gofer” delegation to “stewardship” delegation. In other words, focus on the outcome versus the means (empower the delegate).
- Throughout the book, the reader is afforded several opportunities to call an 800 number to receive free worksheets and other information from Covey’s Leadership Institute. Be aware that requesting the free information places you on a mailing list, but the utility of what you receive is well worth the periodic mailings from his company in Utah.
- Finally, *The 7 Habits* is not a pill. It is not a quick fix, the answer, or the final word. It is a functional and thought-provoking method to help those who would take the initiative to become more effective in their professional and personal lives.

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