

introduced with "Road Maps" that help students to navigate and contrast the mainstream and multistream perspectives that will be presented. In addition, opening and closing cases in each chapter feature an intriguing and diverse selection of practicing managers representing both management perspectives. The "What do you think?" boxes sprinkled throughout the text contain thought-provoking questions aimed at facilitating reflection and discussion, while the "Hands-On Exercises" at the end of each chapter allow students to assess their own views and values in order to place themselves along the mainstream-multistream continuum for that particular topic. Of course, the book also includes some of the same features of other top-selling management books, including an Instructor Website, an Online Instructors' Resource Manual, PowerPoint slides, Classroom Response System (clicker) questions, a DVD with supporting video clips and an electronic test bank.

Aside from its dualistic framework, the primary strength of this text is a friendly and personable writing style that most students will find accessible. The book is simple enough to be easily read and understood, yet complex enough to challenge students and fully capture their attention. Another big positive is the book's overall layout and design. The pages are crisp, colorful, and visually appealing without being overly busy and annoying. Although it is possible that some students might become a little confused by the contrasting perspectives, particularly in a class in which the instructor only discusses the mainstream approach, Dyck and Neubert are very thorough in introducing and explaining the contrasting perspectives, and they continue to reinforce the differences between the approaches throughout the text. If students become lost or confused, they are probably not reading the text carefully and would likely have experienced similar issues with any management book. Overall, this is a very strong management text with few downsides.

I recently finished my first semester of using the book in my mass section introductory management class with excellent results. My colleagues teaching the other sections of the class are also enthusiastic about the book, and we have heard very positive comments from our students. Because I have taught management for many years and my class outlines are already fairly well-established, I plan to gradually work more of the multistream concepts into the course. That's one of the nice things about this book—it doesn't require a drastic or immediate change in your approach to teaching, and it works perfectly well as a text for a predom-

inately mainstream management class. For me, the book is serving as a catalyst to reinvigorate and reenergize my management class, and I am finding it both personally and professionally rewarding as I begin to incorporate ideas from the multistream perspective into my teaching. In addition, the book also makes an excellent choice for someone new to teaching management classes. Building a course from the ground up to include the rich ideas stemming from both perspectives on management is an ideal situation, and I truly wish a book like this had existed when I first started teaching.

Finally, although instructors who use this book in their classes will certainly be enriched by its unique content and novel approach, it is ultimately the students who will come out as the clear winners. Just as experiencing a foreign culture will help you better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies of the culture in your home country, learning about management from a second nontraditional perspective will help students to more fully appreciate the pros and cons of the "dominant" mainstream management perspective. Learning two approaches may also enhance students' critical and ethical thinking abilities. Ethical thinking is thoroughly embedded across the entire management curriculum, and thus, becomes something more than a mere "add-on" to the basic mainstream framework of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Similarly, true critical thinking involves going beyond the ability to criticize the status quo toward the ability to think of alternative theories and practices. By showing students that it is possible to think about management in ways other than the traditional materialist-individualist model, we may be able to influence this next generation of managers to look beyond the Dyck and Neubert's mainstream-multistream continuum to consider novel "third dimensions" that may have the potential to inform management theory and practice well into the future.

Atlas Black: Managing to Succeed, by Jeremy C. Short, Talya Bauer, Dave Ketchen, & Len Simon. Nyack, NY. FlatWorld Knowledge, 2010. 194 pages, soft cover.

Reviewed by **T. Russell Crook**, University of Tennessee.

Do traditional textbooks remain the best way for management students to learn new material? Over the years, I have used at least half a dozen text-

