



**THE TRUTH  
ABOUT**

# MANAGING PEOPLE

THIRD EDITION

“Cuts through the jargon to provide practical solutions.”

Stephen P. Robbins, Ph.D.

Best-Selling Management Author with More Than Six Million Books Sold

**THE TRUTH  
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THIRD EDITION**

Stephen P. Robbins

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For my wife Laura

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## Preface

Managers are bombarded with advice from consultants, professors, business journalists, and assorted management “gurus” on how to manage their employees. A lot of this advice is well researched and valuable. Much of it, however, is a gross generalization, ambiguous, inconsistent, or superficial. Some of it is even just downright wrong. Regardless of the quality, there doesn't seem to be any slowdown in the outpouring of this advice. Quite the contrary. Books on business and management have replaced sex, self-help, and weight loss as topics on many nonfiction best-sellers' lists. Sadly, most of these books are not evidence-based. Most, in fact, seem to be oblivious to the wealth of research on managing people at work and rely on personal opinions, limited experience, or unsupported observations. If you want evidence of this, look at some of the titles in the “Leadership” section of your local bookstore. You'll find titles like *The Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun*; *Make It So: Leadership Lessons from Star Trek*; *The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus*; and *Toy Box Leadership: Leadership Lessons from the Toys You Loved as a Child*.

I've been teaching and writing about managing people at work for more than 40 years. As part of my writing efforts, I have read upwards of 30,000 research studies on human behavior. While my practitioner friends are often quick to criticize research and theory-testing, this research has provided us with innumerable insights into human behavior. Unfortunately, there has been no short, concise summary of behavioral research that cuts through the jargon to give managers the truth about what works and doesn't work when it comes to managing people at work. Well, that's no longer true since the first edition of this book.

As with the previous editions, I've organized this book around key, human-behavior-related problem areas that managers face: hiring, motivation, leadership, communication, team building, performance evaluation, and coping with change. Within each problem area, I've identified a select set of topics that are relevant to managers and where there is substantial research evidence to draw upon. I've also included suggestions to help readers apply this information to improve their managerial effectiveness. Sixteen topics are new to this



edition, and the others have been updated. **New to this edition are contemporary topics such as ethical leadership, virtual leadership, the dark side of charisma, organizational citizenship behavior, age stereotypes, organizational politics, digital distractions at work, the motivational power of recognition, and managing layoff-survivor sickness.**

Who is this book written for? Practicing managers and those aspiring to a management position—from CEOs to supervisor wannabes. I wrote it because I believe you shouldn't have to read through detailed textbooks in human resources or organizational behavior to learn the truth about managing people at work. Nor should you have to attend an executive development course at a prestigious university to get the straight facts. What you get from this book, of course, will depend on your current knowledge about organizational behavior. Recent MBAs, for instance, will find this book to be a concise summary of the evidence they spent many months studying. They won't see elaborated theories or names of major researchers but they will find accurate translations of research findings. For individuals who haven't kept current with research in organizational behavior or for those with little formal academic training, this book should provide a wealth of new insights into managing people at work.

You'll find each of the 59 topics in this book is given its own short chapter. And each chapter is essentially independent from the others. You can read them in any order you desire. Best of all, you needn't tackle this book in one sitting. It's been designed for multiple "quick reads." Read a few chapters, put it down, then pick it up again at a later date. There's no continuous story line that has to be maintained.

Let me conclude this preface by stating the obvious: A book is a team project. While there is only one name on the cover, a number of people contributed to getting this book in your hands. That team included Tim Moore, Jeanne Glasser Levine, Jovana San Nicolas-Shirley, and Amy Neidlinger. My thanks to each.

Stephen P. Robbins

