



Book Smarts

A Sense of Urgency

By John P. Kotter

John P. Kotter says true urgency is a situation where people realize that action on critical issues is needed immediately, not when it fits into their schedules.

Businesses are constantly shifting and evolving in a world of ceaseless change. Being able to sustain a true sense of urgency is essential.

In a study of business initiatives, Kotter found that 70 percent of large-scale initiatives failed or were not fully launched. Only 10 percent achieved the goals set for them, and those 10 percent succeeded because management created a sufficiently high sense of urgency to motivate people to move in a new direction.

Kotter, the Konosuke Matsushita professor of leadership emeritus at Harvard Business School and author of several books on leadership, says a true sense of urgency is a positive and focused force that does not create stress because it motivates people to look for ways to organize and eliminate irrelevant activities.

Kotter explains the differences that characterize true urgency, complacency and false urgency. He also offers four tactics for implementing true urgency.

In the final chapter, Kotter says that as the speed of change increases, a sense of urgency will become more crucial.

— Harvard Business Press, 196 pages.



5 Steps to Expert

How to Go from Business Novice to Elite Performer. By Paul G. Schempp

The journey from business novice to elite performer proceeds through five steps, according to Paul G. Schempp, president of Performance Matters Inc. and a coach for professional golfers.

His steps are: beginner, capable, competent, proficient and expert.

Using real-world examples, Schempp lays out a plan for moving from beginner to expert and achieving excellent results.

"By studying experts, I have discovered that becoming an expert is not innate behavior," he writes. "They earn it by gaining experience, by acquiring knowledge, and by developing skills."

He says experts see the world differently than others do and gives advice on how to become a forward thinker and decision-maker. Schempp lists two things experts do to foster superior memories and the three essential steps for developing skills to become an expert.

At the end of each chapter, he provides questionnaires, work sheets and a variety of assessment tools.

— **Davies-Black Publishing**, 165 pages.

Raise the Bottom

How to Keep Secret Alcoholics from Damaging Your Business. By Arthur M. Jackson

In "Raise the Bottom," Arthur M. Jackson asks: Which will hit rock bottom first, your business or its secret alcoholics?

Jackson, a recovering alcoholic with more than 20 years of consulting experience in business and marketing issues, says problems associated with alcoholism cost businesses \$33 billion to \$68 billion annually.

He shows the reader how to identify telltale signs of an alcoholic — before the alcoholic is even aware of the problem.

Jackson discusses the alcoholic's changing behavior at each stage of the disease. Some of those changes might include cigarette smoking, thriving on crisis, living beyond one's means and an inability to admit mistakes.

He also explains how alcoholics can damage a company and describes specific steps managers can take to protect the business. A fictional narrative tells the story of a mentor, Aaron, and a protege, Jason, who talk about the problem of alcoholism in the workplace.

The book moves from "The Problem" to "Identifying the Steps of Alcoholism" to the final chapter, "There is No Good Time to Act Except Now."

— **Bascom Hill Publishing Group**, 137 pages.

■ LISA BROADT

