

Title: Managing Human Resource Development – an outcomes-based approach

Editor: Marius Meyer

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Reviewer: Karen Hinrichs, independent ETD Practitioner

The range of contributing authors, including the editor, (who are certainly significantly representative of the HRD body of knowledge and application in this country) have chosen to address a longstanding gap in locally produced resources in this area. In that sense, the book is, indeed, long overdue (as pointed out in the foreword) and will make a meaningful contribution. Chapters 1-4 cover strategic, 'big picture' HRD topics, followed by a chapter on Performance Consulting. Chapter 6-8 as well as 17 deal with the operational aspects of managing HRD and chapters 9-16 focus on what might be termed, special training situations. Although there is an appreciable level of detail in the latter chapters and they read quite easily in and of themselves, there seems to be no obvious logic for having included **these** topics (as opposed to any other special training situations). The reader is left with the impression that if there had been other authors, there might have been different topics covered in these chapters – it would, therefore, have been useful to motivate why management development, technology based learning, employee orientation, employment equity and diversity training, adult basic education and training, multiskilling and quality management training were specifically selected. Career management and performance (chapter 15), while often directly associated with HRD, seems out of place in this book because it is neither a special training situation nor an element of

managing HRD. A more relevant topic to support the thrust of the book would perhaps have been workplace assessment, which presently is only covered very briefly in chapter 17.

The structural issues above notwithstanding, the book's real strengths lie in its consistent approach in including company examples, useful, thought-provoking (and rare!) case studies, challenging self assessment opportunities and reference to internet sites. At the beginning of each chapter, there are some well-constructed learning outcomes that will certainly serve to guide the reader but, in terms of best outcomes-based practice, surely an average of six to eight outcomes at a time is too many?

According to the editor, the book seeks to develop and stimulate a higher level of analytical, problem-solving and creative skills but because the writing style is more of an essay-type, additional aspects of learner support (such as a summary of key learning points per chapter or assessment criteria for the learning outcomes) would have added value. However, different target audiences have different learner support needs so, this aspect could easily be resolved by defining the target audience more specifically (rather than "all those responsible for people development").

In conclusion, the book is an especially worthwhile read (and source) for those involved in the practical application of human resource development or in the 'training of trainers' who also need, at least, to understand what the 'big picture' looks like. Readers with more advanced needs (at the strategic level, for example) will probably require more in-depth analysis and commentary than this book is able to provide – perhaps the authors should consider filling yet another gap in the market!