Robert E. Kaplan and Robert B. Kaiser. **Fear Your Strengths: What You Are Best at Could Be Your Biggest Problem**. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2013, 113 pages, $19.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by *Seymour Adler,* Partner, Aon Hewitt, New York, NY.

On their climb up the corporate ladder, aspiring leaders learn to rely on their strengths. Those with strong analytical skills and deep technical knowledge use those skills and that expertise to generate insights and arrive at sound decisions that impress stakeholders and win them rewards and recognition. Those with strong social adeptness apply that skill to forge and nurture relationships, grow extensive personal networks, and exert influence up and down the hierarchy internally and with external partners. If these leaders are effective in applying those strengths to perform well, they are likely to be promoted to positions of increasing responsibility and scope. Our reinforcement history shapes our tendency to rely on our strengths.

Along come Kaplan and Kaiser to warn us, in the title of their new book: *Fear Your Strengths: What You Are Best at Could Be Your Biggest Problem.* The authors alert us to the "dark side" of this history of positive reinforcement, which habituates us into relying on our strengths even when not appropriate. As the authors put it, "Coming to grips with the need to modulate your strengths is some of the hardest developmental work you will ever do." It is hard for us to do less of what we have been acclaimed for—and reveled in—being so good at. It is hard to break habits that have so often paid off. This little volume is intended to guide leaders to become more aware of, and to mitigate, their often unconscious tendencies to overrely on strengths.

In the book's opening chapter the authors describe two ways that "strengths beget weakness." When overused, strengths get corrupted, as in the case of the articulate, forceful, inspiring communicator who simply won't shut up. In addition, reliance on our strengths blinds us to employing other, often more effective, ways of behaving, for example, by that leader listening instead of talking.

This tendency to overuse strengths is pervasive. Kaplan and Kaiser find that leaders are five times more likely to overuse an attribute that is a personal strength than they are to overuse their other attributes. Mindset traps help us rationalize this lopsided use of strengths. For instance, most of us assume more is better and apply that mentality as we approach job challenges. We also harbor a self-serving bias that what we do well has exaggerated importance in getting our job done.

The authors describe an alternative to the trap of overrelying on strengths. Kaplan and Kaiser apply a classic approach to leadership and

distinguish two contrasting styles they label forceful and enabling and two contrasting foci: strategic and operational. Leadership behavior reflecting either end of these two dimensions has its positive and negative impact on leader effectiveness. For example strategy-focused leadership can stimulate innovation but also result in the unnecessary disruption of fixing what is not broken. On the other hand, operationally focused leadership can facilitate execution but also foster tunnel vision. The authors not surprisingly argue that the most effective leadership style is *versatility,* the capacity to balance both ends of the spectrum as needed.

Change toward a more versatile leadership approach requires both behavioral change and a mindset shift. The authors present the basic steps for behavior change starting with an assessment-based self-awareness of what you do too much, too little, or just right relative to your role. They present their tool, the Leadership Versatility Index, a 360 survey that helps assess over- and underreliance on leadership behaviors. Equipped with an assessment-based diagnosis, leaders are urged to implement the basic tools of "unfreezing, changing, and refreezing" to sustain behavior change. The mindset shift begins with a genuine commitment to change and careful and sustained reflection to produce the insight that leads to action that kickstarts a positive cycle of change. Beyond the inner and outer work to dial back on overused strengths, the authors also recommend using external structures (think, e.g., of an annoying alarm that reminds the workaholic to go home at 7:00 two nights a week) or people (think, e.g., of designating a peer who signals the leader when he is dominating conversations) to support the change.

Throughout the book, the authors enliven their discussion by sharing real-life examples drawn from the leadership careers of the famous (e.g., Steve Jobs of Apple), the infamous (e.g., Ken Skilling of Enron), and the unknown (typically leaders they have personally coached).

This book is a boon to executive coaches who often see the careers of talented leaders derailed by overused strengths. Coaches see managers who take glory in the deep technical know-how that got them promoted and dive into the minutia of execution, micromanaging, and in the process missing the big picture. Or they see leaders who were fabulous at promoting their personal brand and managing up to advance their careers but now need to demonstrate humility and energize team performance in order to succeed at the next level. In that sense, experienced practitioners will find no surprises in this book; this is a phenomenon they have seen many times. However, coaches will find that assigning their executives this lively and short book will be a useful first step in a change process. I emphasize *first step* because it is unrealistic to expect the very brief self-help section of this book to sustain material behavior change. Rather, this book's greatest value for executives will be in the important initial

task of raising awareness of the potential derailing impact of overreliance on strengths.

