

The Health of Your Business

(SNP Publishers, 248 pages)

Edited by David Koh & Lee See Muah

The editors are to be congratulated for putting together a fine book. It is never easy to edit a multi-author book especially one which has more contributors than chapters and targeted for a non-clinical audience. The book scores high on readability – the chapters are short and succinct. I was able to read through it in a night and found little overlap between the chapters. Common terms such as “sick buildings”, “ergonomics” and “managed health care” are demystified and explained clearly. The case studies complement the chapters well, though more case studies in the local context would have been welcome. I think it was Samuel Johnson who said that “knowledge comes in two forms, the first being what you know and the second is knowing where to find what you don’t”. More references (especially local ones) and appendices (for example, guidelines about fitness to drive, etc) would have further improved the book giving it a value added advantage as a reference book.

It is never easy to strike a perfect balance and some parts were perhaps underemphasized and some overemphasized. There is scant discussion on dual career stress facing women and its interventions; and healthy eating, diet and cafeteria

programs. The chapter on shift work would have benefited greatly from additional material on sleep problems in general and its effect on work. I wished that the chapter on air travel had talked more about the very common problem of painful ears during take off and landing. The contents of the recommended standard medical kit sounded more like a mini pharmacy than a small practical kit (for example, suppositories for piles – though I suppose those who suffer piles would beg to differ).

Employee health programs are in a state of infancy in Singapore (compared to the comprehensive “employee assistance programs” in the West), and the success of any program depends also on the commitment and enthusiasm of the Corporation’s higher management. This book gives cogent reasons for employee health programs and the more higher management personnel who read it the better. Most health programs reach the already “converted”, helping those who need the most help the least. Hopefully this book will assist companies to creatively help both the converted and the unconverted.

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