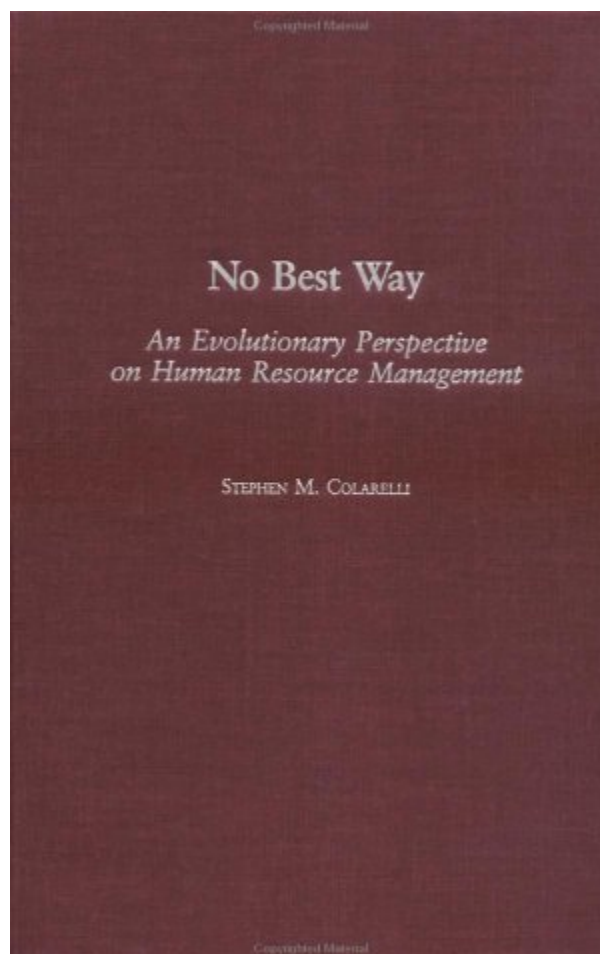


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# No Best Way

*An Evolutionary Perspective  
on Human Resource Management*

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"No Best Way presents a novel and innovative perspective to human resource management. It is the first book to approach these issues from an evolutionary perspective, and does so in a thoughtful and insightful manner. It is a must read for anyone with an interest in personnel selection and training."-David C. Geary, Ph.D. Professor of Psychological Sciences, University of Missouri

"Stephen Colarelli has written an unusual and effective book, drawing attention to new topics and bringing a fresh approach to traditional areas of human resources management by viewing the field through the lens of the new Darwinian science. Thanks to the author's accessible writing and deep knowledge of HRM, he has managed simultaneously to be authoritative, interesting, wide ranging, and current."-Nigel Nicholson London Business School, author of *Managing the Human Animal*

## About the Author

STEPHEN M. COLARELLI is Professor of Psychology at Central Michigan University.

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In this provocative volume, a pioneering organizational psychologist explains that the failure of many human resource programs in business, education, and government is largely due to their mechanistic assumptions. By contrasting the classical human resource paradigm and its emphasis on consistency and a clock-like structure to organizations with the evolutionary paradigm and its focus on variation, conflicting interests and complexity, the author shows how shifting to an evolutionary perspective can make organizations more adaptive, hence human resource programs more attuned to human nature and to organizational realities.

Colarelli gives a lively intellectual history of classical human resource management thinking, from Plato through the Renaissance to Marx and Taylor to the present, and shows that much of it is imbued with utopian ethos. This volume explodes the myths that there is one best way to organize, that organizations have goals and that human resource programs operate to further organizational goals or the good of the organization. The author explains the evolutionary logic that views organizations as collections of individuals pursuing their own interests and that human resource activities are inevitably enmeshed in personal and conflicting interests. Evolutionary-based interventions that are workable, innovative, and compassionate are presented for use in hiring and training. Colarelli also offers a novel approach to affirmative action to deal with the problems of fairness and performance.

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3 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

**STERN'S MANAGEMENT REVIEW FINDS THIS BOOK INSIGHTFUL!**

By Gerry Stern

This book reflects the author's belief that problems of theoretical coherence, utilization and effectiveness of HRM practices can best be addressed by an evolutionary perspective, including sociocultural evolution and evolutionary psychology. The title reflects the view that successful HRM practices must emerge in the context of the organization and its environment; there is no one best way. The author's aim is to show that the mechanical perspective in HRM, which presumes that expert-designed interventions will produce intended outcomes, has outlived its usefulness and discusses ways an evolutionary approach can be applied, specifically in hiring and training. The work includes extensive notes and references. This is not a how-to book and not for practitioners who are looking for answers, now!. It's a very well researched work that presents penetrating, mind-expanding insights, incorporates an historical perspective, and offers unconventional ideas.

2 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

**Out of touch and out of this world**

By Mark Hinkley

This book starts with the nihilistic premise that much of what is done by applied psychologists in the workplace doesn't work well and has not been widely adopted. Therefore evolutionary psychology is needed. The problem is that in actuality much does work and has been adopted. Where it has not, there are a host of explanations that are much simpler and more probable than evolutionary nonsense contained herein (e.g., unstructured interviews require no special training but developing a test does).

What is worse is that a lot of the prescriptions (e.g., random selection) are contraindicated by over one hundred years of data based on millions of participants. But for Colarelli this is not a problem, as the author clearly either does not understand the research in personnel psychology or ignores it at his convenience.

The book was reviewed in *Personnel Psychology* by Mark Wilson with the abstract reading: "The central point of the book is that industrial-organizational psychology (I-O) requires decision makers to act in ways that are not in agreement with how they have evolved to behave and make decisions. The discussion of how humans behaved several thousand years ago will remain nothing more than speculation and has no place in a serious science of behavior until someone invents a time machine. We are constantly told that "traditional methods" are preferred to the I-O approach, especially in the private sector. A reasonable alternative hypothesis as to why decision makers do not want to use data-based decision making is because they fear it will reduce their power to control the organization. Authors have every right to speculate on anything they want when they write a book. This author includes a lot of speculation and not much research to illustrate his points. The premise is bad, he does not deliver on what he says he is going to cover, and the book is hard to read without throwing it across the room several times."

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

**Ambitious and valuable attempt to Darwinize HRM**

By G. Saad

To the extent that the core knowledge in the business sciences has been amassed void of an infusion of

biological and evolutionary-based theorizing, Stephen Colarelli deserves credit for attempting a daring endeavor namely to seek ways of Darwinizing his area of expertise.

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