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Review

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## Book Reviews

Gunn attempts, finally to relate workers' self-management to a broader movement for social change. Here he seems to get carried away a bit and, for the most part, his words read as wishful thinking.

The book is important for several reasons. Gunn has been careful in developing his framework of conditions for workers' self-management and rigorous in his evaluation of the cases and issues. There is much to be learned from his discussion even if it leaves the reader quite pessimistic about the future of workers' self-management. The book is also a valuable methodological example. Workers' self-management is a "soft" and difficult-to-grasp subject area. Gunn demonstrates that such a subject can be addressed, understood, and evaluated in a manner that leaves one with a feeling of confidence about the quality of the criteria developed, the analysis undertaken, and the conclusions presented. Finally, the book clarifies some concepts about workers' self-management and dispels some myths about the subject.

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### **Managing by Negotiations.**

Earl Brooks and George S. Odiorne. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984. 217 pp. \$26.95.

Imagine yourself listening to experienced collective bargaining negotiators who are exchanging their most successful bargaining tips. This is the essence of *Managing by Negotiations*. Brooks and Odiorne offer a medley of advice that may be stale news to labor relations' practitioners but virgin territory to managers who are novices at collective bargaining. The new twist to old ideas is the incorporation of goal-setting agendas as a useful strategy for negotiators.

*Managing by Negotiations* is an exhibition of untamed assertiveness. A take-charge approach to negotiations is clearly its central theme. The book reflects a boldness that undoubtedly is successful in a negotiation setting. Freely admitting that their approach is not scientific, the authors make no pretense of demonstrating support from the literature for their ideas.

Checklists of shoulds are interspersed throughout each chapter. The well-prepared negotiator, for example, should deal with equals or superiors, should control the agenda, should fix the burden of proof on the other side, should make the first demand stiff, should document each concession, should persist, and should get the other side to make the first concessions on major issues. The authors emphasize the importance of understanding the negotiator's own wants and needs as well as the wants and needs of the other party. By trading demands that

maximize the utility of each party, win-lose settlements are avoidable, win-win settlements attainable. The idea is not novel; the taxonomy of wants and needs is perhaps useful.

The authors view negotiations as an ordered, organized ritual. The ability to differentiate your wants and needs as well as those of the other party is never questioned. Negotiations are viewed as if each negotiator had perfect information, a less than satisfying approach in a world in which negotiators must grapple with imperfect information. The authors downplay the advantage of serendipity, ignore the merit of scientific discovery, and neglect the possibility that offers that are actually tendered may be evaluated differently in retrospect. It would seem there is too little emphasis on the process of negotiating and too much on negotiations as "a matter of adaptation in order to keep moving toward established goals" (p. 18). The book is true to its title, for it has more to do with managing by negotiations than negotiating by managers.

Academics in search of research at the leading edge of the field or novel theory development should look elsewhere. Who should read this book, then? — for as you may have already surmised, this is a book of shoulds. The inexperienced negotiator who approaches negotiations too haphazardly or too awkwardly should consider this book as an idea bank. Professors in need of spicy stories for their classroom lectures should also consider *Managing by Negotiations*. Many of the authors' anecdotes are quite entertaining. Have they successfully negotiated with me a recommendation that others purchase their book? They are as bold in their presentation as they argue negotiators should be in bargaining. This is to their credit. They also argue, however, that factual support is needed to win a genuine negotiating demand. I, for one, am more impressed by detailed documentation than boldness.

Their need (or is the correct terminology want?) for a recommendation is thus matched with a counteroffer. A blend of practitioners' viewpoints with those of academics should yield a useful second edition. If you take a fancy to the many should statements in this review, you should take a fancy to the book; if not, cast your preference elsewhere for reading on negotiating.

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### **The Irrational Organization: Irrationality as a Basis for Organizational Action and Change.**

Nils Brunsson. New York: Wiley, 1985. 193 pp. \$18.95.

In this short book, Nils Brunsson has made an interesting contribution to two areas of interest in organization theory. One is the role of rational decision making in organizations. The other is the connection between organizational decision making and