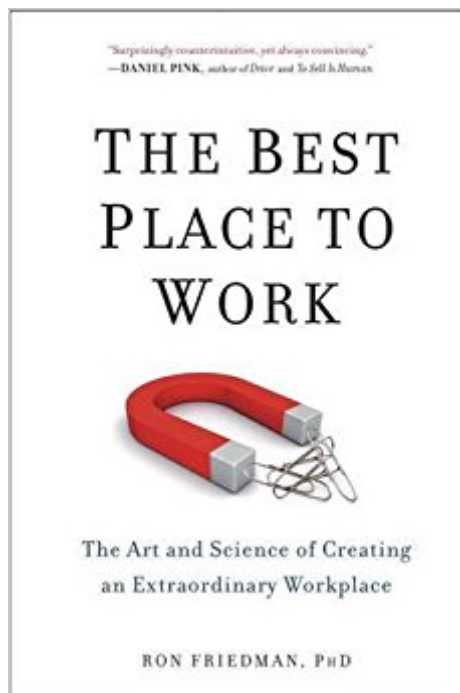




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The Best Place To Work: The Art And Science Of Creating An Extraordinary Workplace



Synopsis

For readers of Malcolm Gladwell, Daniel Pink, and *Freakonomics*, comes a captivating and surprising journey through the science of workplace excellence. Why do successful companies reward failure? What can casinos teach us about building a happy workplace? How do you design an office that enhances both attention to detail and creativity? In *The Best Place to Work*, award-winning psychologist Ron Friedman, Ph.D. uses the latest research from the fields of motivation, creativity, behavioral economics, neuroscience, and management to reveal what really makes us successful at work. Combining powerful stories with cutting edge findings, Friedman shows leaders at every level how they can use scientifically-proven techniques to promote smarter thinking, greater innovation, and stronger performance. Among the many surprising insights, Friedman explains how learning to think like a hostage negotiator can help you diffuse a workplace argument, why placing a fish bowl near your desk can elevate your thinking, and how incorporating strategic distractions into your schedule can help you reach smarter decisions. Along the way, the book introduces the inventor who created the cubicle, the president who brought down the world's most dangerous criminal, and the teenager who single-handedly transformed professional tennis into vivid stories that offer unexpected revelations on achieving workplace excellence. Brimming with counterintuitive insights and actionable recommendations, *The Best Place to Work* offers employees and executives alike game-changing advice for working smarter and turning any organization into an extraordinary workplace.

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An INC. Magazine Best Business Book of the Year • "An excellent book." • "Booklist • "A must-read" • "Library Journal (starred review) • "What a gem! Enough that it's a thorough, practical manual for optimizing relationships and work environments, based on new and solid research in human behavior" but it's a surprising, witty, well-written, and wonderfully engaging read. • "David Allen, author of *Getting Things Done* • "We've lost our way. In this stunning book, Ron Friedman helps us get back on track, exploring not only what work is for, but how we can leap forward and become more human, more alive and more effective. • "Seth Godin, author of *Lynchpin* and *The Icarus Deception* • In *The Best Place to Work*, Ron Friedman examines the factors that take a company from ordinary to extraordinary. The stories in this book . . . pack powerful, research-based lessons for better leadership in the workplace. Friedman's findings are often surprisingly counterintuitive, yet always convincing. • "Daniel H. Pink, author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human* • *The Best Place to Work* is an engaging journey through the latest science of improving the quality of life in organizations. Psychologist Ron Friedman examines how to unleash creativity, boost motivation, and offer rewards and recognition that bring people together rather than driving them apart. • "Adam Grant, Wharton professor and author of *Originals* and *Give and Take* • A contemporary classic. Dr. Friedman's new book offers a highly original guide to creating exceptional workplaces based on cross-field academic research and superb examples from real companies. You won't find these insights elsewhere. • "Marshall Goldsmith, author of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* • "I love this book! It's smart, fun to read, interesting, clear, and practical. We're all owners of our workplaces, and this is our owner's manual. Following Ron's advice is easy and will pay huge dividends for you and the people with whom you work." • "Peter Bregman, author of *18 Minutes* • "An eye-opening, highly-readable, and practical guide to improving the way we work. No matter what you do for a living, this book will change the way you see your workplace. • "Richard Wiseman, author of *59 Seconds: Think a Little Change a Lot* • In *The Best Place to Work*, Ron Friedman brings together decades of psychological research into a package that offers organizations concrete advice to improve the well-being of workers and the quality of work. Much of the advice is eye-opening. I'm sure the results of taking the advice will be too. • "Barry Schwartz, author of *The Paradox of Choice* and *Why We Work* • "This fascinating book shows how to create workspaces that foster creativity,

