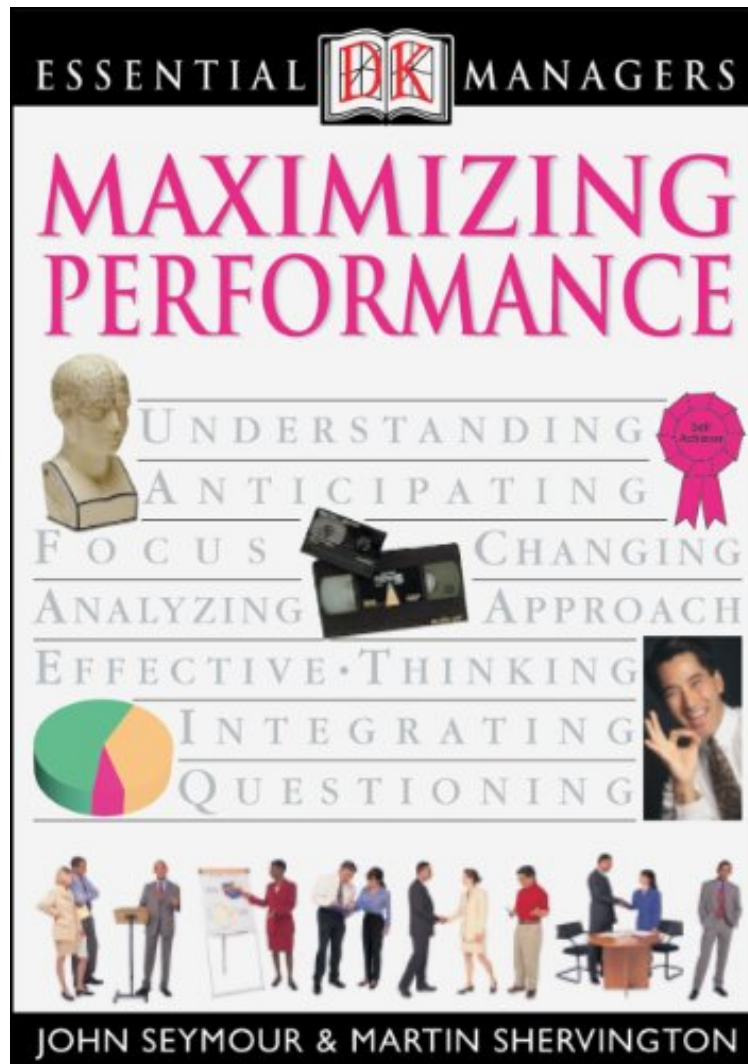


DK Essential Managers: Maximizing Performance: DK Publishing

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Helpful IdeasBy CustomerHelpful, The book reminds people of concepts you know, but has some new suggestions as well. Love The Essential Mgrs Series3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right." -- Henry FordBy Robert MorrisDuring a recent business trip, I stopped by an airport store and saw a display of several volumes of the "Essential Managers" series. I purchased this one as well as Andy Bruce and Ken Langdon's Strategic Thinking, read both while en route home and was surprised, frankly, to find each to be remarkably comprehensive within a 69-page narrative. Obviously, the subject of maximizing performance is vast and complicated. No single book could possibly

