[PDF] The Logic Of Failure: Recognizing And Avoiding Error In Complex Situations

Dietrich Dorner - pdf download free book

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly The Chernobyl atomic-plant explosion, observes Dorner, was entirely due to human error involving the breaking of safety rules by a team of experts who reinforced one another's puffed-up sense of competence. This German psychology professor believes people court failure through sloppy or ingrained mental habits, whether the mistakes involve cleaning dead fish out of a garden pool, adding rooms to a schoolhouse, launching economic development programs in

Africa or forecasting oil prices or the scope of the AIDS epidemic. Things go wrong, according to Dorner, because we focus on just one element in a system complicated by interrelationships; we apply corrective measures too aggressively or too timidly; we ignore basic premises, overgeneralize, follow blind alleys, overlook potential side effects and narrowly extrapolate from the moment, basing our predictions of the future on those aspects of the present that bother or delight us the most. This ingenious manual will assist problem-solvers in all fields.

From Library Journal Things going wrong is an all-too-common modern management experience. Pressed for time, an administrator makes a hasty decision that remedies the problem but creates myriad new problems for someone else. Dorner (psychology, Univ. of Baumberg, Germany), an authority on cognitive behavior, questions whether or not our habits of thought measure up to the systemic demands of profound problems such as environmental degradation, nuclear weapons build-up, terrorism, and overpopulation. Using computer-simulated "real world" scenarios, he measured his test subjects's problem-solving performances over time, and, not surprisingly, discovered that people court failure in predictable patterns?from simple confusion and misperception to short attention spans and unwillingness to change tactics. All is not lost, however, for Dorner suggests that despite the repeated failure, we can learn to recognize defective management behaviors and correct them. Dorner's "only the facts" approach is refreshing; he offers clear arguments, convincing evidence, and well-reasoned conclusions. One of the best management titles of the year, this is a necessary addition to both psychology and management collections of all types.?David R. Johnson, Fayetteville P.L., Ark.

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