Finally, it should be noted that the notion that overused strengths can indeed have a negative impact on performance is beginning to receive empirical support. Recently, Grant and Schwartz (2011), Carter et al. (2014), and others have found solid evidence that very high levels of, respectively, extraversion and conscientiousness do indeed negatively impact on performance. That is, the relationship between these personality factors and performance is curvilinear. Hopefully we will see an increased number of rigorous tests of the hypothesis that "what you're best at could be your biggest problem" across populations and attributes. More important, hopefully this book will stimulate the research that helps identify the moderators that determine when, and where in the scale, the relationship between critical leader attributes and performance turn from positive to negative.

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Herman Aguinis. **Performance Management.** 3rd Edition, Boston, MA: Pearson, 2013, 322 pages, $146.60 hardcover.

Reviewed by *John W. Fleenor*, Senior Faculty, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC.

This book represents the third edition of *Performance Management* authored by Aguinis—the first edition was published in 2005 and the second edition in 2008. A professor of organizational behavior and human resources at Indiana University, the author is well known for his research and publications on performance management and related topics. *Performance Management* is appropriate for use as a textbook for upper-level undergraduate students in performance appraisal, compensation, and training and development courses. As an introductory text, the book presents a survey of the state-of-the-art in performance management, which it positions as key competitive advantage in today's business world. That is, by focusing more on their employees and concentrating less on areas like technology and production, organizations are likely to become more successful.

According to the author, performance management can be a key tool for improving the effectiveness of organizations and their employees, *when properly implemented.* Unfortunately, many organizations are not using their performance management systems productively. We have all heard stories about (or maybe experienced) poorly designed and implemented systems that are considered to be an administrative burden on both employees and supervisors. The purpose of *Performance Management* is to present a detailed plan for developing and implementing a successful performance management system. This plan is based on the latest research findings and on state-of-the-art applications. This text treats performance management as an ongoing and cyclical process that involves performance observation, evaluation, and development. It also focuses on best practices, such as the required steps for creating a successful performance management system. In the coverage of best practices, potential political and organizational pitfalls are discussed that may result in an organization skipping some of the required steps in the implementation of its system. The text includes several examples from real-world organizations that demonstrate how performance management systems can be successfully implemented in spite of situational constraints such as the misalignment of employee and organizational goals.

The text is divided into four parts—each part contains two or three chapters that cover a specific area in performance management. Part I addresses strategic considerations in performance management such as the advantages of implementing a successful performance management system as well as the negative outcomes associated with a poorly implemented system. Part II covers the details of system implementation such as measurement considerations, creating the appraisal forms, and communicating the launch of the system to employees. Part III addresses employee development issues, including creating development plans and implementing 360-degree feedback systems. Part IV concerns the relationships between performance management and rewards, teams, and legal considerations.

Each of the chapters begins with a list of learning objectives and ends with summary points and relevant case studies for that chapter. Students should find these materials valuable when reviewing the chapters for exams. On the author's website, a number of additional resources are available for instructors. These materials include PowerPoint presentations, exam questions and answers, and role plays for use in class.

The third edition of *Performance Management* includes 43 new case studies, and an additional 40 case studies are available in the instructor's manual. These case studies are real-world examples of successful and not so successful implementations of performance management systems. The

case studies are one of the strengths of this text and will serve as valuable learning tools for students.

The latest edition of the text has been extensively updated. In this edition, the role of the context in which performance management occurs receives special emphasis. For example, new initiatives such as 360-degree feedback may work in some organizational contexts but not in others. Another area of emphasis is the multidisciplinary nature of performance management research, which includes diverse fields such as I-O psychology, human resource management, organizational behavior, and strategic management. Whereas the previous editions of the text included descriptions of the technical aspects of implementing performance management systems, this edition emphasizes the importance of interpersonal dynamics in the process. In addition to the measurement concerns in performance management, the role of issues such as trust, politics, leadership, negotiation, and communication are considered for the successful implementation of performance management systems.

This third edition of *Performance Management* presents enhanced discussions of relevant topics such as the importance of performance management to all students regardless of their major and the interaction between science and practice in performance management. The text focuses on research-based findings and presents statistics relevant to increasing an organization's human capital. Rather than including a separate chapter on international issues, *Performance Management* integrates global issues throughout the text, including topics such as the implementation of a performance management system in Ghana, the integration of performance management and business strategy in organizations in Australia, and a methodology for moving away from seniority-based performance management systems in collective cultures such as Korea and China.

