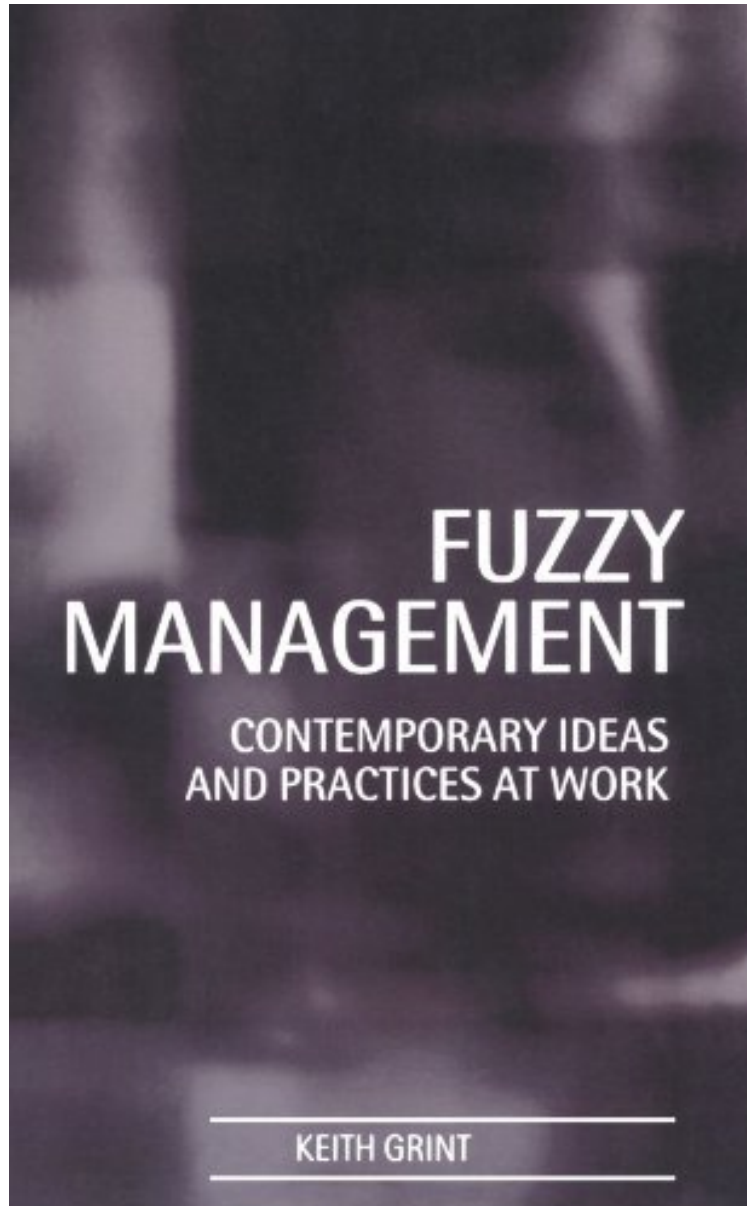


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Fuzzy Management: Contemporary Ideas and Practices at Work

Keith Grint

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current management orthodoxies to be inadequate and who are interested in alternative ideas. They should be interested in how these might be applied to management practice; but they will not want "theoretical books about theory". He seems envisage this constituency as being the classic MBA-type student, who is at the same time a practicing manager. Thus Grint's aim is to provide a bridging work between the worlds of academia and practical management. The book is not written as a practical manual of management. A number of real-life examples from the literature are briefly described to illustrate the points; but there are no case studies, or anecdotes based on Grint's experience (he is a career academic). The approach is academic, though the tone is light. The content is best described as suggestive, rather than comprehensive. First Grint introduces the idea of 'fuzzy thinking', based on work in set theory and mathematical logic. The idea that this is the most appropriate type of thinking for real-world management problems is the primary message of the book. Grint goes on to look at change programmes, chaos and evolutionary theory, actor-network theory, leadership and appraisal, risk management, and negotiating theory. In each case he applies his fuzzy thinking perspective. Grint, though by no means providing a manual of managing under uncertainty, does add a dose of realism not found in many popular management texts on the one hand, or academic literature on the other. Furthermore, some of his suggestions are consistent with recent developments in management theory and practice, implying that the book indirectly has value for the practising manager at the level of its specific discussions.

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Offering a bridge between the esoteric world of theory and the practical world of management, Keith Grint here explores current theories such as Fuzzy Logic, Actor-network Theory, Chaos Theory, and Constructivism, through the discussion of some everyday management issues such as Strategic Decision Making, Appraisals, Negotiation, Leadership, Culture, and Motivation. Crisp and concise, this book is a useful guide to all those concerned with the relationship between management theory and practice.

...provocative study.'Sloan Management . Summer 1998
About the Author
Keith Grint is at Templeton College, University of Oxford.