collaboration, and high productivity. It's a joy to read, filled with practical advice for leaders, engaging real-world stories, and grounded in scientific research.

• "Keith Sawyer, author of *Group Genius* and *Zig Zag: The Surprising Path to Greater Creativity* "Friedman's book fills you with optimism about the future of work. If enough managers pay attention to the science he is promoting, then a lot of people are going to roll out of bed on Mondays truly eager to get to the other side of their commutes."

• "David McRaney, author of *You Are Not So Smart* "When it comes to motivation and engagement, the problem is rarely that the work itself is terrible " it's that the way we are working is. In *The Best Place to Work*, Ron Friedman tells you everything " and I mean everything " you need to know to bring out the best in your employees. This powerful (and entertaining!) book is a guide to understanding how subtle, often unconscious influences in the workplace affect happiness, creativity, productivity and loyalty " and how you can use these insights to create real and lasting impact, on your team and in your organization. Everyone should be reading this book."

• "Heidi Grant Halvorson, author of *9 Things Successful People Do Differently* "If you want to attract and keep exceptional employees, your culture is the key. In this entertaining book, Ron Friedman offers a practical game plan for building a workplace that thrives."

• "Todd Henry, author of *The Accidental Creative* and *Die Empty* "There's an astonishing gap between what science knows about human behavior and what companies think they know. In this fascinating book, Ron Friedman outlines the science behind thriving at work and offers practical advice for managers who are committed to making a real difference in the workplace."

• "David Burkus, author of *Under New Management* "What a great relief to read a business book that is not just about how to be a better leader but about what makes work more fun, exciting and productive. By focusing on what managers at all levels of an organization can do, this book provides a rich inventory of practical, research-based ideas for making work engaging. A most valuable and entertaining read full of powerful insights that should be read by every manager and employee."

• "Edgar H. Schein, Professor Emeritus Sloan School of Management, MIT "Ron Friedman's *The Best Place to Work* presents the latest scientific findings in a highly entertaining but rigorous way. An excellent example of great science writing for practical application in the real world. If you want to make the workplace better, this book is the best place to start."

• "Dean Keith Simonton, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychology, University of California, Davis "The *Best Place to Work* flows seamlessly and is filled with practical, accessible ways of seeing not only oneself in depth, but also the complex mosaics of workplace environments with pitfalls and opportunities galore. The principles that undergird a fulfilling and healthy life, with room for authentic, creative play

are infused into practical, real-life vignettes throughout its pages. Bringing the science of human innovativeness and productivity into focus, and combining these science-based truths with a life well lived are what can be gleaned from its chapters.

• “Stuart Brown, M.D., author of *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*”

• Ron Friedman “bridges the gap between cutting-edge science and the reality of the modern workplace in a way that is clear, sensible, and effective. Friedman does more than offer recommendations – he provides empirically supported tools for turning most any office into a lively, engaging workplace. Written in a user-friendly style that will grab your attention, this book is a must-read for anyone who has wondered why workplaces can’t be successful and welcoming at the same time.”

• Harry Reis, PhD, University of Rochester Professor of Psychology, Past President of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology “An energetic, conversational look at what really makes an office environment tick.”

• Publishers Weekly “Most readers will find some arresting ideas in this book...with a light and entertaining touch.”

• Financial Times

Ron Friedman, Ph.D., is an award-winning psychologist who writes for the Harvard Business Review, Fast Company, Forbes, Entrepreneur, and CNN. He is the founder of ignite80, a consulting firm that helps smart leaders build thriving workplaces, and frequently delivers keynotes and trainings on the science of workplace excellence. To learn more about his work, visit ignite80.com.