In the chapter on employee development, the author devotes considerable space to 360-degree feedback systems, where he provides an excellent overview of this important technique for performance management. He takes the position that 360-degree feedback is most helpful when it is used for only developmental purposes—and not for administrative purposes such as promotion and compensation. Given research indicating that raters tend to change their ratings according to the purpose of the assessment, the author's position seems to be appropriate. This is particularly true for organizations that are implementing 360-degree feedback for the first time. After an organization has successfully implemented a 360-degree system for 2 or more years and employees have developed trust in the process, it may be possible to begin using it for administrative purposes.

As part of the coverage of 360-degree feedback, the author presents a table summarizing eight vendors that offer 360-degree feedback systems,

including well-known providers such as PDI, DDI, and CCL. (Full disclosure: This reviewer is a CCL employee.) He then provides a detailed description of a 360-degree system called Checkpoint, which appears to be an example of a well-developed system. The emphasis is on using these systems for employee development; that is, participants receive developmental feedback from the assessment and then create plans to address areas in need of development (i.e., weaknesses).

There is also a section on legal issues in performance management—a topic that is difficult to summarize in a few pages. The author, however, does a good job in presenting the highlights of important concepts such as adverse impact and in discussing important laws that affect performance management. A table presenting the characteristics of legally sound performance management systems will be particularly useful for introducing these concepts to students. In addition, four case studies are included on topics such as illegal discrimination that will be helpful for students trying to understand these complex legal issues.

As with most textbooks, there is a fair amount of repetition throughout *Performance Management*. For example, there are a number of times when information presented in the text is repeated verbatim in accompanying tables and lists. Although this may be annoying to readers who are familiar with the concepts of performance management, this repetition may be helpful to students who are experiencing this information for the first time.

In summary, this text provides an excellent introduction to performance management for upper-level undergraduate students in a number of areas such I-O psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior. It is recommended without reservation as textbook for undergraduate courses in these disciplines.

Gyan Nagpal. **Talent Economics: The Fine Line Between Winning and Losing the Global War for Talent**. London: Kogan Page, 2013, 207 pages, $39.95 paperback.

Reviewed by *Alexis Fink ,* Sr. Director Talent Intelligence Analytics, Intel Corporation, Hillsboro, OR.

A Cup Full of Insight

Talent Economics, by Nagpal, is a broadly integrative work that packs a lot of conceptual punch into its 207 pages. The central premise of the book rests at the intersection of talent management, labor economics, and corporate strategy, but in making his central points, Nagpal frequently incorporates useful perspectives from adjacent disciplines such as history.

Where many business books seem to take a handful of ideas and create something book length by examining the same ideas in excruciating detail, Nagpal's book is snappily paced, typically devoting no more than five paragraphs to each of the scores of meaty topics addressed. Nagpal takes his own advice in keeping a tight connection between the wide volume of data presented and the implications they suggest: "A pond full of information can sometimes be less useful than a cup full of insight" (p. 4). Completing this book feels a bit like completing a semester-long course in terms of the sheer volume of concepts presented.

A book as densely packed with concepts and insights as *Talent Economics* runs the risk of feeling disjointed and dry. Surprisingly, it is neither. The book is well organized, and for the most part, there is a clear conceptual thread leading from one section to the next. Liberal use of headers, graphs, figures, lists, case studies, and diagnostics help keep things peppy and break up the pages visually. Occasionally, Nagpal personalizes the concepts with a personal anecdote or observation, such as illustrating globally falling birthrates with a look back at the changes in family size over three generations of his own family (see p. 60). A crisp, 13-page toolkit is included at the end and, in addition to highlighting items like the talent strategy assessment around which Chapter 6 on talent strategy is built, also includes an extensive list of website URLs for significant global organizations and projects that are relevant to the wide range of topics included.

A key differentiator for this book is that it examines the global economy and global trends from the standpoint of someone living and breathing that milieu everyday—not just for the occasional business trip or a couple years as an expatriate. Nagpal is currently based in Singapore and is keenly attuned to the complexities and opportunities of a truly global economy and workforce. Particularly for those primarily rooted in an American viewpoint on the world, this sophisticated global analysis will be eye opening.

The text itself is broken in seven sections. The first three sections set up the context and conceptual framework. These are relatively shorter. The next three sections form the bulk of the book, delving deeply into macro trends, micro insights, and a prescription for strategic assessment. The seventh section includes the toolkit referenced above.

The book sets off at a sprint from the beginning, neatly summarizing the challenges at hand: "In the future, the data tells us, this war for talent will get considerably works, because while global circumstances for business are converging, the 3-billion-strong global workforce is not. In some places it is ageing rapidly, in others, social, cultural or language barriers are holding talent back. And in countries full of young personal ambition, a lack of infrastructure or education is severely limiting potential" (p. 2).

