Please recommend to your colleagues an outstanding book you've read at any time in your career that has helped you professionally.

TLT readers are a fairly literate lot, based on this month's question. Given the option, the majority of TLT readers recommended books about philosophy, business strategies and personal improvement rather than tribology books. Dr. Spence Johnson's Who Moved My Cheese was the No. 1 non-tribology selection with nearly a half dozen mentions. There were many tribology books cited, too, with Lubrication Fundamentals, First Edition by J. George Willis the top choice. The greatest number of respondents say they read 1-2 work-related books annually and subscribe to 3-4 work-related magazines and journals. When it's time to unwind after a long day, the majority of STLE members lean toward news and general-interest magazines, novels and non-fiction books.

The Diamond Cutter by Geshe Michael Roach. He's an American who became a Buddhist monk and scholar in India. His lamas instructed him to return to America and run a business based on Buddhist principles. He co-founded a diamond distribution business with $50,000 in capital and turned it into a $100 million company. The principles, and the diamond business, are discussed in great detail. Enlightening.

Diesel by Kates and Lucas. Provides an excellent understanding of applications in the field.

Mechanical Vibrations. This classic text taught me how to approach the analysis of any physical phenomenon. The philosophy applies to all engineering disciplines.

Trade Show & Event Marketing by Ruth Stevens. An excellent resource for strategic thinkers.

Encouraging the Heart. Excellent book for the management team looking to increase productivity.

Lubrication Fundamentals, First Edition by J. George Willis. This book was down to earth with a variety of different applications. I keep it handy today for an array of questions I have. My second most used book is Standard Handbook of Lubricating Engineers. This one I use for more technical applications.

Who Moved My Cheese? by Dr. Spence Johnson. It tells about the various ways people adapt to or resist change. It can be applied to any situation, be it work, personal, etc. Very beneficial when applied to the work environment.

Morrison and Boyd on Organic Chemistry. Still probably the best introduction to organic text ever. When was the last time you read a text that had jokes?

Difficult Conversations by Stone, Patton and Heen. It has amazing insights and tips to help professionals engage in the conversations that are difficult for most to have but necessary for a successful business and career.

What Color is Your Parachute is the best book about finding a job and the best career guidance book out there. Plan your career, don’t let circumstances prevail.

Endurance by Caroline Alexander. It’s the best telling of Ernest Shackleton’s ill-fated Trans-Antarctic Expedition. The story is a truly great example of strong leadership, teamwork and overcoming nearly insurmountable odds.

• How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie. It helps you learn how to work with all types of people and makes you look carefully at yourself.

• The Fifth Discipline by Dr. Peter Senge. He describes systems thinking and analysis, which enables you to solve deeply rooted, long-term problems.

• How to Think Like a CEO. This book was helpful because it showed me how to function as an effective and mature professional.

• Lubricant Additives, Chemistry and Applications by Dr. Les Rudnick. A thoughtful review of additives.

• The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven Covey.

• The Art of Dealing with People. We all must deal with people on a daily basis. This book guides how to do this effectively.

• Lifescripts. It has good guidance and advice for tough situations that you might not have yet encountered.

• Same Game, New Rules: Contemporary Insights for the Advanced Sales Professional by Bill Caskey. Looks at the sales process in a new and different way.

• Lubrication Fundamentals. It gives an excellent overview of numerous topics. Pretty much a 'must read' for the young lubrication technologist.

• The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman. Every U.S. congressman, labor leader and professional should be required to read this book about how the world really works. It will get rid of our fear of globalization and insane government policies that fight normal economic progress.

• The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren. Many simple answers to engineering ethics and how to properly balance priorities.

• Time Management for Unmanageable People. This book helped me feel better about my messy desk and provided a couple of good ideas for working smarter.

• The Bible. Great fundamentals.

• Space Vehicle Mechanisms: Elements of Successful Design, Peter Conley, editor. This book covers many aspects of tribology for the technically difficult application of spacecraft. It has several excellent chapters on lubricants and lubricated devices, from both materials and component points of view.

• Managing Interpersonal Relationships. This book helped me accept people (including myself) for what we are. Identifying your own weaknesses and strengths, as well as those of the people around you, can lead to reduced conflicts and rewarding success.

• Metalworking Fluids, edited by Jerry Byers. All the key information in one handy collection.

• Hearing Grasshoppers Jump, an inspirational book on why you need to listen to your customer's needs.

• Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds. It provides insight into how crowd psychology works. Especially helpful in filtering out a fad from a lasting trend. Good insights for the stock market also! <<

Editor’s note: Sounding Board is based on an e-mail survey of 7,200 TLT readers. Views expressed are those of the respondents and do not reflect the opinions of the Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers. STLE does not vouch for the technical accuracy of opinions expressed in Sounding Board, nor does inclusion of a comment represent an endorsement of the technology by STLE.