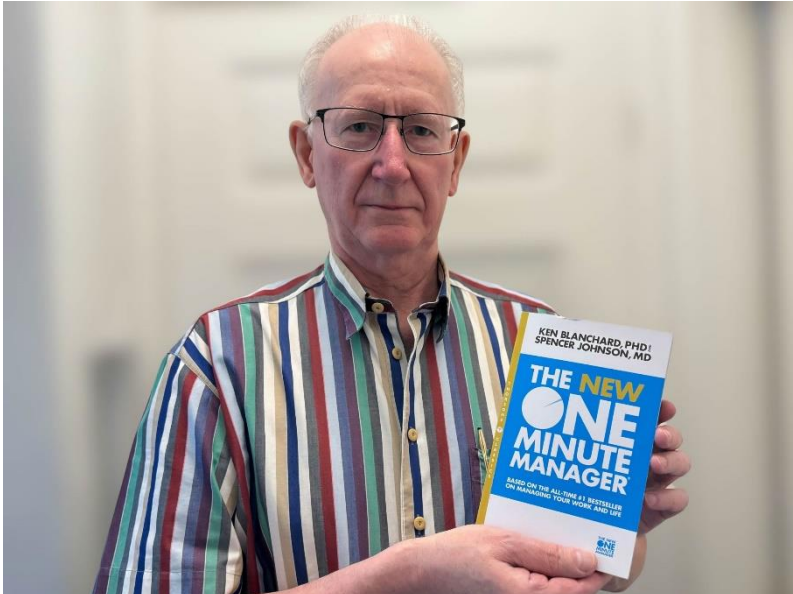


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Book Review: "The New One Minute Manager" by Blanchard and Johnson. Report by Bill Ferguson, Wed 29 May 2024



Bill Ferguson

This is a classic short story that has recently been updated and republished.

In my review today I would like to do something a bit different and invite you to consider this book as a product. Looking at the outside, as well as the inside and considering some of the marketing decisions that will have influenced its final appearance.

Let's start with the outer appearance of the book. Smaller than A5, slim and light, approx. 100 pages. The front cover has four colours: white, blue, gold and black.

Blue is associated with trust and reliability. The contrast between the large white font and the blue panel make the title stand out, a similar device with bold black font on a white background draws the eye to the authors' names. And let's look at the authors' names more closely: the first one boasts a PhD and the second a degree in medicine. And a clever device is the word "and" on its side after PhD, at a glance it looks like an exclamation mark, emphasising the authority of the author.

Classically colours like navy blue, charcoal grey, or deep green are used to convey professionalism and credibility, especially for books aimed at a corporate audience or providing serious business advice. The lighter blue suggests that the book will be authoritative but not too stuffy or too formal.

Now consider the back cover: the language on the back cover is persuasive "This book will help you find meaning in your work and make your life better". Who can refuse an offer like that?

The original One Minute Manager sold 15 million copies, claims the cover. Well it must be good if all these people bought it!

Of the top ten psychological persuasion techniques commonly used to promote books (ref Google), six are evident here:

1. **Social Proof:** Highlighting positive sales figures to demonstrate the book's credibility and popularity.
2. And a testimonial from Claire Diaz-Ortiz telling us how thrilled she was.
3. **Authority:** Leveraging the expertise or credentials of the author to position them as a trusted authority in their field. This can include mentioning the author's qualifications, professional background, or previous successful works.
4. **Emotional Appeal:** Using emotional language and storytelling to appeal to readers' emotions and create a connection with the book's themes or characters.
5. **Framing:** Presenting the book's content in a way that highlights it as a solution to a problem.
6. **Consistency:** Encouraging readers to commit to their decision to purchase the book by highlighting their previous interest or engagement with similar topics, genres, or authors.

Now I am ready to look inside: I have expectations based on the cover, I've paid my money and I am very susceptible to confirmation bias. I want to get value for my £10.

The story is linear with a simple narrative as our hero searches for the answer to his question: what makes a good manager?

At the heart of the book are three core principles: One Minute Goals, One Minute Praisings, and One Minute Re-Directs. These principles are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-understand manner.

One Minute Goals emphasize the importance of setting clear and concise goals that are achievable within a short time frame. The book stresses that the goals have to be specific including behaviours and outcomes, and managers and their team members have to understand them. To be a good manager you need clear communication with your employees.

Once the clear objectives are agreed on they must be constantly reviewed and backed up with a system of feedback that is timely and helpful (not an annual review).

One Minute Praisings highlight the power of providing timely and specific feedback to reinforce positive behaviours and performance. The authors emphasize the importance of catching people doing things right and expressing appreciation for their contributions in a sincere and genuine manner.

One Minute Re-Directs focus on addressing performance issues and providing corrective feedback in a respectful and constructive manner. Instead of dwelling on mistakes, the book encourages managers to quickly address issues, clarify expectations, and offer support to help team members improve their performance. (The original book suggested a One Minute Reprimand! Followed by positive reinforcement.)

Throughout the book, Blanchard and Johnson use simple storytelling to illustrate key concepts and demonstrate how the One Minute Manager principles can be applied in various situations. Critics might say that while the principles presented in the book are effective, they may not address every management challenge or scenario.

I liked the brevity and simplicity of the book. It is concise and to the point, presenting practical strategies and techniques that can be implemented immediately. This book reminded me of a biblical parable: a simple, engaging tale with a clear message.

At £10 for less than 100 pages it seems expensive compared to many books on management however its strength is its simplicity. There are no wasted pages and no unnecessary padding. I read the book in an hour and I got the message straight away. More than can be said for some business books that simply regurgitate old ideas.

This book is one of a set of 34 by the two authors. A while ago we read a book by the same authors called "who moved my cheese?" If this book has given you the appetite for more by the same authors I would recommend it for future reading.

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