The first chapter is a social and political Cook's Tour of the last quarter century, highlighting the impact of the fall of the Berlin wall and the key factors contributing to the rise of India and China. Nagpal uses that contextual foundation to shift deftly to the evolution of global market strategies, the impact of technology, particularly in terms of global commerce and virtual work, and finally to reach his key point about reinvention of employment in light of these seismic shifts.

Having set the context, Nagpal shifts gears to discuss the implications of these contextual factors on 21st century leadership. Here, I review the history of leadership imperatives, each aligned to a respective context. Nagpal argues that the shareholder return focus of the past 30 years is insufficient for the coming decades and suggests that innovation and collaboration are top contenders for a replacement. The balance of the chapter is devoted to these themes.

The third chapter functions as an extended segue from the context setting of the first two chapters into the data-dense fourth chapter. Here, he essentially argues for a mass customization strategy, noting "centralized global strategy [is] a hazardous game to execute . . . . The only way to control chaos and complexity is to give up some of that control" (p. 40). In this chapter also Nagpal scolds both leaders and HR as a function, arguing that talent strategy must "sit squarely on the business leader's table" (p. 42) and scolding that "By pitching someone else's best practice, programmes, initiatives and 'tweaking' existing processes in the name of strategy, [HR] is distracting leadership focus from a greater goal – commercial talent strategy that is embedded at the very core of business strategy" (p. 43).

Chapter 4 is a deep and roving dive into labor economics, analyzed along eight themes: (a) broad workforce changes in aggregate talent; (b) replacement and mobility; (c) age and scope of dependency, that is, the number of dependents each worker is supporting; (d) gender mix broadly and within management specifically; (e) generational trends within specific markets; (f) basic education and workforce proficiency; (g) management proficiency, especially as indicated through quality college and graduate manager preparation; and (h) corporate governance and sustainability of social systems. As you might expect, this chapter includes a great number of illustrative graphs and tables. I appreciated the generational section especially as it provided an assessment of the major generational markers in China, India, and Japan.

The student of Organizational Effectiveness will find the most familiar territory in Chapter 5. Here Nagpal flits about like a bumblebee, delving into a wide variety of talent management topics. He begins by considering how to find the right, as opposed to the best, talent, including discussions of employee value propositions, culture, and organization assimilation.

From there, he moves to different models for bringing talent into your organization, especially tending to unconventional talent pools and entry points. In the same vein, he addresses the importance of understanding and tending the internal labor markets within organizations. The book is aimed at business leaders, but industrial and organizational psychologists will be pleased to see him emphasize the importance of sound job analyses. The chapter also includes a discussion on the importance of removing obstacles and growing engagement in the workforce and brief treatments of topics such as the impact of cash versus noncash rewards.

The work reviewed here all comes together in Chapter 6, where Nagpal addresses in detail his approach to developing and embedding a sound talent strategy. Accordingly, this chapter is the most linear, walking thoughtfully through 11 distinct talent priorities that bring together the topics addressed earlier in the book. Here, he reemphasizes his point about talent strategy as a business imperative rather than an HR problem. My favorite analogy in the book is used here: "a groundsman's goal to prepare a good soccer pitch cannot be mixed up with a coach's strategy to win the soccer game" (p. 140).

Having walked through the diagnostic, he moves on an approach for creating a customized talent strategy, balancing across two axes, individual and group, and short-term and long-term. Here again Nagpal is crisp and focused, sharing key examples without belaboring the point. The toolkit with which he closes the book reiterates the key points, as noted earlier.

This book is explicitly targeted at senior management, and the succinct style and speedy pacing is appropriate for that time-constrained audience. Those seeking a silver bullet will likely find the journeys into topics such as the global stack ranking of basic capabilities in reading, science, and math (pp. 87–88) tiresome. However, for those seeking to create a talent strategy based on more than the latest fad in performance management and cafeteria-style benefits plans, the broadly integrative ideas and data presented here will likely feel like a door opening into a whole new world.

Dennis Tourish. **The Dark Side of Transformational Leadership: A Critical Perspective**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013, 252 pages, $39.95 paperback.

Reviewed by *Gary B. Brumback ,* Palm Coast, FL.

Mountains are there for climbers

Leadership is there for professors

To theorize and write books

Mountains don't change

Neither does bad leadership

Dennis Tourish is a professor of leadership and organization studies at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK. This is his eighth book on leadership and organizational communication. Eight books on the subject from one author are a bit much. How long, for goodness sakes, does it take an intellectual to understand leadership? Its meaning to me is very simple. In its most generalized, abstract, and simple form, leadership means controlling means in the pursuit of ends. My definition obviously won't suit Professor Tourish, probably any other professor, or the Harvard Business School, or any other business school. As for all these schools, Tourish would agree for he devotes Chapter 6 to "The folly and the dangers of leadership education in business schools" (p. 96), a topic I'll let speak for itself.

