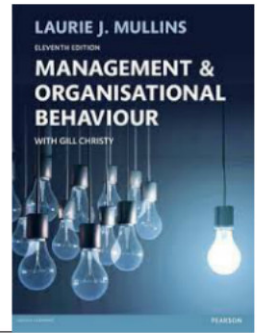


Management & Organisational Behaviour

By Laurie J. Mullins



As with previous editions of this book, Laurie Mullins and his team have provided management students with a solid work. As an established text currently in its eleventh iteration, it regularly features in lists of recommended and mandatory reading, and has done so for many years in relation to Institute of Administrative Management courses, for example.

This time around, the authors have clearly taken the opportunity to update their case studies in order to provide the book with a more contemporary feel. Its strength can be found in meeting the needs of students, analysing the problems facing managers and offering a number of theories in response. This is clearly the book's intention as it includes many references to "your university".

But ultimately, this approach is also its weakness. Practising managers will not find solutions to real-world problems here.

Above all, an opportunity has been missed to draw together links between the different elements of subject matter covered: the dynamic relationship between structure and culture; the challenges presented by organisational lifecycles; frameworks for improvement; the challenges and strengths of the supply chain; how to communicate and so on.

Glaring omissions

But various key topics are not even covered at all. These include organisational aims and objectives, the importance of policies and procedures and how to use them as well as an analysis of how KPIs and documented standards are employed.

Moreover, although managers need to focus on financial information and results on a daily basis, financial and accounting systems are only briefly discussed on a single page out of more than 600. A brief section on Total Quality Management explores kaizen but not the role of documented standards, which are far more common in most organisations. This omission also serves to preclude any evaluation or comparison of the two approaches.

Autonomous working groups are likewise explored briefly, but that section could perhaps have been brought more to life by using the Buurtzorg nursing care model as an example.

So all in all, this latest edition continues to provide students with a good overview of management as an academic subject, some of the challenges that managers face and alternative views and approaches. Where the book runs out of steam, however, is in its application to the real world. ■

Review written by Mark Northway, director and courses co-ordinator at ***Deltic Training***.