

Managing Diversity

A monthly source of information, ideas, and tips for people managing a Diverse Workforce

January 1993

Vol. 2, No. 4

Keeping Up

A review by Dr. George F. Simons

Inspired in format by the Pfeiffer and Jones Annual Handbooks published by University Associates, but with a definitely European flavor, *Cross-Cultural Communication: A Trainer's Manual* by Frank R. Oomkes and Richard H. Thomas is a full service guide for the cross-cultural trainer. It contains not only a large collection of exercises and activities, but also information on how to plan, conduct and evaluate cross-cultural training events. The full size A-4 handout pages are clearly identified, have ample white space and can conveniently be reproduced on standard 8-1/2" by 11" paper. A thorough index assists the trainer who wants to pick and choose her or his own interventions from the abundance of offerings.

This collection is really much broader in scope than the word "Communication" in the title suggests. There are pieces about understanding one's own culture as well as exercises in collaboration, problem solving, cross-cultural learning methodology, and a host of other related topics. With the exception of a few items about values and beliefs, most of the material is focused on the development of general cultural competence rather than detailed teaching about the values and behaviors of specific groups. Such learning will come rather from the interaction of participants with one another stimulated by the training interventions in the manual.

This handbook will be of interest to professionals in global organizations, as an adjunct to training, team and work group formation, managing the cultural issues of

(Continued on page 8)

Keeping Up

(Continued from page 7)

takeovers and mergers, establishing overseas facilities, and the like. Educators and administrators at the secondary and university levels, especially those with large international student populations, will delight in enriching their curriculum from these pages.

In Europe the social issues surrounding diversity tend to be governmental rather than business concerns. Not surprisingly, the American user, accustomed to living and working in a multicultural society with its struggle between acculturation and assimilation, senses a distinct lack of discussion of economic empowerment, the "isms" and gender concerns, and in general of hands-on, hard-data business cases. The creative trainer, in both the public and private sectors, however, can easily restructure many of the exercises around an American diversity agenda.

The appearance of this manual is a reminder to us that even the managing of diversity is rightly diverse. One might hope that the field of cross-cultural endeavor will soon have more such collections of user friendly materials representing an ever wider variety of approaches to the challenges of difference.

The manual is available for \$149.95 from Ashgate Publishing Company Ltd., Old Post Road, Brookfield, VT 05036; 802-276-3162.

Dr. George F. Simons is Principal of George Simons International, 335 Gulf Club Drive, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (408) 426-9608.