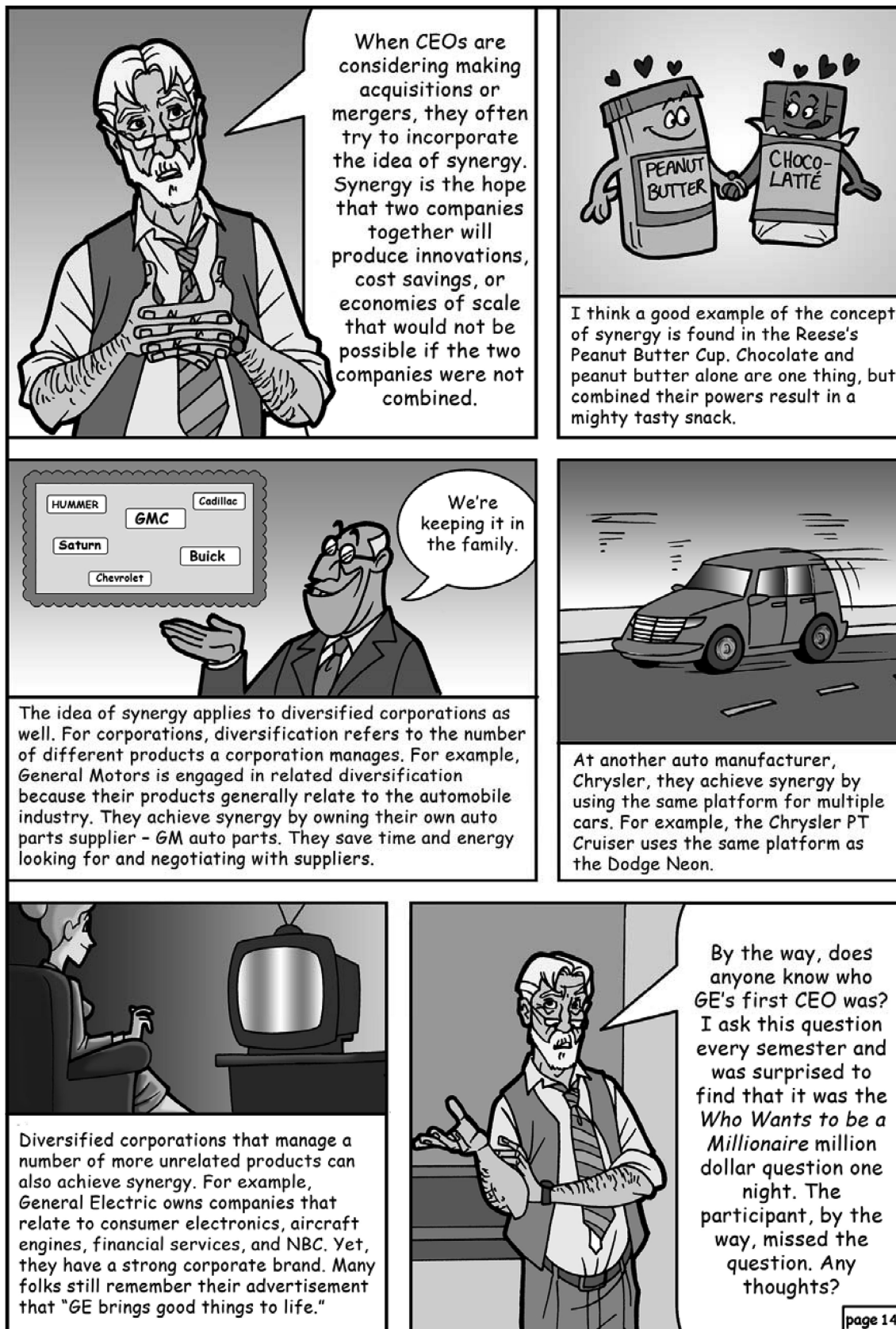


FIGURE 1

books, and I always hear the same comment from students. It sounds something like this: "Professor, the text is boring; it could be written in a way that makes the material more exciting to learn." Given such criticisms, it seems like there should be a better way for students to learn new material, and I think I might have found an alternative to "boring textbooks."

I recently came across *Atlas Black: Managing to Succeed* (hereafter *Atlas Black*), which is a graphic novel written by Jeremy Short, Talya Bauer, and Dave Ketchen with illustrations by Len Simon. Graphic novels not only contain content, but also illustrations similar to comics that help add life to the content. While the author team is well known to management educators and scholars, the illustrator is a newcomer to management education. However, you might have heard his name in movies such as *Anastasia*, *Curious George*, *Fat Albert*, and *Eight Crazy Nights*. To the best of my knowledge, *Atlas Black* is the first textbook geared toward management education that combines theoretical ideas and concepts with graphics that help students grasp the material more thoroughly. The book publisher—Flat-World Knowledge—asserts that "[f]or perhaps the first time, you will not struggle to get your students to read their assigned text" (www.flatworldknowledge.com). From my own reading, I agree.

Atlas Black is a unique textbook in the sense that it integrates insights from a number of management courses. As noted on the back cover, prominent management scholar Duane Ireland notes, "Written in an engaging style, *Atlas Black* gets at the heart of management by integrating entrepreneurship, strategic thinking, and organizational behavior into a storyline that is as entertaining as it is informative." I, too, liked the approach of blending a number of disciplines, as it conveys a sense of realism that occurs in the "real world." In my view, elements of strategic management, organizational behavior, organization theory, and entrepreneurship are all important, and the authors blended these elements throughout the five chapters of the book.

Chapter 1, which is available to view free online on the publisher's website, is titled Not So Ancient History. It begins by introducing Atlas Black, a college student who is behind on his rent. While in college, he realizes that much of what he has learned is based on memorizing management definitions and buzzwords, and that, because of this, it is hard to apply what he has learned in business. Atlas has also had difficulty finding a solid job when the mysterious "Black" appears. Black suggests that Atlas consider starting his own business venture, given Atlas's other prospects. As

the chapter unfolds, management ideas and concepts such as scientific management are described.

Chapter 2 is titled How To Make Good Decisions (And Avoid Bad Ones). Here, Atlas attempts to fund his venture. In the process, he needs his tax returns in order and gets help from an accounting firm, where he encounters his ex-girlfriend, Maria. Atlas makes the case that he is now taking school more seriously, so much so that he is applying the balanced-scorecard concept to his personal life. As the chapter unfolds, concepts such as the balanced scorecard as well as central ideas from decision theory, such as rational decision making and decision biases that inhibit rational decisions, are discussed. The chapter also covers concepts such as mission, vision, and the triple bottom line (I also liked the reference to Grameen Bank and the introduction of social entrepreneurship).

