

**Unfiltered conversations with staff at every level.
In their words—walking in their shoes.**



STAFF MATTERS

People-Focused Solutions for
the Ultimate New Workplace

BONNIE LOW-KRAMEN

FOREWORD

In her timely and transformative book, *Staff Matters: People-Focused Solutions for the Ultimate New Workplace*, Bonnie Low-Kramen carefully identifies and emphasizes the virtues, qualities, and motivations that exemplify moral courage in the workplace.

For more than twenty years, Bonnie and I have been in conversation about the high-potential talent of those who have chosen the executive assisting profession and how outmoded workplace structures can undermine the worth of these vital individuals. During my career, I supported a world leader for ten years, which led to my role as Founder and CEO of The Duncan Group, Inc., a global recruiting and coaching firm, and the Duncan Leadership Institute, our global training entity, which focuses on the value of solutions. This experience continues to give me a rich perspective and allows me to applaud Bonnie's visionary leadership.

The core of *Staff Matters* is Bonnie's compelling research, which answers the hard questions that others tend to avoid asking. Her vigilance in uncovering complex truths helps her construct a persuasive message: be prepared to engage in courageous and important conversations!

Bonnie invites us to consider all possible solutions for professional staff challenges, and to appreciate the workplace as the perfect setting to build a culture of shared responsibility, practicing the principle of inclusion, which allows us to remove the limiting lenses through which we see the world: lenses of race, gender, wealth, poverty, and religion. The development of such a hiring strategy represents an opportunity to offer equity and social advantage to those who contribute to our economic prosperity.

Bonnie addresses human resources practices that prove precarious when challenged with unpredictable forces and how unconscious bias in hiring has massive influence on workplace culture and talent retention. *Staff Matters* confirms the need to bring leaders, business practices, and the workplace population together to address systemic societal issues at the core of “business as usual.” This book moves us from the abstract to the concrete, questions the status quo, and encourages us to respect the dignity of others.

Bonnie intends to inspire the application of better judgment by all staff, and in so doing, to positively impact the outcomes of our ethical standards going forward. Her messaging is based on an astute understanding that existing motivations shift our fundamental perceptions of widely held assumptions, resulting in companies that remain trapped in marginalized, outdated beliefs and, therefore, approaches.

Staff Matters’ data on pervasive stereotypes challenges a relentless and unrealistic disconnect between the perception and the reality: Bonnie champions equal opportunities and pay, demonstrating how the positive effects of fair treatment and compensation create pathways for advancement and increased productivity.

Bonnie wisely identifies empathy as the primary driver for essential workplace evolution. She observes how hard it is to manage effectively without demonstrating the ability to understand and support others with compassion or sensitivity.

Occupying a singular place in the world of professional support, Bonnie’s perspective is reinforced by years of research and on-the-ground experience as a professional assistant. This uniquely positions her to advocate for a greater level of social and cultural harmony in the workplace. She reminds us of the profound impact that staying strongly connected to our colleagues all over the world offers to our work environment, which can unite us in a common vision.

Staff Matters is a book that exposes the “elephants in the room” in management breakdowns and inspires us not only to examine but to change the thinking, language, and social structure rooted in the deeply embedded inequities that characterize today’s workplace. Bonnie offers a clear prescription for addressing these inequities, reminding us along the way not to let a temporary solution become a permanent mistake, and that inaction is complicity.

This book is an engaging, living monument to the diverse workplace population and a tribute to all staff. Among its core messages are that the best legacy you can leave behind are the people whose lives you have changed, that speaking the inconvenient truth is imperative for effective leadership, and that knowledge will forever overpower ignorance.

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Group, New York City