

cost savings that were achieved in a few companies are also cited. Nippondenso in Battle Creek, Michigan, is one of the companies that has provided such data.

Before launching a major effort to install Kaizen Teian, an organization needs to examine its own culture, its management style, the basic skill level of its employees, the adaptability of the organization, and what will be done with the work force if appreciable cost savings are achieved. Other issues that need to be considered are: Who will serve as the Kaizen coaches? How will the company be able to sustain a slow down in productivity while the proposals for change are implemented? What position will the organized bargaining units take?

In summary, this volume offers an opportunity to become acquainted with Kaizen Teian and to make some preliminary judgments as to whether the potential benefits will offset such factors as the start-up costs associated with training Kaizen leaders (facilitators) in the process, inertia or resistance to change, and the amount of worker time that will be spent before the cost benefits can be realized.

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SIBSON, ROBERT E. *Strategic Planning for Human Resource Management*. New York: AMACOM Books, a division of American Management Association, 1992. Pp. xii + 290. \$59.95

In the preface, the author states that his intent was to write a practical book about strategic planning in human resources management that (a) identifies the major strategic human resource management issues and (b) provides ideas and recommendations for dealing with these matters. The content of the book is based on the author's experience in human resource consulting with over 500 companies over the past 30 years.

The book consists of 22 chapters. The first 4 chapters describe the process of strategic human resource management used by the author and provide the background for the remainder of the book which focuses on critical strategic planning items. One issue that was overlooked in the beginning chapters was a clear and concise definition of strategic planning. Six different types of planning are described in the first chapter, including conceptual/pragmatic, externally driven/internally driven, problem-oriented/opportunity-oriented, input/output, long-term/short-term, and operational/strategic. However, strategic planning was not precisely defined and, often, the use of terminology was confusing. For example, in Chapter 4, the author states, "strategic human resources management

planning is part of strategic human resources management work, which, in turn, is part of strategic management.”

In terms of implementation, the strategic human resource management planning process consists of the following steps:

A. Current Human Resources Management Planning

1. The base of the planning process is scanning journals and inputs from network contacts inside and outside the company.
2. The current planning actions that are identified are catalogued.
3. The result is an identification and description of *current* human resources management planning trends and issues.
4. These current planning items are weighted to assess relative importance.

B. Strategic Human Resources Management Planning

5. The current trends are examined to determine which might have strategic relevance.
6. The most likely time span of each strategic human resources management planning item is judged.
7. Then there is a forecasting of each strategic human resources management planning item through the time period determined for each.
8. At predetermined periods, forecasts are monitored and adjustments are made when necessary.
9. The result is an identification of strategic human resources management planning items.
10. These results should also be weighted to determine relative importance.

As for current human resources management planning, as many as 100 current human resource management items may be identified every year, but only some of these will be relevant to the particular company. Consequently, in Chapter 3, the author recommends several methods for weighting these items. I found the information concerning weighting to be lacking in detail from a practical standpoint. For example, Exhibit 3-1 provides a list of planning items for the year ending September, 1992. There are a total of 62 items listed with individual ranks as well as a “percent of importance rating” for each item. However, it is not clear from the explanation of the weighting system how the importance ratings were derived. Further, individually ranking such a large number of items would seem to involve some inherent reliability problems.

The remainder of the book focuses on the top 16 strategic planning items identified by the author in Chapters 3 and 4. These items include:

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| 1. Productivity Management | 9. Retirement Issues |
| 2. Educational Deficiency | 10. Labor Scarcity |
| 3. Delegative Management | 11. Impact of Technology on the
Work Experience |
| 4. Equal Treatment | 12. Employee Owners |
| 5. Managing Differences | 13. Restructuring the Organization |
| 6. Demands of Special Interest
Groups | 14. Job Security |
| 7. Fair Pay | 15. The Working Poor |
| 8. Benefit Cost Containment | 16. The New Work Democracy |

Individual chapters are devoted to each of these planning items in which the author discusses his views concerning each item and offers a host of recommended actions. For the most part, I found the action recommendations to be reasonable and sound but not particularly novel or innovative. In several instances, however, the author makes statements that are inconsistent with available research evidence. For example, in the chapter concerned with productivity management, the author asserts that "canned" productivity programs such as organizational development (a canned program?) and quality circles, have, in most people's opinion, done more harm than good. Although quality circles have not enjoyed uniform success, research evidence suggests that they can lead to improvements in productivity, quality, absenteeism, and job attitudes (Barrick & Alexander, 1987). Overall, I was disappointed in the author's tendency to overlook or disregard available research to support his viewpoints and recommendations. In fact, I was surprised to discover that there were no citations or references included in the book whatsoever.

Frankly, I have mixed feelings about the value of this book. In one sense, the author met his purpose with respect to identifying major strategic human resource issues, though the methodology utilized to achieve this end may be questionable to some. Issues such as productivity management, organizational restructuring, delegation and empowerment, and benefit cost containment have received and will likely continue to receive a great deal of attention in popular business magazines and books as well as professional journals. Identification of these issues and general agreement as to their strategic importance for future business success seems to be less of a concern than identification of appropriate action plans and activities. From a strategic management perspective, addressing the latter issue is a much more difficult task that must be faced by human resource professionals. Although this book offers recommendations for each of the critical planning items identified, each item was addressed individually. Recent conceptualizations and research in strategic human resource management suggest a trend toward a more integrative approach, where patterns of human resource choices

and activities is emphasized (e.g., Buller, 1989; Schuler & Walker, 1990; Wright & Snell, 1991).

Perhaps there is some middle ground to be traveled. For those interested in acquiring more information about some of the critical issues of strategic importance in human resources from an experience-based perspective, this book may serve as an initial first course. However, for those interested more in state-of-the-art strategic human resource practices with an integrated focus, I would recommend that they look elsewhere.

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CARROLL, JOHN M. (Ed.). *Designing Interaction: Psychology at the Human-Computer Interface*. Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Pp. ix + 333. \$59.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper

This edited volume is the fourth title in the Cambridge series on human-computer interaction. This particular work is composed of 15 articles by various authors. Several of the authors come from IBM while a number hail from academe and industry. The book itself is the product of a conference sponsored by the User Interface Institute of IBM's Watson Research Center. The basic focus of the conference is an examination and critique of psychology in the design of human-computer interaction (HCI). Considering the changes in HCI from the standpoint of users or consumers of computer services over the past quarter century, this is an interesting and intriguing topic. Those "old-timers" among us who can remember using cards and tapes and the incessant delays, can really appreciate the virtual revolution that PCs and software packages such as Windows have had on us in the workplace and in our personal lives.