Caught in the Middle: A Leadership Guide for Partnership in the Workplace
by Rick Maurer

Reviewed by Cheryl Munn-Fremon

Are you feeling “caught in the middle?” That is, are you feeling caught between, on the one hand, the expectations of upper management for productivity gains, reduced expenditures, and continuous quality improvement and, on the other hand, a front-line staff that is tired of the “flavor of the day” productivity process and demanding credibility from you? If this describes your situation, then Caught in the Middle: A Leadership Guide for Partnership in the Workplace may be for you.

Rick Maurer has written a very basic guide to help the middle manager begin the journey toward creating an empowered work force. In Maurer’s model, there are two parts to the process of improving quality and involvement: the partnership between management and front-line staff, and the methods used for improving and measuring quality. He focuses solely on realistic steps a manager can take to begin building a partnership with the front-line staff. In addition to describing these steps and listing many books that provide the theoretical foundation for his practical suggestions (and that serve as resources for the reader), the author gives readers some important assessment tools.

These tools can help a manager decide whether he or she is ready for the transformation, can help a team discuss the forces aiding or hindering the employee involvement process, and can help a manager create a staff development profile. Maurer includes a diagnostic check for teams, to help a team to clarify its goals and the roles and responsibilities of team members. It also highlights the ways in which a team will approach problem solving and its relationships with other teams.

One of the most helpful chapters in the book is called “Pulling It All Together.” Maurer suggests using force field analysis to sort out the positive and the negative issues, or forces, that arise from the organizational- and self-assessment tools, and gives a concrete example of the use of force field analysis. It is very important that the manager and his or her front-line staff have a realistic view of their chances of success in changing the work environment. Redefining the goal in light of the forces for and against it, and developing strategies for working on the forces you can control, will both be critical factors in your success.

Too often as middle managers we feel uneasy about moving forward and wonder where we can start. Caught in the Middle provides an effective road map for creating a partnership between middle management and front-line staff.

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Reviewed by Anne Woodsworth

For those who want to understand what constitutes “fair use” in today’s mercurial electronic climate, this slim volume will be useful for all sectors of education. What’s Fair? A Report on the Proceedings of the National Conference on Educational Fair Access and the New Media, American University, Washington, DC, June 15-17, 1994, presents the issues, and points toward possible solutions, through the eyes of copyright experts, representatives of educational institutions, and producers of copyrighted materials. The papers presented at the conference, sponsored by the Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC) and the Agency for Instructional Technology (AIT), are augmented here with relevant sections of the 1976 Copyright Law, and fair-use guidelines for books, music, and off-air videotaping, as well as a short list of further readings. Efforts of various groups to define and clarify fair use peppers the volume—from the AAU/ARL report to a working group of the National Information Infrastructure Task Force, as well as the practical examples of how the Association of American Publishers is working on pilot projects, experiments, and models to accommodate the needs of multimedia users and developers.

While work on guidelines has progressed since the conference took place, the report still provides a useful summary of how U.S. Copyright Law is being and might be explicated for
new media. The views from users, publishers, copyright experts, and educators give the report both balance and tension. The limitations of the report are that it provides a snapshot of a work in progress—work on the interpretation and application of a law that was devised at a time when education, publishing, computing, and telecommunications were clear and distinctive domains and their interests did not intersect as partners and collaborators.

In sum, I recommend this to anyone with skimpy knowledge of fair use. It is a useful summary and short reference guide to complicated issues—barring final resolution of how fair use gets defined for twenty-first century multimedia.

Reviewer Anne Woodsworth is Dean of the Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University. She has served twice on the CAUSE Current Issues Committee and is author of CAUSE Professional Paper #11, Reinvesting in the Information Job Family. (woodswor@aurora.liunet.edu)

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**Handbook for Personal Productivity**

*by Henry E. Liebling*


Reviewed by Jan Baltzer

If you are the type of individual who is attracted to books on 101 ways to improve employee morale, 200 ways to improve your management style, or fifty-two timely tips for improving productivity, you may very well enjoy the *Handbook for Personal Productivity* written by Henry E. Liebling and published by Productivity Press. This pocket-sized handbook gives concise suggestions on how to: improve your personal productivity, get more productivity from teams, achieve quality customer service, deal with personal health issues, and gain the most from workshops and seminars.

In the area of personal productivity, the focus is on the importance of good self esteem, the need to ban negative thinking, setting goals and objectives, visualizing yourself as an achiever, and time management. Each section begins with a motivational look at the topic and a well developed list of “Things to Do” and “Challenge Exercises.” The sections on team productivity, quality service, health, and workshops/seminars mirror this approach.

The information presented in the *Handbook for Personal Productivity* is nothing new to managers who have done much reading on the area of personal productivity. It certainly does not have the content or depth that would be required by someone who was seriously trying to research and understand the dilemmas that managers face today. However, it is nicely condensed and excellent as a refresher on the do’s and don’ts of managing yourself and your time.

Reviewer Jan Baltzer is Vice President and Chief Information Officer of The Apollo Group, Inc., parent company of The University of Phoenix and the Institute for Professional Development.