

**bookmark** reviewed by bob libbey

## Telling it like it is

Roger D'Aprix's latest book explains why keeping employees in the loop can bring business benefits

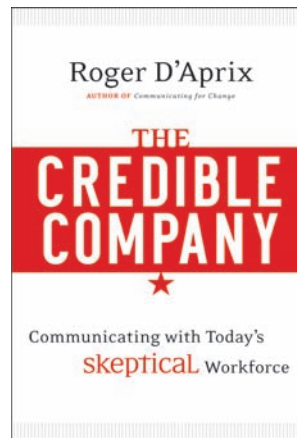
“Intellectual capital is the real treasure of any organization today,” D'Aprix writes. “And only well-informed and engaged people can create it.”

**about the reviewer**  
Bob Libbey is senior director of worldwide colleague communications at Pfizer.

Roger D'Aprix is at his best in his new book, *The Credible Company*. He identifies the key element too often missing in organizational communication today: helping the employee understand why his or her company is pursuing a strategy, executing a tactic or planning for change. He covers a lot of ground, addressing everything from changing world markets to the continued advance and hidden dangers of communication technology.

“Too often organizational leaders talk about strategy or future plans in isolation without discussing why they are taking the actions they propose to take,” he writes. “Without the explanation of why, it's inevitable that people will resort to speculation based on insufficient information.” What makes the “why” question so important is that it marks the point where an organization either decides to help its employees focus and succeed or leaves them to wonder. And it's at this point that the potential of organizational communication to improve performance either rises or falls.

D'Aprix's observations regarding the “why” questions underscore his view of the communication function today: “The modern assembly line in the Information Age is virtual, manned by smart, educated people who take that raw



### about the book

*The Credible Company: Communicating with Today's Skeptical Workforce*  
by Roger D'Aprix  
Jossey-Bass, 2008  
192 pages

information, add their expertise to it, and pass it on to their peers.... Intellectual capital is the real treasure of any organization today. And only well-informed and engaged people can create it.”

As befits one whose experience extends from a staff position at General Electric in the early 1960s through leadership positions at two of the world's top human resources consultancies (Towers Perrin and Mercer) to his current role at ROI Communications, D'Aprix also covers such pressing communication topics as employee engagement, the explosion of social media, and Generation Y

and its influence and context.

What makes it all work is not only the breadth and depth of experience that informs his writing but also the manner in which he has organized the book. In fact, the first letters of the first words of each of the main chapters spell the word INFORMS. And that's just what he does throughout this, his seventh book and a worthy successor to his last effort, *Communicating for Change: Connecting the Workplace with the Marketplace*.

I have known Roger D'Aprix, worked with him, and admired both him and his work for some 15 years. But for all that has changed during that time, one of the great constants that has defined D'Aprix and his work is his decidedly humanist view of human labor. “Work has become our religion in the twenty-first century,” he writes. “We sacrifice our needs for it—and sometimes the needs of the people we care most about. And we long for the dignity and self-worth that it provides us.”

His stated intent in writing the book is “to analyze the critical elements of a communication strategy to reach a skeptical workforce.” Internal communication professionals and business leaders who pick up this book will be thankful that D'Aprix has chosen to once again inform and educate us in what is undoubtedly his best work yet. ●