

The book intended to depict the industry scene forming the "infobahn" system along with current strategies of major players in the industries. The former goal is reasonably met but the latter is not quite apparent. The onus seems to be on the reader to extract from the discussions what those strategies actually are. The title of the book would bias a reader, not wholly without reason, towards expecting more on "repositioning" of corporations rather than on raw facts and figures about individual companies.

The quality of printing and the general appearance of the book is good. The language is quite easy to follow. The price is affordable for an average target reader. The References Section does point to some interesting reading materials. Moreover, there is a general dearth of affordable books, especially in India, on such topics. Although the thirst of an average reader might not get fully quenched on reaching the last page, it is worth going through the book and appreciating the author's ways of looking at things related to the cyberspace.

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Intelligent Manufacturing by Lynn Underwood, Economic Intelligence Unit Universities Press (I) Ltd., 1994

The search to find new ways to make productive use of information technology (IT) for carrying out business, never seem to come to an end. It is hard to say to what extent the search is driven by the needs of an aging business system, but the set of models, all designed to alleviate the problems, seem to expand. The claims of these models are often tall. The real benefits do not always match up to the claims but they cost the firms quite dearly. Most of these require information technology as an enabler and they often complicate the business processes and involve major organisational change. One specific case in point is that of ERP, the latest entrant in the arena. For the uninitiated it's a business model that tries to integrate almost all functions of a business. Integration is at the heart of the ERP model because that seems to hold the key to many business problems. The integration is made possible by IT. Implementation of ERP involves organisational change to incorporate the 'industry best practices' to replace a firm's own and time tested business practices. The expenditure towards cost of software and consultant fees runs into crores. The costs of organisational change or the lost competitive advantage are usually ignored.

There is however little that business firms can do to stay away from these models that surface from time to time or the associated change. Therefore, any guidance on how a firm can make the best out of these is always welcome. The book being reviewed in one such and it is for manufacturing firms that wish to become world class through the use of appropriate information technology.

The book is on IT enabled manufacturing system, which the author has called 'intelligent manufacturing'. The model is based on principles of Just-In-Time (JIT) manufacturing. To a large extent it has the look and feel of the ERP model. But here the scope is limited to manufacturing and usage of IT is restricted to the bare minimum. The stress is more on process simplification and IT merely plays the role of an integrator binding all functions linked to manufacturing. The expected outcome is a lean, simple and highly responsive (manufacturing) system that in turn results in a highly responsive supply chain where changes (like a product change) are incorporated at minimum cost and minimum effect on the organisation. According to the author, the model transcends the scope of Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) and rectifies the complications associated with an MRP-II model and is one that allows firms to achieve world class manufacturing standards.

The book is divided in twelve chapters. The first two chapters describe the history of manufacturing systems and put the problem in perspective. For problem identification the author has chosen to look inward, trying to locate the enemy within. Analysis has been done based on a comparison of the manufacturing system models followed by firms in USA and UK against that followed by their Far-Eastern counterparts. The comparison has led to pointers to the shortcomings of the western model – to the enemy within. Other associated problems like over dependence on information technology and ignorance of issues related to human resources have also been discussed. The analysis is quite detailed, informative and admittedly has been handled in a manner benefiting a historian.

In remaining ten chapters the author has discussed other related topics that are building blocks of this model. Four chapters have been devoted to information technology related issues like information system planning, IT investment, IT risk management. A lot of ground has been covered in too small a space and justice has not been done to topics like Planning, Risk Management and Consultant Selection. The coverage of IT is too cursory for any meaningful guidance. One chapter each has been devoted to topics as important as quality, change management and the human factor. Here once again proper justice has not been done to any of the issues.

In consideration of the importance, significant part of the book has been devoted to discussion on integration. However the treatment has in most part been carried out at a conceptual level and no definite framework has been suggested. In a book devoted to intelligent manufacturing, some generic model of integration and a few case studies could have been provided. Some space could also be allotted to the principles of systems thinking, a term coined long time ago but recently made popular by Peter Senge's widely read book title fifth discipline : The Art of Learning Organisation. Some discussion on process benchmarking also could have been added.

Overall, *Intelligent Manufacturing* is a book recommended for people managing IT led redesign of manufacturing function, for functional managers participating in ERP or BPR initiatives. No doubt, it falls short of qualifying as a recipe book but it still shows some guiding light.

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Organizational Misbehaviour by Stephen Ackroyd and Paul Thomson, Sage Publications, 1999, £ 14.99

One more book on 'Organization Management' when the book-shelves are already crammed with innumerable books on the subject? True, but then the book under notice, is quite different. To begin with, it is neither textbook nor management refresher. The book, on the other hand, adopts an approach focusing on typical practical issues drawn from real-life workplace situations. The central theme of the book revolves around current management practices.

The redeeming feature of Ackroyd and Thomson's volume is that it brings out a view of behaviour that rings true, and which would account for the experience of organizations as it is known to people who work in them.

It is no denying a fact that both managers and organization behaviour experts alike not only underestimate the extent of 'organizational misbehaviour' but at the same time they also exaggerate the extent to which organizational behaviour can be changed by them. Surprisingly, standard textbooks in this area actually say little about the character of the phenomenon with which they are centrally concerned – the behaviour routinely exhibited by people in organization. Quite obviously, the authors move from simply wishing to redress an imbalance in the way the organizational behaviour is thought about.