My reading of history tells me that the world throughout the ages has been plagued by leadership in the public, commercial, and spiritual spheres of life that has led to negative successes (e.g., wars fought and won) and negative failures (e.g., wars fought and lost), and rarely to positive successes and positive failures (i.e., positive ends not achieved due to unpredictable situational interventions). There are today numerous tinder boxes throughout the world being fueled by reckless leaders in their quest for more power, and some notable observers believe U.S. militarism is setting the stage for WWIII (e.g., Boyle, 2012; Roberts, 2014). Tourish alludes to this volatile situation very early in the first chapter when he states: "The world is on fire and it will take more than a spirit of sorrowful torpor (whatever that means to Tourish) to extinguish the flames" (p. 14). But judging from the four ill-chosen case studies he uses in Part II to illustrate the dark side of transformational leadership, I wonder if he's got a clue as to the size of the fire, its causes, or what to do about it.

The six chapters of Part I are spent as he puts it on unraveling leadership agency. He clearly disdains the theory, teaching, and practice of transformational leadership, all three of which he claims result in giving leaders all the power and followers none. He examines the dynamics of excessive leader agency that encourages authoritarian forms of organization and popularizes transformational leadership that to him resembles "a form of 'nympholepsy'" (p. 37).

Transformational leaders, he says, "often exercise their power through 'coercive control mechanisms'" (p. 40). Relying on a study (Schein, Schneier, & Barker, 1961) of U.S. POWs in Korea in the 1950s, Tourish in Chapter 3 compares side-by-side the key techniques of coercive persuasion used by the captors with those used by leaders of organizations today, such as, for example, role modeling.

In Chapter 4, Tourish explains how leaders use ideology to enhance their power. There's certainly no doubt in my mind that leaders do just that. To me, ideology is an intellectualized and usually firmly held set of beliefs, and a perfect contemporary example is that of the neoconservative politicos who influenced President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq. But Tourish settles for a different example, one that he spends a whole chapter discussing, namely, the example of leaders promoting spirituality in the workplace as a very invasive form of control. A more uncommon, off-beat example would be hard for me to imagine. But Tourish defends his choice by mentioning that "The Academy of Management has a special interest group devoted to the subject with almost 700 members, a development which has created 'legitimacy and support for research and teaching in the field'" (pp. 59–60). Well, I am singularly unimpressed. Spirituality has helped to fuel, not dampen the world's fire, and it is worth noting that President Bush reportedly prayed before making momentous decisions (Suskind, 2004).

In the fifth chapter he explains the obvious, how the dark side of leadership stifles if not extinguishes dissent among followers. He describes the benefits of upward feedback and the barriers to that feedback ever happening. He ends the chapter by offering "Ten commandments for improving upward communication," as if any powerful leader would, for instance, "promote systems for greater participation in decision making" (p. 88).

This brings us to Part II and its four case studies, which themselves are a case study in the irrelevance at worst and limited implications at best for taking transformational leadership out of the ethereal of Part I and into the real world of leadership. Even taken together, the case studies don't even remotely reflect a world on fire and primarily at the hands of the dark side of leadership no matter how theorized.

"Enron revisited" (p. 117) is the first case study, and the story of this corporation's implosion is indeed a revisited one. Tourish himself cites two books and a documentary about the company's fall, and there are countless more post mortems that could have been cited judging from a browsing of the subject on the Internet. Enron's executives clearly were operating on the dark side, but the harm they caused, although widespread and varied, was still mostly confined to the United States. Although two of them were imprisoned and one died before being jailed, "hands up corporate crooks" could be on a theater marquee but is as uncommon in America's corpocracy as is the failure of companies "too big to fail" where U.S. politicians are indebted to large corporations (see Brumback, 2011, 2012).

The second case study, picked by Tourish to illustrate cultic leadership in practice, is way out in left field, literally, on the political spectrum. It is

an accounting of the rise and fall of the far-left Trotskyite movement and the Committee for a Worker's International in the 1980s and early 1990s that had launched "a prolonged struggle against the Tory government" (p. 136). He could have but didn't mention that leadership on the right and in the center on the political spectrum can be even darker, and he could have but didn't include the cult of unbridled capitalism in the discussion (a subject not in the book's index).

