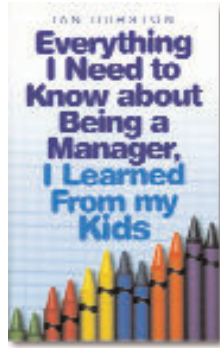


REVIEW A book on management technique, and another giving advice to inventors, receive a critical read by our reviewers

If you can bring up kids successfully, you can manage a company. Is that really true? asks Ben Sampson



Sometimes moments of insight are wasted on other people. Declaring, for example, that you've just realised that race car spells the same backwards as it does forwards is usually met with disinterest. It's not really in the Einstein league.

One gets the impression that it was a similar moment of insight that led Ian Durston to write *Everything I Need to Know about Being a Manager, I Learned from My Kids*. The book is formed entirely on his hypothesis that managing engineering projects requires the same skills and experience that bringing up children does. The result is very specific – it is unlikely anyone apart from engineers with kids will really “get it” – but those who can relate will find it contains sensible

advice presented in an entertaining way.

The author succeeds in maintaining a lively and engaging tone throughout the book, even when the topic is inherently dull, by including amusing anecdotes from both his home life and his career as a senior project manager on the Airbus A380 project. There are quotes from management gurus such as Peter Drucker and Mike Woods, as well as children's characters like Winnie the Pooh and Yoda – a strange concoction.

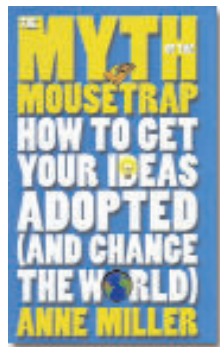
The book deals with the softer side of management, interpersonal communication and organisational skills, and adheres to the popular psychological roots of the area. Durston himself alludes to his status as an “amateur psychologist”. The

reader is given a tour of leadership, sections on motivation, performance, teamwork, managing change and finally self-organisation, properly referenced and sensibly written.

At its worst, the book seems an excuse for Durston to tell everyone about his kids – sometimes the hypothesis seems strained when accounting tales of first days at school, or struggles to get children to sleep at night. At its best *Everything I Need to Know...* will amuse and impress you with the sharpness of its observations. The risk is of course that after reading the book you will end up treating all your co-workers like children – now hands up who thinks that's a good idea?

■ *Everything I Need to Know about Being a Manager, I Learned from My Kids* is published by Piatkus, price £9.99.

Inventors need to know how to win friends and influence people. This book should help, says Andy Warren



That dark pit of despair in which inventors and designers sometimes find themselves has been made significantly brighter by Anne Miller's explanation of the secrets of getting others to take your ideas seriously. As its title might suggest, *The Myth of the Mousetrap* is more a book of insights than a step-by-step guide to success, though it does take you through the five steps of effective presentation.

Miller draws on more than 25

years' experience as an engineer, innovator and technical consultant to break down into easily digestible chunks the process of successfully getting your idea adopted, as well as offering an insight into the way others might view both you and it.

By singling out the different characteristics and traits of the kinds of people inventors are likely to come up against, as well as the weaknesses and strengths of the creative, Miller offers ways to overcome the four key stages of

resistance those of influence will put up.

Her colourful anecdotes add humour and realism by sharing with the reader some of the monumental mistakes even the biggest conglomerates made. Armed with these, companies and individuals should be able to pluck the nuggets highlighted in this book and use them to dispel their own myths.

■ *The Myth of the Mousetrap - How to Get Your Ideas Adopted (and Change the World)* is published by Marshall Cavendish, price £16.99.

ARCHIVE by Laura Gardner Gas-light for railway carriages

Artificial lighting on the first railway carriages was provided by oil lamps, which was enough to find your way around a train but not enough to read by. Booksellers at stations began selling portable tinplate candle-lamps and holders, which could be attached to the window by a sucker, or hooked into seat upholstery.

This situation being neither satisfactory nor safe, experiments with gas-lighting ensued. The quality of light from gas was much better

than that from oil, but there were difficulties to overcome.

Gas-lighting had been proposed as early as 1834, and various schemes for lighting carriages by gas were discussed at the IMechE during the 1850s, but it was not implemented until the mid-1860s. A major improvement came in the 1870s with Pintsch's compressed oil gas, which could be carried in cylinders, usually beneath the carriage. But there were concerns over gas-lighting, which had contributed to accidents.

These concerns hastened the advent of electric lighting, which was more reliable. Blackouts on trains that used oil or gas encouraged crime, even murder. The first use of electric lighting came in 1881, on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.

A large battery was stored under the floor, which lit 12 incandescent lamps. The battery was charged at Victoria by a steam engine and dynamo, and would supply enough power for the short journey to Brighton.

For longer journeys, new



Travelling light: Rail by gas

technology was required. Experiments followed with large dynamos, usually powered by the axle on the guard's carriage. Although the early equipment was cumbersome, such systems remained in use for the next few years, until J Stone introduced an improved system in the mid-1890s.

It used a light dynamo on each carriage, powered by the axle, to power either a single or a double battery, and remained in use until steam gave way to diesel and electric in the mid-20th century.