

Developments in the Management of Human Resources

JOHN STOREY

Blackwell, Oxford, 1992. xvi + 304 pp. £16.95

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This book provides a fascinating insight into changes in the way in which people are managed within organizations, through a series of interviews with the line managers most closely involved.

Storey introduces the area by discussing rumours of radical changes in management practice and work organization, propagated not least by American management gurus such as Tom Peters. Storey's approach is not to search out the companies in the vanguard of change, but rather to look at what is actually happening in British companies. The interviews are carried out in 15 'run of the mill' organizations, from the public sector, the motor industry, engineering and the process industry.

As a lecturer at Loughborough University, Storey is interested in putting his observations into a conceptual framework and in pursuit of this he suggests several differences between the traditional 'Personnel/Industrial Relations' approach and the newer 'Human Resource Management' (HRM) approach. For example, the traditional approach is exemplified by careful delineation of written contracts, whereas HRM aims to go beyond contracts; the traditional manager role is of monitoring, whereas in HRM it is concerned with nurturing; traditionally, pay is determined by job evaluation whereas in HRM it is related to individual performance.

Storey found that managers had indeed sought to manage labour differently in recent years, and that there have been widespread effects on individual employees. What is less clear is that management has developed its approach to employees collectively to anything like the same degree. For example, management encourages open communication of goals and performance with employees—but then withholds financial information from the unions during pay negotiations.

This book provides a valuable insight into the paradigm shift in managerial styles which is likely to impact on most of our companies. The presentation is relatively easy to read, and liberally scattered with examples, although the academic style does sometimes get in the way of what would be a jolly interesting story!

JASON LOWTHER

Discrete Event Systems: Sensitivity Analysis and Stochastic Optimization by the Score Function Method

REUVEN Y. RUBINSTEIN and ALEXANDER SHAPIRO

Wiley, Chichester, 1993. xv + 332 pp. £39.95

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The book is concerned with examining alternatives to multiple simulations in order to obtain a stochastic optimization of the process being simulated. As amazing as this might seem, the text does an excellent job of providing a number of alternatives to multiple simulations in order to achieve a stochastic optimization. The procedure featured in the text is the score function (SF) method.

According to the authors, the purpose of the text was to demonstrate the feasibility and efficiency of the SF method. The book concerns itself however, not only with the SF method, but it also provides a number of alternative methods for use in performance evaluation, sensitivity analysis and optimization of rather complex discrete event systems (DES). One point of interest is the use of the Radon–Nikodym derivative in the development of the SF. Chapter 2 has a very useful table of SF's for such common distributions as the gamma, normal, Weibull, binomial, Poisson and geometric distributions.

The text is well-organized, but is not easy to read. It is certainly not readily transparent to a novice in mathematics. It is possible to use portions of the book on an as needed basis because of the many useful illustrative examples, but to follow the thread of reasoning of the