Tourish continues his fascination with cultic leadership in the third case study so anomalous so as to be beyond even the extreme fringe of transformational leadership. He entitled the chapter, "Leadership, group suicide and mass murder: Jonestown and Heaven's Gate through the looking glass" (p. 157). This is such a ludicrous choice that it doesn't deserve comment other than to say it makes me wonder if he is deliberately avoiding politically sensitive cases such as the role of nations' warriors-in-chiefs in sending millions to their graves for the sake of self-serving imperialism and the demands of multinational corporations, banking cartels, new world order ideologues (see below), and the military/industrial complex (see Brumback, 2011; 2013).

The last case study puts four UK senior "banksters" (my term) in the slimelight (again, my term) by highlighting in testimonies before the UK House of Parliament's Banking Crisis Inquiry their rationalized excuses for the global economic meltdown of 2008. Tourish shows no sign of insight into the more dangerous role that big banksters play in helping to instigate and fund wars or whatever other means necessary to establish, in the words of the world's premier banker, David Rockefeller, a new world order of "supranational sovereignty" dominated by "an intellectual elite and world bankers" (Kozy, 2013).

Tourish, seemingly without any sense of irony, declares that the banksters have learned their lesson and are now "keen to shore up their tattered reputations and to ensure that they retain their ability to lead banks in a manner as close to the way they have traditionally done as possible" (p. 178). Yes, Professor Tourish, the banksters are now displaying the same impression management they displayed in giving their testimonies, and the state of the world will never improve as long as the international financial system remains "corrupt to the core" (Todhunter, 2014).

Tourish wraps up his book in the 11th and final chapter, "Reimagining leadership and followership: A processual, communication perspective" (p. 199). It stands to reason that being a specialty of his organizational communication would be part of his perspective. It offers, he says, "a dynamic conception of power dynamics—as a struggle over meaning" (p. 211). That is certainly not my conception of power, which is simply the capacity to control the means to ends.

The proper perspective furthermore is one he says in which leadership "emerges through the interaction of organizational actors and has a contested, fluid meaning for all of them in a given social situation for determinate amount of time" (p. 205). I suppose that quote would make more sense to you if I copied the rest of the chapter here. He concludes it with the "hope that the journey undertaken in this book enables us to map at least the outline of some answers" (p. 215). If by the time I was writing an eighth book on the subject, I surely think I would have more than an outline to offer.

You can easily tell from my foregoing review that I can't give an unqualified endorsement of the book. Yet, recognizing that Tourish is an eminent authority on leadership theory, I have no qualms in recommending his book for professors and their students who can't get enough of the subject. For readers like me retired from their careers, you should have the time I think to understand leadership better, if you want to, by reading history and current events as reported and analyzed by the independent media. The rest of you will know what to do.

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Amy L. Kristof-Brown and Jon Billsberry (Eds.). **Organizational Fit: Key Issues and New Directions**. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2013, 246 pages, $127.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by *John A. Lust* , Professor of Management, Illinois State University, Normal, IL.

Organizational Fit: Key Issues and New Directions is an outstanding volume. The goal of the book is to go beyond the current research on the fit of individuals with organizations to begin to develop new approaches to the study of the area. The authors certainly have achieved this goal and more. Kristof-Brown and Billsberry bring together some the key researchers in this arena to provide an exciting and thought-provoking work.

In all, there are 10 chapters in the volume organized in two sections. The editors begin the volume with an excellent introductory chapter that summarizes the existing fit research and details a number of problems associated with that research. The first section follows and has five chapters that examine topics related to fit using existing concepts and approaches. There is a chapter on the motivational processes that lead people to seek fit, a chapter describing the role of organizational socialization programs in helping to achieve fit, a chapter outlining self-regulation processes that individuals use to maintain fit, a chapter on fit and its impact on organizational citizenship behaviors, and a chapter that outlines the potential use of cognitive mapping concepts to determine how individuals develop fit perceptions.

The four chapters in the second section of the book take a very different approach and look at new ways to approach the study of fit. These chapters tend to be among the most interesting in the volume. There is a chapter that outlines the potential use of the attraction–selection–attrition framework as a way to understand fit and in particular how and why fit perceptions may change over time; there is a chapter that takes a "conservation of resources" perspective to analyze fit, a chapter that focuses on the role of time in fit determination, and a chapter that takes a more macro approach and reviews the potential impact of national culture on fit perceptions.

As mentioned, the editors have really done an excellent job with this volume, and they are to be commended. Most certainly one of the reasons for the quality of the work is the process that Kristof-Brown and Billsberry employed to gather the manuscripts for the work. The process started in 2009 when the editors held a caucus on fit at the Academy of Management annual meeting in Chicago. At that caucus they discussed the concept of this book and the competitive process that they wished to employ to select chapters. From there they issued a general call for papers where authors provided a 2,000-word extended abstract for review. The best of these

papers were presented and discussed at the 3rd Global e-Conference on Fit. After the conference, the editors reviewed the 18 papers presented at the e-Conference and ultimately chose nine to be developed as full chapters for the book. After that decision, there was a "two-round feedback and editing process" that Kristof-Brown and Billsberry held with the authors. Many of the papers were then presented and discussed further at a symposium on fit held at the 2011 Academy of Management annual meeting held in San Antonio. The final results are the manuscripts contained in this volume. Most certainly the extensive review (and somewhat atypical approach for edited volumes) has contributed to the clarity of thought and interesting approaches employed by the chapter authors.

