Organizing and Organizations: An Introduction

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The first edition of this book, published in 1992, was notable for its focus on the lived experiences of organisation members and its invitation to teachers and students to use students' own experience as part of the learning process, as well as for its treatment of topics such as morality, emotions, sexuality and humour. These features of the first edition are kept intact in the second, although the material has been extensively updated, and in some cases reworked.

The structure of the book is a relatively unusual one. Rather than a sequence from the beginning to the end of the book, the authors describe the structure of their book as a wheel, consisting of hub, spokes and rim. The introductory and concluding chapters represent the hub. The spokes are 18 chapters organised by the topics/themes that the authors identify as representing live issues and activities of organisational life, such as entering and leaving, machines and mechanising, leading and following, judging others. Finally, the rim of the book is provided by the thesaurus which presents explanations and references for some of the key theoretical concepts used in the book. The idea they present is that after reading the introduction, the chapters can be tackled as the reader's fancy takes her/him.

In the hub of the book the authors argue for the importance of making a shift from a focus on organisation to organising—the activities and processes of doing things in organisations. Organising, as they present it in the book, is intimately concerned with the ways in which people create meaning for themselves, with others, in their working lives; organising is a social (and dynamic) process. As the examples quoted earlier illustrate, the chapter titles emphasise this focus on processes and activities. Links to the more traditional list of topics found in organisation studies, such as organisational structure, organisational culture, communication, motivation, leadership etc. are provided in a table that identifies the chapters in which each traditional topic is found.

Of particular interest, and importance, are the three new chapters that appear in the second edition: on organising and the environment; managing difference and diversity; and the relations between the activities of organisations and consumption. Another welcome new feature in the second edition is a 'reading on' section at the end of each chapter. In these 'reading on' sections and in the thesaurus, cross-reference to the literature and research studies can be found. Those that like a conventional academic style of referencing in the body of the text will not find it in this book! Cross-reference to the literature is also aided by the

list of relevant thesaurus entries that appears at the end of each chapter.

The relatively short concluding chapter 'Learning and organizing in uncertain times' makes explicit the book's message that learning about organisations can never end. Knowledge within (and without) organisations can be implicit or explicit, incomplete, confused or temporary. Rather than seeking the 'winning formula', organisations need to be capable of constantly learning, and of performing the difficult balancing act of blending still relevant parts of old learning with new learning.

The book is a stimulating and accessible text that presents a non-traditional treatment of its subject. It will be of interest to a wide range of students of organisational behaviour, organisation theory and the psychology and sociology of organisations, as well as to students of operational research, management or systems science. I would recommend it also to operational research practitioners feeling themselves in need of an updated introduction in this area.

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Turning Lead into Gold: The Demystification of Outsourcing

P Bendor-Samuel

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This book provides an interesting insight into the 'black art' of outsourcing. It is essentially a users' guide although its style is perhaps more in keeping with someone on an evangelical mission. It is also something of a marketing prospectus for the *Outsourcing Center*, of which the author happens to be the CEO.

The author has looked at, and indeed, been involved in many cases, both successful and not so successful. The book is full of examples although these tend to be rather one-sided and rather superficial, no doubt due to commercial sensitivity. There is no feedback from either the buyers or suppliers and there is no corroborating evidence supporting any of the statements or recommendations.

Outsourcing is clearly not a science, indeed, the analogy with alchemy reminds us that there is no recipe for [guaranteeing] success and the cost of achieving ones aim could far exceed the benefits. Having said that, the author does take us through the process drawing attention to the numerous potential pitfalls *en route*. He is at pains to point out that outsourcing can benefit both sides and unless it does then it is very unlikely to succeed eg unless the payments to