Chapter 3 is titled Blood, SWOT, and Tears. In this chapter, Atlas discovers that starting a business venture is not that difficult as long as he has a strategy. Like many college students, Atlas believes that college towns are great places to start new ventures. He also believes that restaurants are viable business ventures, but that the only way to succeed is to do something different. This chapter covers concepts such as SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces model, the Big Five Personality types, and self-efficacy.

In Chapter 4, Human Resources: Sail or Anchor?, Atlas believes that the idea of the No Cover Café might be the right recipe for success. He believes that people that live in college towns would find his idea appealing because he would serve modestly priced food and provide free live music. This chapter covers theories and concepts such as the resource-based view, generic business level strategies, intellectual property, and human resources and selection.

Chapter 5 is titled Charting the Future: Organizational Structure and Fit. Atlas realizes that starting a new business can be difficult, especially without a structure. In particular, he discovers that he must become more organized if the No Cover Café is to get off the ground. This chapter covers ideas about organizational structure and the division of labor. The chapter also covers Max Weber's ideas about bureaucracy and describes the notion of person-job fit. From my perspective as a strategic management professor, I found this chapter's explanation of synergy to be particularly helpful. Synergy strikes many students as an abstract concept, but the examples provided on the page shown (see Fig. 1) bring it alive. Business students will appreciate the clear discussions of General Motors and General Electric, and even nonbusi-

ness students can relate to the synergy embedded in a popular snack food.

The strength of *Atlas Black* is how the book storylines key management concepts and applies these concepts in an entrepreneurial context. This is in stark contrast to the many texts that contain a different S&P 500 company for each example. Despite the many positives of *Atlas Black*, the trade-off to this approach is that this book does not contain the detailed prose found in many traditional textbooks. Concepts such as corporate diversification are explained using a few examples in a minimum of pages compared to some books that might devote several chapters to this subject. However, I believe the trade-off between providing memorable content and detailed explanation is an acceptable one with this approach. I know that a number of business students can memorize line and verse of business related movies such as *Office Space*, and I believe *Atlas Black* could potentially capture this kind of enthusiasm. And, the introduction of various concepts offers instructors an opportunity to expand on the concepts however they choose.

Overall, this book was a delight to read, and I believe this approach could reshape the way we approach management education. Given that the book is priced at only \$14.95, this work could be incorporated into a number of classes at both the undergraduate and MBA levels. For example, it could be used as a supplement or complementary text for principles of management, organizational behavior, strategic management, and entrepreneurship courses. In such cases, the instructors could substitute articles available from library resources if they want to offer additional details. The book might even be a full substitute for a text in a short course or an experiential course, for example, where the majority of student time is spent focusing on their unique business ideas. Given the focus on career management throughout the book, *Atlas Black* might also serve as a primer on business, management, and entrepreneurship for incoming freshmen within the "overview of business" classes that are offered at many colleges and universities. Finally, I would not be surprised to see this book at a local bookstore, as I could see this work enjoyed by practitioners, individuals with a general interest in business, written in a way that incorporates key management concepts while in a format that would be interest to the general population. In conclusion, I do not think that traditional textbooks are always the best way for management students to learn new material, and *Atlas Black* uses a "novel" approach that will become a viable substitute.

Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula: A Practical Guide, 3rd edition, by Robert M. Diamond. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008. 512 pages, paperback.

Reviewed by G. A. Hrivnak, Bond University.

If teaching is a part of your job, then defining, prioritizing, achieving, and assessing student learning outcomes is a topic that has most likely been receiving increased attention from both inside and outside the walls of your proverbial ivory tower. Whether driven by questions of practical relevance, return on investment, instructor performance, utilization of new technology, or some combination thereof, chances are either you or your institution is questioning (or is in search of evidence supporting) the effectiveness of the courses and curricula you offer. Thankfully, Robert Diamond's posthumous third edition of *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula* offers a practical guide for faculty, administrators, and others grappling with the topic of curricular design and assessment. Diamond's advice is worth heeding. Over the course of his career, he was a highly regarded researcher, practitioner, and thought leader in instructional design, innovation, and change in higher education.

The book itself is organized in six sections. Part One (A Frame of Reference) includes six chapters that provide a foundation for the rest of the book. The entire section is a well-organized sequence of topics beginning with a general overview of the design and assessment model used throughout the book (chapter 1) and ending with suggestions for getting curricula design efforts recognized and rewarded as important scholarly work (chapter 4). Concerning the latter topic, the book's Preface makes several relevant points about the current and future context of teaching and learning that should not be missed.

Part Two (The Process) offers a detailed, step-by-step presentation of the curriculum design model that is the core of the book. Diamond notes that the model has been refined over nearly half a century of use and has been successfully employed in a number of widely varying educational institutions. This history allows Diamond to include a number of case studies, each with its own lessons learned and embedded practical implications, both at the end of the chapters and in a separate section at the end of the book. Diamond argues that in order to achieve a successful curriculum or course design project, the project managers must start by clearly establishing the need and ensuring the necessary