Theory to Practice: Practice to Theory

Devi Akella
Albany State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj

Part of the Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons, and the Organizational Communication Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol10/iss1/9
REVIEW & RESEARCH OF NOTE

Theory to Practice: Practice to Theory

Devi Akella¹
Co-Editor
¹College of Business, Albany State University, Albany, Georgia, USA

How does one learn and acquire knowledge? Which approach is better—practical exposure and application, or learning concepts and techniques grounded in theoretical models and framework? Which method is correct—which method has all the solutions? This is a key topic of debate in the contemporary management/educational scenario. The two books reviewed in this issue of OMJ present the two sides of this debate. The books are both valuable sources of information and knowledge in the area of management. However, their approaches toward creation and generation of knowledge are totally different.

The first book, titled Organizational Ethics: A Practical Approach, edited by Craig E. Johnson, is a comprehensive volume on organizational ethics. The book covers theories, principles, and philosophies of ethics and ethical behavior, relating them to individual behaviors, organizational environments, teams, and group function and decision-making concerns. The various facets of organizational elements such as interpersonal communication, power and politics, conflict, and leadership are examined under the lens of ethics and moral values. Ethical culture and its influence on values, vision and mission, and norms of an organization are emphasized. All theoretical assertions pertaining to ethical behavior and dilemmas are practically explored using case studies, projects, and assessment for hands-on experience and corporate examples.

Ashwini Gangadharan’s review provides a succinct analysis of the book. Her review focuses on the need and usefulness of the book and the role of ethics and ethical behavior at both organizational and individual levels. She provides detailed summaries of all sections of the book highlighting important perspectives and elements pertaining to ethical behavior and stages. She opines that this book could be considered a “systematic guide to ethical decision making and a guide to creating an ethical environment in the organization.” Ashwini Gangadharan lauds the potential and significant contribution of this book.

In her review, she comments that the book will be able to convert a novice to a moral expert. The author, according to the reviewer, adopts a simple and straightforward writing style and tone that allow easy acquisition of knowledge.

The second book, entitled Everything I Know About Business I Learned From the Grateful Dead: The Ten Most Innovative Lessons From a Long, Strange Trip, by Barry Barnes, is an engaging book that enables readers to learn about effective management strategies from the various decisions taken by a successful music band called Grateful Dead. Grateful Dead was a successful rock band in the 1970s, and all its business practices have been researched and compiled into book form by the author. Each chapter covers a strategy adopted by the musical group, which has been compared to a management feature and concept—an alternative approach to business in general.” The book reveals how Grateful Dead had converted their group into a sort of learning organization with autonomous team members, servant leadership, flat structures, consumer-oriented culture, emphasis on innovation, and common identity. The book expresses hope that readers learn about management practices from Grateful Dead’s story.

The two reviewers, Joanne L. Tritsch and Claudia Harris, write a revealing review that portrays the author’s perspective and aspirations about the book and its value. The review maps the highs and lows of the rock-and-roll band and music industry with managerial concepts and business practices. A brief but detailed introduction about the music band is provided for those readers who may not be well versed in the rock-and-roll culture of America. The reviewers do a compelling analysis, discussing all business decisions and moves of Grateful Dead, comparing them to relevant management models and topics. They believe that the book is highly entertaining and educational, not only telling but also showing and illustrating business lessons to students. The book can be used as supplementary reading for students in classrooms.

Address correspondence to Devi Akella, College of Business, Albany State University, 504 College Drive, Albany, GA 31705, USA. E-mail: devi.akella@asurams.edu