Understanding Organizations: Interpreting Organizational Communication Cultures
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Abstract:
The organizational communication culture method has been used in more than 200 analyses of "real-world" organizations (e.g., a legal services office, a cooperative food store, an engineering unit of a major corporation, a rock band) and organizations presented in literature (e.g., the U.S. Army of Joseph Heller's Catch-22). By using the OCC method interpreters come to understand the symbolic world of the organization they study as well as the process by which members construct, maintain, and transform organizations. By presenting the method and presenting Gerald Pepper's case study illustration of the method (chap. 10), the book seeks three sets of readers. First, the role of communication in the construction of symbolic realities is an important intellectual question that is receiving a great deal of scholarly attention (e.g., witness the impact of Fisher's 1987 book Human Communication as Narration); this book will contribute to those discussions. Second, the OCC method has been valuable for helping students analyze organizations; the book makes the OCC method available to students of organizational communication and organizational theory. Third, given the intense practical interest in organizational culture in the 1980s (e.g., Peters's and Waterman's In Search of Excellence [1982]), managers of organizations and those studying to be managers will find a systematic approach to understanding organizational culture helpful. The book is useful, then, to scholars, students, and managers of organizations.
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