



The Challenge of Front-Line Management: Flattened Organizations in the New Economy

Carolyn L. Fecteau, Katherine A. Jackson, Ronald R. Sims, John G. Veres

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As the way work is done changes and as organizations flatten themselves down in response to demands posed by the new global economy, managers on the front lines, where some say the real work is done, need a broader set of skills than ever before. They must learn to see their jobs differently?to become tougher and more durable?but they must also become more flexible in how they interact with the organization itself and its changing work and economic environments. The authors emphasize key tasks that front-line managers must do today, such as strategic planning, budgeting, quality management, and benchmarking, and how they must focus attention on their customers, until now far removed and perhaps out of mind. They must also recognize the need for effective information systems and find ways to align their immediate work units with larger organizational strategies and processes. In short, the authors offer essentially a new paradigm for the way management should now be practiced in a far-ranging book that today's managers will need to keep pace with changes that could threaten their careers, and a book that offers others on the way up a way to start their own careers on the right foot.

Becoming an effective front-line manager starts with understanding the job. The authors begin with a comprehensive look at what it means to be a front-line manager and the special challenges they face. They must become all things to all people, say the authors, and at the same time consider other, perhaps unfamiliar challenges, such as safety and health concerns. Front-line managers today must also learn to grow and adapt to changing work environments. The authors present an extensive view of these new tasks and roles and detail the ways in which front-line managers can address and overcome the obstacles they will find. The book is a readable, thought-provoking study of special interest to teachers of general management courses on the undergraduate and graduate levels.

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