This is my favorite book of the year! It’s packed with science-based guidance on how to be a better employee, a better manager, and a better business owner. I’m the founder and CEO of a relatively new company, and this book is now my go-to guide for how to build my business in the most effective way possible. I’m a behavioral scientist myself, with a Ph.D. in Brain and Cognitive Sciences, so I certainly appreciate the value of applied research, but the truth is that I honestly don’t have the time to stay current on all the studies that are published on how to motivate employees, how to hire, how to design effective office spaces, and how to gain a competitive advantage in the knowledge-based economy. This book compiles over 1000 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, saving me years of time and effort. The best part of the book is the tools guide at the end of each chapter--a little checklist of action items for managers, business owners, and up-and-coming employees. I don’t have to reread the book to make sure that I’m applying its lessons; I can just refer to the end of each chapter to make sure I’m on track. I can’t say enough good things about this book. It’s totally riveting and fun to read. FIVE STARS!

Healthy organizations are also best places to work. In fact, creating a best place to work is one of the three main reasons for starting a worksite wellness/wellbeing program. As the vernacular in worksite wellness shifts to wellbeing (even though there is no real difference between the two!), increasing recognition is being paid to how the other dimensions of wellness/wellbeing contribute to organizational health, besides just the physical health of the employee. These dimensions also contribute to the creation of a best place to work. The nature of the workplace is changing. This creates the need for the organization to not only be more efficient, but to also create the conditions that create the opportunity for both the workplace and its employees to thrive. Dr. Friedman put it this way: "Creating the conditions that allow employees to do their best work." Dr. Friedman makes the point that today's workplaces need to harness intelligence, creativity and interpersonal skill. The book is divided into three parts: 1. Workplace design 2. Motivation 3. Employee recruitment and retention. I found the book easy to read despite the significant reference to the published research literature. In addition to reporting on the research literature, the book contains a nice mix of stories and suggestions about how to apply the research learnings. I also appreciated the action items for managers and emerging leaders at the end of each chapter. If you are interested in or involved in or desire to create healthy, best places to work, this book should be on your reading list.

Note: The author is a Social Psychologist but this book falls under I/O psychology category more accurately. As a potential I/O student, and an English teacher, I think this book succeeded in introducing crucial aspects of the modern workplace and how they all related to productivity. The author cites historical figures from the past and big tech companies of the present. The novel moves fast enough to stay interesting yet dives deep enough to impart a decent understanding. For skimmers, Emerging leaders and managers, you will find helpful tips at the end of each chapter. According to Gallup, employee disengagement is at a monumental 80% which costs over 550 billion dollars every year. Every HR department should operate with these insights in mind.

I was so fascinated with this book I carried it around with me everywhere until I finished it! The book is loaded with story after story, and is thoroughly entertaining as well as full of provocative questions about what makes a workplace great and what makes employees engaged and happy. I cannot imagine the amount of research Ron Friedman had to do to compile all the evidence he so beautifully uses to make his insightful points -- and some of his conclusions aren't what you might

think. This is the kind of book EVERY company CEO should read and implement, as well as an eye-opener for every employee who wants to find a forward-thinking company to work for. (True confessions: I'm recruiting an employee for Ron Friedman's company, so you might think I'm biased, but he practices what he preaches, and his book speaks for itself. Lucky employees who get to work for him!)

Great book that sits on my desk at work. There are quick and easy takeaways included in the book that new and senior managers can use to the workplace for their staff and for themselves. The book is well arranged by topic and the author uses good examples to explain their views and ideas. The only negative I have is the last 3rd of the book seems to get a bit more higher level and the takeaways weren't quite as easy to grasp but that could be how I was trying to relate this to my area of employment (government and customer service focused). At the outset I was a bit concerned that this book might be more corporate America and not really apply to my area of focus which is government and social services. I was wrong there are pieces here that giant companies can use as well as a local government that wants to be the best government to work for. It's overall a quick read - keep a pencil and paper handy so you can keep some notes! Happy Reading!

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