

BEYOND THE JOB DESCRIPTION

How Managers and Employees Can
Navigate the True Demands of the Job

JESSE SOSTRIN

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Dedication

For Joy: thank you for your enduring belief in
what matters to me.



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PREFACE

BEYOND THE JOB DESCRIPTION IS a book I wish I had when I was learning how to manage people, lead organizations, and coach others to do the same. As a new manager, I found that for every moment of insight and success there were two challenges around every corner. The progress made on one front was just as quickly eroded by another unseen obstacle elsewhere. Constant change from the world outside, combined with the unpredictability of people and circumstances inside the organization, kept me chasing the ghosts of issues that affected my team's performance, my own contributions to the organization, and the bottom line.

Slowly but surely, and with the accumulation of the battle scars to prove it, I discovered the fundamental cause of my greatest challenges in the world of work: *there is a hidden side of work that is constantly felt, but seldom seen*. Whether my focus was on my own responsibilities, managing my team's performance, or leading changes to improve the overall effectiveness of the organization, these *hidden challenges of work* were always there, silently undermining success at every turn.

Despite the endless stream of conventional solutions available to address workplace issues, I realized that something different was needed. There was not even a language to describe the true demands of work that I discovered, let alone tools and reliable resources to address them. Half-hearted responses that failed to get at the root cause of the issue at hand only increased frustration and sustained the damage over time. Recognizing this gap in resources inspired me to build my own set of tools and practices to expose the hidden side of work and effectively address its many challenges.

For over a decade now I have been a cartographer of sorts, painstakingly mapping the ecology and terrain of work's greatest challenges and helping leaders and their organizations to work differently in response to it. I put all of these insights and practices together so that others could decode their greatest challenges at work, and *Beyond the Job Description* is the result.

I stumbled toward my own epiphany about the hidden path to success at work; in contrast, *Beyond the Job Description* provides a roadmap to help you avoid hazardous pitfalls and unforeseen obstacles that threaten your success on the job. Writing the book was a labor of love for me. My hope is that reading it will help you love the results of your labor and lead you toward the working life you want.

JESSE SOSTRIN,
April 2013

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And, finally, I would like to thank the greatest contributors to this book: the countless clients and colleagues I have worked with over the years who trusted me to help them identify and resolve their greatest challenges on the job.