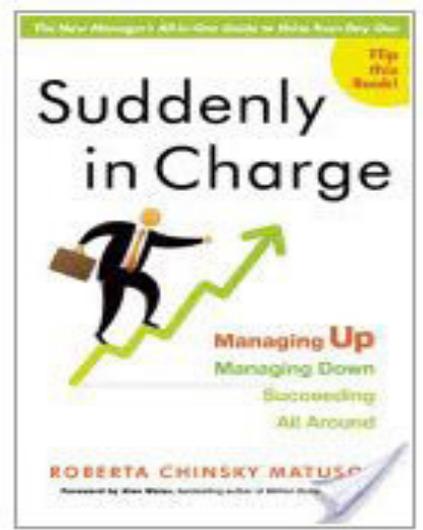


Suddenly in Charge:

Managing Up, Managing Down, Succeeding All Around

by R.C. Matuson

Book Analysis Prepared by Tracy Summers





(I wrote this analysis for an assignment in my Organizational Behavior course at the University of North Texas. Only a portion of the document is shown here. For additional writing examples, please see my online portfolio: TracyCSummers.com.)

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Overall Summary

In *Suddenly in Charge: Managing Up, Managing Down, Succeeding All Around*, author Roberta Chinsky Matuson explains *how* we should manage our work relationships, and she includes insight about *why* these relationships impact our professional careers. The two main types of relationships she addresses involve either people who manage us or people who we manage. Her insight is helpful for anyone in the corporate world regardless of their current role or job satisfaction. Matuson reminds us that throughout our careers we will experience various situations, including some unpleasant ones; we just need to handle these experiences as best we can, and know that these situations will eventually end because the corporate world is always changing.

The book is divided into two sections (managing up and managing down). In the managing up section, Matuson helps us understand why we need the information in this book: the content is imperative to the success of anyone who reports to someone else (and almost everyone will report to someone). She explains how managers have the power to help us in our careers. We need to know how to adapt to their management style so that they consider us valuable and allow us to succeed. The managing down section explains that managing people is challenging because it requires a special skillset (leadership) and because managers have to adjust their management style depending on the environment and people.

Five of the chapters I selected focused on managing upward, because I found this perspective new and interesting. Most of us think of managing people who report to us, but this book guides us to manage in a new direction (upward). Normally, individual contributors do not receive training on how to manage (upwards or downwards)--so we end up learning by observing others' behavior. Matuson's book gives us the training we need to avoid mistakes. Furthermore, she prepares us for success by showing us how to communicate with coworkers, build relationships, respond to tricky situations, and behave professionally.

The following pages contain my analysis of select chapters from *Suddenly in Charge*. I devoted 1 page to each chapter. For each chapter, I provide a short overview, a few takeaway points (bulleted list), and my input comparing that chapter to what I have learned throughout this semester.

Chapter 1

Understanding Various Management Styles

For their career success, employees need to recognize that there are various management styles, and they need to determine which management style their manager prefers. Matuson explains how employees should use this knowledge to communicate effectively, as well as to avoid annoying their manager. Four types of managers are discussed in this chapter: dictatorial, laissez-faire, bureaucratic, and consultative. These managers differ in how they use their authority, what they want from their work relationships, and how they communicate with others.

Chapter Takeaways

- Employees must adjust their communication methods to adapt to their manager's needs.
- Employees' success in an organization is strongly connected to how well employees manage relationships with others.

My Input

I agree that employees need to analyze their own working style, communication methods, and objectives to ensure that their behaviors align with their manager's expectations and needs. When employees identify their own perception and objectives, they gain information to help themselves because management styles vary, and managers respond differently based on their own management styles. For example, an extravert might identify their inclination to be talkative and assertive, which could be considered strengths or weaknesses depending on the situation. If a manager prefers a quick overview and less details, employees (who are extraverts) must monitor their own behavior to avoid clashing personalities or over stepping boundaries. Employees who are aware they have the potential for being considered too talkative can adjust their dialogue and listen more.

Furthermore, employees who are interested in promotions and professional growth can learn how to effectively communicate their needs to their managers. Some managers may not be aware that their employees have these interests--so employees need to determine the best way to share this information. Before sharing the information, employees need to identify how their boss can help, the best way to communicate with their boss, and how they (the employees) can adapt their own style to the boss's desired style. Matuson explains that the intricacies of these pieces impact how the information is received (by the manager).

Conclusion

I found this book (*Suddenly in Charge: Managing Up, Managing Down, Succeeding All Around* by Roberta Chinsky Matuson) enlightening and entertaining. Matuson provides insight into real corporate-world behavior that will benefit most employees (because most employees do not receive training on behaviors). She provides important information about managing work relationships, such as how to determine the best communication methods based on a management style. In addition to explaining how to manage relationships, the book also explains how to manage difficult work environments. Basically, this book has helpful advice for all employees, whether they are managers or individual contributors.

I would recommend other students purchase this book and keep it for future reference because they may come across these situations in their careers. This type of information is something inexperienced students need to read prior to entering the workforce. For example, management styles vary, and managers respond differently to behaviors based on their own management styles. Future employees need to understand that they are responsible for discovering their manager's style, and they must adapt to their manager's behavior because behavior that doesn't match the manager's expectations can damage relationships or careers. Students who study Matuson's suggestions will be better prepared when they enter the corporate world.

Matuson's writing style makes the book entertaining. She uses humor and easy-to-understand language. Not only did I learn something from the book, but also I enjoyed reading the content. I think other readers will benefit from the book too. Even though I am an experienced manager, I found her suggestions helpful. For example, I learned that behavior issues are common and ignoring bad behavior is not a good option. I will keep Matuson's book for future reference because I will probably come across situations where I will want to reread her suggestions.