

Lifting People Up: The Power of Recognition

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Book Ends Publishing (May 7, 2018)

Hardcover \$25.95 (190pp)

978-0-9908625-1-2

Lifting People Up is a business book that combines powerful leadership development advice with sound, actionable tips.

Lifting People Up collects practical ideas and tips for building people-centered organizations through praise and feedback. Husband-and-wife team Susan Smith Kuczmarski and Thomas D. Kuczmarski have written a warm, practical guide to providing recognition that engages employees and strengthens workplaces.

Relying on their shared decades of experience as instructors at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, the Kuczmarskis advocate for "a leadership approach focused on cultivating and motivating people," a process they term "peopleship." Among other behaviors, peopleship is aimed at creating collaborative workplaces where workers are driven to succeed because of intrinsic motivators, not because they fear reprisal from management.

The book weaves enlightening, down-to-earth anecdotes from a variety of industries and workplaces with the Kuczmarskis' original thinking on the importance of self-knowledge, focused listening, trust, mutual respect, and authentic praise and rewards as the foundations of high-performing work cultures. Chapters are short, clearly structured, and end with brief summaries, making their topics easy to follow and digest.

Throughout the book, the Kuczmarskis emphasize the need for buy-in and involvement at every level of an organization, including the very top. In their systems-based view of work, developing strong workplace norms and values around recognition isn't solely the responsibility of the human resources department or C-suite, but it does require their explicit support.

In addition to exploring the many benefits of recognition, the Kuczmarskis bring their considerable work in the field of innovation management consulting to bear in this book. They argue that recognition should be joined with both constructive, timely feedback and celebrations of "smart failures," foundational concepts of design thinking and start-up cultures. They believe that to be maximally effective, leaders must "build a culture where the freedom to take risks, experiment, and fail is accepted" and convey to their organizations that "risk-taking will yield a mix of successes and failures."

The final third of the book provides step-by-step guidance on identifying and nurturing workplace values and norms and articulating a vision for an organization. Actual company values from Google, IBM, and more are provided as helpful examples.

While *Lifting People Up* is aimed at a wide variety of organizations, some workplaces might struggle to enact some of the advice. For example, it encourages organizations to use humor in the workplace and note the benefits of laughter and "playful pranks," suggestions that might fall flat in more buttoned-up or safety-minded settings.

For organizations looking to get the most out of their people—and invest the most back into them—*Lifting People Up*

is a business book that combines powerful leadership development advice with sound, actionable tips on inspiring engagement and a shared sense of purpose at every level of an organization.

ANITRA BUDD (January 7, 2019)

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