Although all of the chapters in the work are quite good, there are several that stand out as having the potential to significantly impact the field. Chapter 7 by Van Vianen, Stoelhorst, and De Goede and Chapter 9 by Jansen and Shipp are both outstanding. The two chapters have similar goals in that they examine how perceptions of fit change. Van Vianen et al. use the attraction–selection–attrition framework to explain key points in one's career where fit perceptions will be impacted. Especially interesting is their argument that individuals will employ both different sources of organizational information and different reference individuals as they move through the process of career management and adaptation. In addition, their discussion of possibilities for future research should be reviewed by anyone interested in the field.

The Jansen and Shipp chapter examines the role of both "clock time" and "psychological time" on fit perceptions. One of their more interesting conclusions is that type of fit will vary in importance as one moves through the organization from prehire to posthire. For example, fit with job-related concepts (person–vocation fit and person–job fit) will be extremely important early in the process. Once one becomes a fully contributing member of the organization, other types of fit become more important. For example, person–work group fit and person–supervisor fit will become more salient in shaping individual perceptions and outcomes. As with the above-mentioned Chapter 7, Jansen and Shipp also have an excellent section on future research possibilities.

The final chapter I wish to highlight is Chapter 10 by Lee and Ramaswami on the impact of national culture on fit perceptions. This chapter takes a very different focus from others in the volume in that it is more macro in its approach. The authors do a very good job in outlining the cultural dimensions that might impact fit. In addition, I thought that their discussion of the role of culture on fit before organizational entry, during entry and employment, and at organizational exit was very insightful. This area of research is largely untapped and represents an important opportunity to increase our understanding of the fit phenomenon.

In summary, I found this volume to be outstanding. Although I only highlight a few chapters in the work, the potential reader should not be dissuaded. This work makes an important contribution to the research on organizational fit and should have an impact on shaping the field for years to come.

There is an interesting sidenote that I wish to mention. Even though this volume is clearly aimed at current and future fit researchers, it will be of benefit to other potential readers as well. In particular, we have seen growth in recent years in the number of U.S. colleges of business offering courses on professionalism to their undergraduate students. I developed and teach our course on professional and career development here at Illinois State. A major component of this course is focused on ensuring that our students understand the decision-making processes that companies employ during recruitment and selection. Obviously a key component of this discussion is fit perceptions for both the applicant/future employee and the organization. Although I know quite a bit about the area, this work has changed some of my thinking and so will impact how I approach several sections of the course in future semesters. Thus I am very grateful to Kristof-Brown and Billsberry and to the various chapter authors for the work that they did on this unique volume. Fit is important to both individual employees and the organizations that they populate. This work has done much to increase our understanding of this important phenomenon and provides the promise of even more important future results. It will certainly become required reading in human resource management and I-O psychology doctoral programs, and hopefully it will receive the wide-spread readership that it deserves.

Bryan J. Dik, Zinta S. Byrne, and Michael F. Steger (Eds.). **Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace**. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2013, 248 pages, $69.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by *Tom Walk,* Director, Learning Design and Technology, MetLife, New York, NY.

By way of an overview, *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace* is an edited compilation of 10 chapters, organized into three discrete sections:

(1) Cultivating a Meaningful Career—focuses on research and interventions focused on individuals and their career satisfaction
(2) Meaning Making on the Job—discusses theory and practice around designing and deriving meaning from jobs
(3) Leading a Meaningful Organization—reviews how organization-level activities and interventions can positively impact experienced meaning for the associates

In the introduction, the editors make clear the purpose of this compilation, stating that "The overarching mission of *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace* is to provide a resource that supports paradigm integration and assimilation of cross-disciplinary theory and research related to purpose and meaning in the workplace in a way that highlights clearly defined, empirically derived practical applications" (p. 7).

As I began reading *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace*, I was very much heartened by the introductory content. The tone taken by the author of the foreword and the editors was reminiscent of work by Douglas McGregor or Hackman and Oldham where enhancing the meaningfulness of work was viewed as a valuable outcome unto itself. Increasingly, the employee attitudes literature has taken on a more instrumental tone where any benefits that an individual or society might accrue from an employee's improved experience of work are secondary to the economic benefit accrued by the enterprise.

