

BOOK REVIEWS

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The three reviews presented here deal with change. There is no better word to describe the common element in the provision of adult services for people with disabilities. I have selected three publications from outside the field of rehabilitation from which numerous connections can be made. We can learn a great deal from the leaders of the business community in adopting strategies to successfully plan for the rapid pace of change in providing services to individuals with disabilities. Kriegel and Patler (1991) summarize the unconventional wisdom of corporate leaders regarding what it will take to meet the constant changes in the 1990s. Joel Barker (1988) introduces us to the world of the future, where the "new paradigms" will dictate a whole new way of doing things. A much referenced book by Rosabeth Moss Kantor (1983) is reviewed to encourage readers to draw parallels between the concepts presented in her book and the realities of providing services for people with disabilities. Each of these books provides experiences from which we can draw connections to our current work on behalf of people with disabilities.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE . . . BREAK IT!

R.J. Kriegel and L. Patler

New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1991.

This book jumped out at me while I was browsing through a book store in Richmond, Virginia. I looked at the table of contents and saw chapters with such headings as "Playing It Safe . . . Is Dangerous!," "Don't Look Where You Don't Want to Go," and "Mistakes Are a Good Investment." I didn't put it down for a long time. There is a wealth of feedback from interviews either conducted by the authors or drawn from the corporate literature to highlight the qualities of surviving in the ever-changing business world of the 1990s. Even though there is no mention of rehabilitation facilities in this publication, it is about rehabilitation facilities. The connections are so strong that

I will use this book in an upcoming in-service on creative decision-making strategies at a local facility.

General highlights

- Continual reference is made to "break-it thinkers," who are individuals with a passion for the work they do and who accomplish their goals in a different way than conventional wisdom would dictate.
- Throughout each chapter there are highlighted sections with a **UW** preceding each one. These **Unconventional Wisdom** summaries provide quick references for the main points of each chapter.
- Many sports metaphors are used throughout the publication. Although I found this method extremely clarifying, other not-so-sports-minded readers may not appreciate these references.
- Chapters are brief, to the point, and sequenced in a logical order.
- A strong message is present throughout the publication: organizations not in the process of change are in the process of becoming obsolete.
- The best time to make changes is when there are no present threats. When an organization is at its healthiest, the time to change is ripe:

Specific areas of excellence

- The way in which success is measured varies greatly throughout organizations. Business leaders who stop listening to the customer will soon find no customers. There couldn't be a stronger comparison to adult services provided by rehabilitation facilities for assisting individuals with disabilities to seek and maintain employment.
- I wonder how many management and front-line personnel feel the following way: "When you are excited about what you are doing, you don't have to convince yourself to 'stick to it,' you have to convince yourself *not* to. It's not something you *have* to do, it's something you *want* to do" (p. 17). I believe many parents felt this way when they gave their blood, sweat, and tears to set up the original sheltered facilities for their sons and daughters. They believed so strongly in their vision that 16-hour days were

commonplace. Where is this same passion for community-based services?

- The chapter “Dreams Are Goals with Wings” reminded me of the planning process for individuals with disabilities. How many of us get caught up in the measurement of goals and objectives while losing sight of the dream? “Goals have their place . . . second place, following dreams” (p. 35). A few pages later we read “a dream is an ideal involving a sense of possibilities rather than probabilities, or potential rather than limits” (p. 38). This is a powerful chapter and should be read by all people who assist individuals with disabilities to plan for their future. The chapter ends with a quote from Jesse Jackson’s son at the 1988 Democratic Convention: “The shame in life is not to fail to reach your dream, but to fail to have a dream to reach” (p. 51).
- Some bits of unconventional wisdom:
 - Always mess with success.
 - The best time to change is when you don’t have to.
 - Playing it safe is dangerous.
 - The only way to move into the future is to let go of the past . . . and the present.
 - Think like a beginner.
 - New ideas most often come from “outside” your field.
 - Make exceptions to the rule.
- The book emphasizes a “continuous improvement” way of analysis rather than being satisfied with “what seems to be working at the time” orientation.
- Here is a sobering thought: “Being willing to put your own business out of business is crucial to preserving an innovative spirit. You have to be willing to make it obsolete.” This statement is a powerful slap in the face to wake us up. What is the true purpose of the facility or agency at which you now work? What service will allow a person with a disability to realize his or her dream better? Am I listening to what my customer needs? Remember, your primary customer is not the business who secures your services for a subcontract. *Your primary customer is the person with a disability* who is seeking an

enhanced quality of life through the supports you provide.

