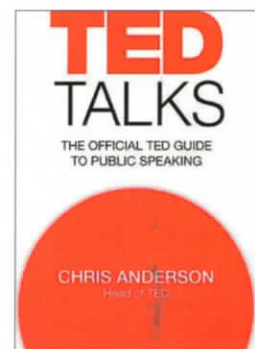


BOOKS

Reviews Derek Parker



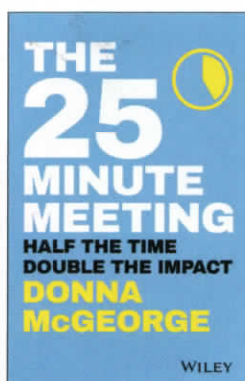
TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking

By Chris Anderson, Headline, A\$25

Large parts of the internet seem to have descended into meaningless chatter, but the TED Talks site stands out as a beacon of clarity and relevance. Chris Anderson, the curator of the site, is adamant about the importance of clear communication, and in this book (recently re-released) he provides advice on everything from organising content to setting up a lectern.

TED Talks are given on a wide range of topics, but the underlying lesson is the same regardless of subject: know what your point is and how to get to it. There is no single method for a good presentation, but Anderson explores five tools in detail: connection, narration, explanation, persuasion, and revelation. Showing a little vulnerability, and even some humour, can help. The book has an important section on how to explain complex issues, something particularly relevant to finance professionals. The key is to build on the audience's existing knowledge, bringing in new concepts in an ordered way.

Anderson does not much like visual aids, but he nevertheless offers some useful tips. He underlines the importance of preparation and rehearsal, and has solid advice on managing nerves. Public speaking is a skill that can be learned, and this book is a very good place to start.



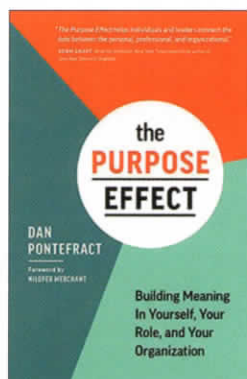
The 25 Minute Meeting

By Donna McGeorge, Wiley, A\$25

Donna McGeorge, a corporate trainer and facilitator, believes that bad meetings are the bane of business life, and when you see her calculations of the cost of lost time it is hard to disagree. Most meetings take about an hour, but usually there is only 25 minutes of effective work. Therefore, she says, limit the meeting to this time. It's obvious, once someone has suggested it.

McGeorge argues that the first step is to determine whether the meeting is even necessary (she believes that two-thirds of meetings are not). In many cases the wrong people are there, or there are too many participants (McGeorge suggests a limit of five). To make a meeting effective the purpose must be clear, the agenda provided in plenty of time, and discussion must be relevant. Furthermore, everyone should leave their phones on their desk.

Much of the book is for meeting organisers, but the lessons are for all participants. McGeorge believes that the chairperson must be firm in keeping things on track; this will be welcomed by everyone, and everyone should leave knowing what they have to do next. The book sets all this out with admirable clarity and systematic organisation – a model, in fact, for an effective and enjoyable meeting.



The Purpose Effect

By Dan Pontefract, Elevate Publishing, A\$37

Dan Pontefract's previous book, *Flat Army*, was about developing collaborative mechanisms within organisations as an alternative to hierarchies and silos. In *The Purpose Effect* he takes this theme further, looking for ways to build personal satisfaction. He starts from the premise that a company should act in a socially responsible way, and that its values need to be understood by employees. In fact, much of the book is directed at employees, although the latter chapters are designed for corporate and team leaders.

He asks employees to examine the relationship between their individual purpose, the purpose of the organisation, and their role within it. Do you really aspire to the position of the boss, or is it merely what you have been told you should do? If you get there, what will you do to improve the organisation and society? Is there another direction that might be more satisfying? Difficult questions, but necessary.

Pontefract provides several case studies, with his examination of Deloitte being the most interesting. It created "a culture of purpose" by seeking to instil confidence and responsibility in employees. Such programs can lift productivity, but the real goal, says Pontefract, is not to improve the bottom line, but to make the world a better place.

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