In addition to the more appealing, humanistic tone of *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace*, Dik, Byrne, and Steger also compiled some very strong work. Generally, the chapters are thorough and interesting. In particular, I was very impressed with Jo-Ida Hansen's chapter on how good person–environment fit can enhance meaning, and I found myself debating Robert Lent as he discussed his social-cognitive view of meaning in the workplace. Although it is beyond the scope of this review to discuss each chapter in detail, I felt that these two chapters were particularly noteworthy only because they engaged my curiosity and challenged my preconceptions in a positive way. I am sure that readers with different interests would find some of the other chapters equally interesting.

Having acknowledged what I perceive to be the key virtues of this volume, I still feel somewhat disappointed with this work, overall. Stylistically, I found the book very difficult to read, though I acknowledge that this difficulty may have been unavoidable. As a cross-disciplinary work, the book necessarily covers a broad range of topics that some readers will find unfamiliar and, consequently, more challenging. In addition, by using contributing authors, each chapter introduces a new writing style and approach, making for a somewhat choppy reading experience. Finally, the book is written in a more formal and academic style that is very information dense and works reasonably well in the context of a journal article but translates less comfortably to a longer work.

Acknowledging these points, it is also the case that I have read other collections that flowed much more smoothly. Although some of the contributors displayed mastery of the academic writing style, others appeared to struggle navigating that style and presented too much material without cleanly transitioning between concepts. As a consequence, some chapters are rather difficult to follow, particularly if the reader is less knowledgeable

in that topic area. In summary, I believe that some of the chapters could have benefited greatly from more assertive editing than they received.

Although this volume does have some notable lapses in clarity on a chapter-by-chapter basis, my biggest concern is actually with how the book addressed its stated purpose. The editors do an excellent job of setting a tone and providing a compelling purpose for the book, but their stated mission is quite expansive and encompasses some broad and well-researched topics, like job design or leadership, that are the topics of their own books. Given this incredible breadth of topics, I was surprised to see that several chapters were very deeply and narrowly focused on one technique or practice, whereas other, equally worthy topics weren't discussed at all. By way of example, in the section on "Meaning Making on the Job," one chapter is devoted to job crafting, a well-researched technique for job design originated by Justin Berg and his colleagues. Although I appreciated the chapter on its own merits, I wondered if a chapter focused exclusively on job crafting was the best choice for this book given the breadth of job design literature and the relatively short length of the book. I had similar reservations with articles in the other two sections. Past experience reading compiled volumes suggests that presenting a larger number of narrowly focused, shorter chapters or fewer chapters constructed as broad literature reviews are both effective approaches. The mixed approach presented in this volume did not, in my opinion, provide sufficient coverage of the construct space that they outlined to be fully effective.

Beyond coverage, however, I also found that the volume simply did not have a strong unifying thread. Although the authors clearly present cross-disciplinary integration as a key purpose, none of the contributing authors sought to highlight integration opportunities. As an alternative, the editors could have provided interludes that made those integrative ties. Unfortunately, neither approach was implemented, leaving me with the feeling that this wasn't so much a book as a set of articles.

In summary, *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace* certainly possesses some genuine strengths. Several chapters are very well-written and provide interesting insights and perspectives on the topic of how we might influence the meaningfulness of work. Unfortunately, inconsistencies in style across the chapters and an overly forgiving editing style make the book rather difficult to read unless you are already very familiar with the topics presented. More important, however, the ambitious purpose stated in this volume's introduction is simply not fulfilled by the chapters that follow.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS RECEIVED[1]

Barretta, Jackie. *Primal Teams*. New York, NY: AMACOM, 2015. 240 pages, $24.95 hardcover.

Bright, Deb. *The Truth Doesn't Have to Hurt: How to Use Criticism to Strengthen Relationships, Improve Performance, and Promote Change*. New York, NY: AMACOM, 2015. 256 pages, $17.95 paperback.

Byrne, Zinta. *Understanding Employee Engagement: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015. 254 pages, $49.95 paperback.

Cutler, Alan. *Leadership Psychology: How the Best Leaders Inspire Their People*. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page, 2014. 296 pages, $29.95 paperback.

Langelett, George. *How Do I Keep My Employees Motivated? The Practice of Empathy-Based Management.* Austin, TX: River Grove, 2014. 215 pages, $15.39 paperback.

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[1]The publications listed are either already scheduled for review and/or are included as a new listing. Readers interested in reviewing for *Personnel Psychology* are invited to write our Book Review Editor Dr. Satoris Culbertson at satoris@ksu.edu providing information about background and areas of interest.