- “Many systems that generate paperwork look good on paper but they don’t really work that well operationally.” Remember, I mentioned that this book does not refer to rehabilitation facilities once. But if you read between the lines, this book is exactly about ways in which adult service agencies can be more responsive to the individuals for whom they provide supports.
- The book gives many examples of how new ways of doing things occurred by using information from outside the area in which a person worked. For example, the inventor of velcro was hiking in Europe and, upon removing burrs from his socks, realized that he was witnessing nature’s fastener. He made a connection!
- A very insightful chapter contains a discussion on making mistakes. Peter Drucker was quoted: “It is rarely a choice between right or wrong. It is at best a choice between ‘almost right’ and ‘probably wrong.’”
- The authors emphasize accentuating the positive strengths we each possess rather than concentrating on our weaknesses. We will always have a weakness, but the emphasis should be on enhancing our strengths. This is exactly the orientation we must use in developing profiles of individuals with disabilities. Instead of dwelling on what a person cannot currently accomplish, we should focus on the person’s competencies and how they can be enhanced.

Areas in which this publication could be enhanced

- All of the examples were from the for-profit business world. A much wider audience would benefit from examples from the not-for-profit sector as well.
- Many of the sources where citations originated were from the popular press. It would have been a more powerful book if a brief two- to three-page bibliography could have been provided of peer-reviewed, professional publications.

Common threads

- Conventional wisdom is not appropriate to the ever-changing world of the 1990s.
- Connections can be made between the process of change in any speciality area and how that process can be adapted to one's current profession.
- Creativity and innovation are the buzz words for success.
- The process of dealing with change is more critical than a focus on the finished product. The outcomes will evolve from the process. The decision-making process is more important than the final decision since, in about three months, that decision is apt to be obsolete.

Recommended usefulness for rehabilitation professionals

- Anyone curious about how to do things better is a prime target for this book. I thoroughly enjoyed the style, examples, unconventional wisdom, and connections I made to the area of rehabilitation.
- All management personnel, executive directors, and board members would benefit from discussions on each of the individual chapters in this book.

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Book Review Editor

DISCOVERING THE FUTURE: THE BUSINESS OF PARADIGMS

Joel Arthur Barker

St. Paul, Minnesota: ILI Press, 1988.

Rehabilitation professionals have always had a difficult time finding support for their ongoing training and technical assistance needs. This problem has been exacerbated in recent years by major shifts in service delivery focus. New services, such as supported employment, and newly empowered self-advocates have forced rehabilitation professionals to rethink how they do things. This process of rethinking can be very exciting or it can be hell, depending on the training supports

available and attitude of the professional. One thing is clear—the more knowledge professionals have about dealing with change, the better they deal with the process. There have been numerous books and training programs that deal with this topic, but one that strikes a particularly strong chord is Joel Barker's *The Business of Paradigms*. This book and the accompanying video offer the professional a refreshing, nonthreatening approach to dealing with new ideas. Mr. Barker is a "futurist" and has compiled a fascinating collection of facts and stories that explain the power of a concept based on the scientific work of Thomas Kuhn. Mr. Barker adapts Mr. Kuhn's explanation of scientific paradigms to his concept of "anticipating the future." The power of the concept is best demonstrated in the many examples Mr. Barker uses in the book. The difference between this book and the other "managing change" books is its direct application to the paradigm shift in rehabilitation from facility-based to integrated services.

General highlights

- The book builds from a premise of "the importance of anticipating the future" as it relates to managing change in today's environment.
- The author establishes the correlation between the scientific relevance of paradigms to that broader application in any area of human endeavor that requires management of change.
- The text includes clear examples from history and business.
- Major points about the history and relevance of paradigm theory are clearly highlighted.
- The author introduces several "new" concepts in the book, including "going back to zero," that deal with the risks that an innovator or change agent must take.
- The author provides an excellent bibliography for further study of the future and anticipating change.