cover everything, nor do Seymour and Shervington make any such claim. What they offer is a focus on fundamentals, as do the volumes which comprise the "Harvard Business Essentials" series. Seymour and Shervington divide their material within four sections: Thinking about Performance, Improving Your Performance, Helping Others to Improve, and Continuing to Improve. Note the use of direct address (i.e. "Your") which correctly indicates the direct and personal rapport that Seymour and Shervington establish and then sustain with their reader. In effect, they are saying "Here is what we have learned about maximizing performance. We hope it will help you and your associates, individually and together, to produce more and better work in less time." In the Introduction, Seymour and Shervington duly acknowledge their high regard for the skills that Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) can help to develop. (To those who wish to obtain more information about this methodology, I recommend NLP: The New Technology of Achievement, co-edited by Steve Andress and Charles Faulkner.) Obviously, there are several different types of under-performers. The two most familiar to me are those who are able but unwilling, and, those who are willing but unable. For managers, the challenge when supervising those in the first group is to inspire self-motivation; when supervising those in the second, the challenge is to do everything possible (and appropriate) to help them to increase their strengths while reducing their weaknesses. The principles and techniques of NLP can help managers to respond effectively to either challenge but, alas, "you can't win them all." Or as Jason Jennings has so concisely suggested, "If it's DOA, bury it." I quite agree with Seymour and Shervington about the importance of emotional intelligence. (Daniel Goleman has written several immensely informative books on the subject, most recently Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence, co-authored with Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee.) The most effective managers recognize emotions as "fuel" that, if carefully processed and properly controlled, can create the energy needed to solve especially serious problems. If change initiatives are involved, for example, emotional intelligence enables those who possess it to respond effectively to resistance...to what James O'Toole has aptly characterized as "the ideology of comfort and the tyranny of custom." There is always room for personal improvement, of course, and that is as true of managers as it is of those whom they supervise. The importance of emotional intelligence is even greater when a team effort is needed. Effective communication, cooperation, and collaboration between and among members of a team are difficult, if not impossible, unless everyone involved is respectful of her or his associates, eager to receive as well as provide constructive criticism, committed to common goals, and sensitive to others' needs and interests. For me, some of the most valuable material in this volume is prevented in the third section, Continuing to Improve," as Seymour and Shervington focus on a subject of special interest to me: how to sustain a performance improvement process. They recommend the formulation of a "life plan" that consists of specific objectives (each having a deadline) and then selecting the strategies and tactics to achieve each objective. Here again, NLP principles and techniques can be of substantial assistance to what should be viewed as a never-ending process of performance improvement. The Gallup Organization has accumulated a wealth of research (on millions of individuals within thousands of different organizations) that stresses the need to leverage one's strengths in proper alignment with the work to be done. Hence the importance of assuming personal accountability for one's performance. Readers will appreciate the provision by Seymour and Shervington of a self-diagnostic, "Evaluating Your Performance Skills," with responses serving as a benchmark against which to measure progress when activating their own "life plan." As I read this book, I was again reminded of Oliver Wendell Holmes' comment, "I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity." To me, that comment suggests the essential value of the "Essential Managers" series, at least of the two volumes I have read thus far. Here's another point. What Seymour and Shervington have to say about the fundamentals of maximizing performance is consistent with what other experts on the subject suggest, notably Marcus Buckingham, Stephen Covey, Peter Drucker, John Maxwell, Carla O'Dell, and Brian Tracy. As I read this book, I was also reminded of what Drucker observed in 1963: "There is surely nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency what should not be done at all." However different they may be in every other respect, all under-performing organizations fail to maximize the performance of their people at all levels and in all areas of the given enterprise. With all due respect to the importance of knowing what to do and how to do it, former Texas football coach Darrell Royal is right: "potential" means "you ain't done it yet." Credit John Seymour and Martin Shervington with providing a remarkably comprehensive discussion of what to do and how to do it. It remains for those who read their book to apply what they have learned.

Learn all you need to know about NeuroLinguistic Programming--achieving excellence by copying the behavior and thought patterns of outstanding professionals. Maximizing Performance shows you how to boost your confidence by changing the way you see yourself and also provides practical techniques in a variety of settings. power tips help you to deal with real-life situations and develop skills to overcome many challenges. The Essential Manager have sold more than 1.9 million copies worldwide! Experienced and novice managers alike can benefit from these compact guides that slip easily into a briefcase or a portfolio. The topics are relevant to every work environment, from large corporations to small businesses. Concise treatments of dozens of business techniques, skills, methods, and problems are presented with hundreds of photos, charts, and diagrams. It is the most exciting and accessible approach to business and self-

improvement available.