



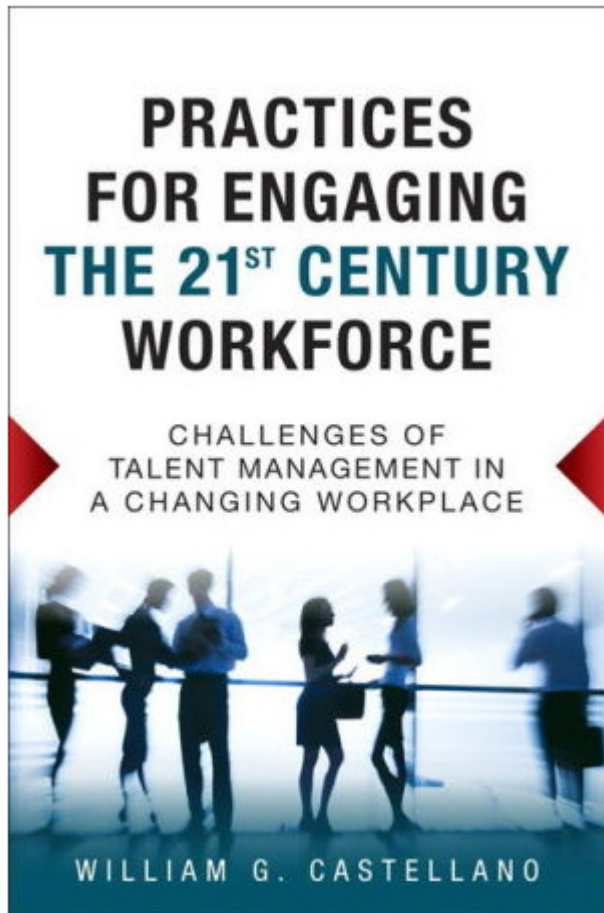
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DAILY NEWS

'Pass it along to your sons, daughters'

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"Practices for Engaging the 21st Century Workforce: Challenges of Talent Management in a Changing Workplace" by William G. Castellano. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education, 2014. 320 pages, \$35.59.



"You truly live in interesting times," William Castellano notes at the beginning of "Practices for Engaging the 21st Century Workforce: Challenges of Talent Management in a Changing Workplace," his new book on the shifting nature of work. "Change has been a constant in your life for some time now, and the pace of change is increasing at a dizzying rate. You are entering a new and challenging way of working as a result of unprecedented technological, global, economic and demographic trends. Unlike previous tumultuous business cycles, you can now witness structural shifts in labor markets and the economy that are fundamentally reshaping the world of work. Many economists, business leaders and commentators are describing this trend as the new normal."

One of the courses I teach on an annual basis is advanced career counseling and services administration, a graduate-level exploration of how we can best prepare individuals to meet the enormous challenges facing anyone who hopes to be gainfully employed throughout their lives. I ran across this volume as I was searching for a resource that would help my students better understand the changing

nature of work in an increasingly interconnected, technologically driven global community. After I had finished the first few chapters, it was obvious "Engaging the 21st Century Workforce" fits the bill. In order to equip future generations with the knowledge and skills they will no doubt need in order to successfully negotiate the turbulent times ahead, we must first have an accurate and thorough understanding of how the employment climate is currently evolving. This is precisely what Castellano provides.

"Practices for Engaging the 21st Century Workforce" is extensively researched, with 25 pages of references at the conclusion of the eight chapters that form the main text. Although he is careful to document the sources of much of the narrative, it is apparent on almost every page that he draws from his extensive real-world experience as he lays out what the world of work will probably look like in the coming decades. Indeed, the book serves as a wake-up call for anyone who is truly concerned about the economy, job creation, unemployment, growing social programs and the respective roles of the

private sector and government in addressing these issues. For the most part, he tries to stay objective as he provides a roadmap that can be used by both employers as well as job seekers. His primary take-away revolves around the rather straightforward notion we are not in Kansas anymore, and the sooner we recognize and accept this undeniable reality, the better off we will all be. Certainly, he believes those who embrace the changes he is describing, and learn to factor them into their decision-making, will have a distinct advantage over their less enlightened counterparts.

One of the aspects of Castellano's writing I appreciate is his honesty. Witness the following from "Challenges of Talent Management in the New Normal," the third chapter: "There will also be the potential for more prejudice and bias that can negatively impact employees' perceptions of fairness and hurt morale resulting in lost customers and costly litigation. One growing concern is the attitudes toward and treatment of older workers. With the youngest of the baby boomers already beyond 40 years of age, there is concern that some organizations view older workers with negative stereotypes based on ageism." As someone who has been in this category for quite a while, I see exactly what he is referring to on a daily basis.

Another emerging trend Castellano addresses in some detail is the growing emphasis on employee wellness. Whereas some dismiss this trend as outside the scope of an employer's responsibility, it is clear that companies promoting this dimension of their workers' lives are already beginning to derive significant gains from these initiatives.

"A growing number of active younger workers are attracted to companies that offer such benefits as onsite workout facilities and programs promoting healthy lifestyles," the author explains in "Practices to Create Employee Engagement in the New Normal," the seventh chapter. "The benefits of effective corporate wellness programs go beyond increasing employees' perceptions of organizational support and levels of engagement, or reducing companies' increasing health care costs. Increasing the health of all workers complements national initiatives to curtail out-of-control health care expenditures."

Castellano serves as executive director of the Center for Management Development as well as director of the Strategic Human Resource Leadership Council at Rutgers University, where he is also a clinical associate professor in the School of Management and Labor Relations. He has a doctorate in industrial relations and human resources as well as a master's degree in human resource management from Rutgers; he earned his bachelor's degree in management from Pace University. He is an active member of the Academy of Management and the Society of Human Resource Management. His 30 years of experience working in the private sector include stints with Merrill Lynch and Manufacturers Hanover. This is his first book; he can be reached at castellano@smlr.rutgers.edu.

"We seem to be living at the edge of chaos in which governments, organizations and individuals need a solid foundation by developing the right competencies and capabilities to interpret and respond to the multitude of challenges facing society, while simultaneously becoming adaptable," Castellano writes near the end of the book. I could not agree more. I encourage everyone reading this review to pick up a copy of "Practices for Engaging the 21st Century Workforce." And when you're finished, pass it along to your sons and daughters.

— Reviewed by Aaron W. Hughey, Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, Western Kentucky University.