Specific areas of excellence

- The author manages to take a difficult concept from the rigid world of science and apply it in a very powerful way to the world at large.

- The author's stories and examples bring a difficult concept to life.
- The development and explanation of the "going back to zero" concept is of singular relevance to the rehabilitation field.

Areas in which this publication could be enhanced

- I read this book after I saw the video of the same title. I was not sure which one came first. The book gives the impression that it may be an afterthought. This does not take away from the message, but it could have been developed more fully.

Common threads

- The book and video both stress the importance of the individual in the process of change.

Recommended usefulness for rehabilitation professionals

- This book and video should be read and viewed by all rehabilitation professionals to help develop an open mind to new paradigms and ideas.
- The book and video are excellent tools for presentation to boards of directors and administrators of rehabilitation programs who are considering or are in the process of converting their programs from facility- to integrated community-based services.
- The book and video are appropriate for use with consumers, families, advocates, and other individuals who affect the lives of people with disabilities. The concepts blend well with such standards as Marc Gold's "Try Another Way" and Minnesota's "New Way of Thinking."

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THE CHANGEMASTERS: INNOVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE AMERICAN CORPORATION

Rosabeth Moss Kantor

New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

New technology, changing societal demands, and new expectations of empowered customers and employees are changing the way business leaders organize, operate, and manage their organizations. In this book, Dr. Kantor compares organizations where innovation flourishes to places where new ideas suffocate. Through this comparison, she provides practical ideas for avoiding pitfalls leading to stagnation and suggests pragmatic strategies for developing environments that encourage people to act on their ideas. Skills needed by managers operating in innovative organizations are also discussed in detail. This book is a must for people interested in enhancing their ability to anticipate the need for and lead productive change.

General highlights

- The reader will quickly identify with the themes raised in this book. The examples are credible and the lessons learned from these examples are easily applied to all types of organizations.
- The comparisons between organizations that stifle innovation and those where innovation flourishes provide concrete do's and don't's for facilitating the development of innovative environments.
- The section on empowerment describes both the benefits and the drawbacks of making power more accessible to employees. This discussion helps to dispel some of the myths about empowerment and allows the reader to better understand the effective use of strategies that empower.
- The chapter on power skills in use provides useful strategies for helping individuals to understand how they can exert leverage in their organization so that they can turn their ideas into successful innovations.

Specific areas of excellence

- The second chapter of the book provides a clear, succinct historical analysis of factors that have influenced the development of organizations. Through this analysis, Dr. Kantor makes it clear that we are in the midst of a "transforming era" which is forcing a major shift in assumptions about how organizations should be managed.
- Chapter three provides a wonderful tongue-in-cheek corporate philosophy and describes 10 "Rules for Stifling Innovation."

Areas in which this publication could be enhanced

- Although it is clear that all of the concepts in this book can be applied to not-for-profit organizations, it would have been helpful if more examples of not-for-profits were included.
- The book is not for those who are looking for a quick fix to their organization's problems. Although practical advice is provided on how to facilitate innovation in an organization, some of the ideas presented are complex and the ramifications for implementation of most of the ideas are far reaching. This is the type of book that must be read more than once by most individuals if it is to be used to make real, long-lasting change.

Common threads

- Changing a company's culture takes a lot of time but it can be done. Even the most bureaucratic organizations have pockets of innovation that can be expanded and enhanced.
- The challenges facing organizations can be addressed through increased participation and greater facilitation of innovation. Survival of organizations in today's complex and fast-paced environment requires that all organizations become more flexible and innovative.

Recommended usefulness for rehabilitation professionals

- This is a very readable, practical book that provides an abundance of useable ideas for facilitating innovation in any type of organization. All rehabilitation managers interested in achieving excellence in their organization should have a copy of this book.
- Individuals who are interested in implementing new ideas and facilitating change in their organization should read this book. They will find concrete strategies for understanding the best method for initiating change, techniques for gathering resources to support change, and suggestions for effective use of power to sustain change.

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