Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
Thursday, 01 April 2004 11:50

Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor The other small book I unearthed a couple months ago with " The Team Memory Jogger " is the delightful "Think Outside the Box: The Most Trite, Generic, Hokey, Overused, Clichéd or Unmotivating Motivational Slogans" put together several years ago by consultant Jim Tompkins. Its content was fed by a contest to see who could come up with the worst slogan. It drew 1100 entries.

The book is available from the Tompkins Associates Web site at www.tompkinsinc.com, and draws attention to that portion of today's corporate culture that often looks for quick fixes or creative slogans to solve problems or re-energize organizations. What typically happens is the opposite—such slogans often backfire.

As one contributor put it: "The currently popular phrase 'outside the box' fits the contest criteria perfectly. It pre-supposes in the most denigrating way that employees are unimaginative, uncreative, and stupid. The only clue to the faintest possibility of it being true is that the person works for someone who uses such a phrase."

In all too many cases, the think-outside-the-box message needs to be sent back up the chain of command where it might do some good.

Many people with leadership titles might as well be working inside an empty box. They seem ill informed about or do not understand the workings of the organizations they have been

tapped to lead.

Perhaps they are asking people to think outside the box because they have little knowledge or appreciation for what is going on inside the box.

It would seem prudent to leverage what is of value inside the box, regardless of which way you are looking.

There is plenty of value inside the maintenance, reliability, and operations (MRO) box and most companies are using only a fraction of what's there.

More companies are beginning to realize that some of their best chances for boosting performance reside in the MRO sector and there are a number of suppliers of technology products and services gearing up to serve the growing MRO market.

One place to find out more about what the MRO box has to offer and how you can make it an even more effective contributor to enterprise performance is the Maintenance & Reliability Techology Summit (MARTS) scheduled for May 24-27, 2004 in Rosemont, IL.

I hope we will see you there, regardless of whether you hang out inside or outside of the MRO box. **MT**

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