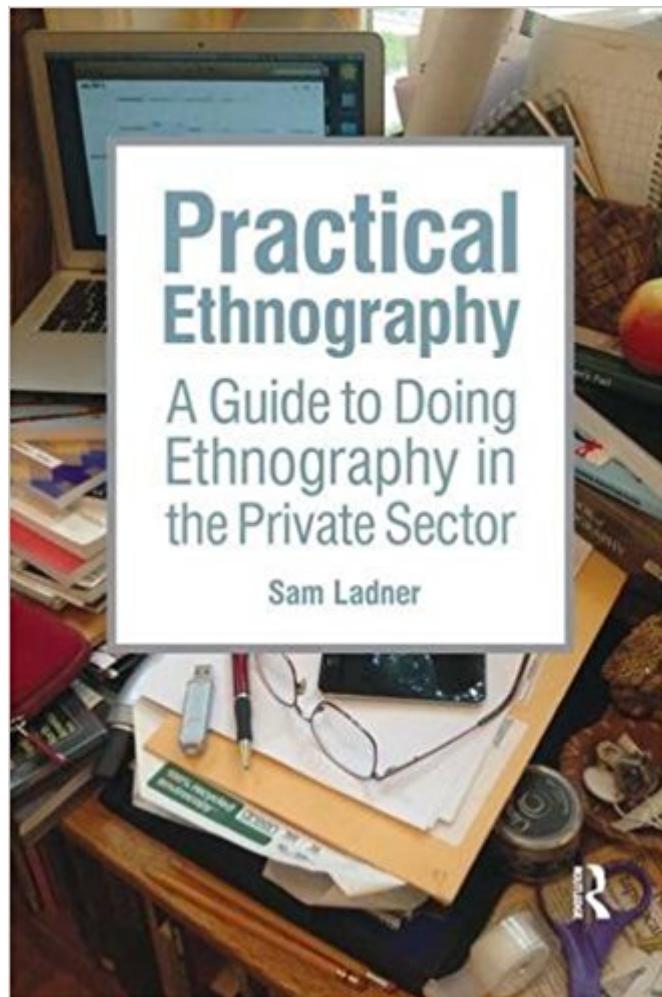


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Practical Ethnography: A Guide To Doing Ethnography In The Private Sector



Synopsis

Ethnography is an increasingly important research method in the private sector, yet ethnographic literature continues to focus on an academic audience. Sam Ladner fills the gap by advancing rigorous ethnographic practice that is tailored to corporate settings where colleagues are not steeped in social theory, research time lines may be days rather than months or years, and research sponsors expect actionable outcomes and recommendations. Ladner provides step-by-step guidance at every turn--covering core methods, research design, using the latest mobile and digital technologies, project and client management, ethics, reporting, and translating your findings into business strategies. This book is the perfect resource for private-sector researchers, designers, and managers seeking robust ethnographic tools or academic researchers hoping to conduct research in corporate settings. More information on the book is available at <http://www.practicalethnography.com/>.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is one of those rare books that balances academic rigor with practice-based implications. Sam does a great job of mediating the theory required to talk about ethnography with the language needed to communicate to business-minded readers. I'm a practicing design researcher myself, and although perhaps not the main target reader for this book, I learned a lot. I would particularly recommend the book for business leaders who interact with qualitative researchers or are thinking about bringing it into their organization, or to practitioners who have some experience with research

but seek a more well-rounded explanation. I recommended that my students all pick up a copy. Even if they don't become ethnographers, ethnographic approaches affect many parts of the design process. Similarly, even if you don't work with ethnography, the methods and frameworks in this book are transportable to many contexts.

I've been running usability studies and field studies for about 15 years. As an in-house user experience researcher, I got great value from this book and will explore the ethnographic approach further. I was chuckling, nodding and highlighting in roughly equal measure. Solid read, well written.

This book sits on my desk, dog-eared and highlighted, and I refer to it more than just about any other resource that I have. And it's not because I am a corporate ethnographer - I'm not. But it allows me to use my background in anthropology to do my current job in solutions consulting BETTER, and think about the problems of consumers, developers and C-level executives with a different perspective that brings immediate value to my company and its clients. Dr. Ladner provides not only combines strong theoretical foundation with first-hand narratives of her own experience in the field, but also offers practical advice and applications that are immediately applicable in the field or in the office.

From theory and analysis to working with stakeholders and creating proposals, this book touches on the key aspects involved in doing high-quality ethnography in a business setting. While most of the book is a primer on designing, conducting and managing ethnographic projects, Ladner does not gloss over the important stuff, like the misconceptions of ethnography in business, managing client expectations, ethics, the various aspects of culture that can be studied through ethnography (identity, values, beliefs, behaviors), and what ethnography is actually meant to accomplish. There's enough in here to satisfy everyone. The veteran researcher will take great interest in Ladner's thoughts on how to maneuver corporate culture and be successful with ethnographic research. The novice or non-researcher will appreciate how Ladner demystifies the process of ethnography, and provides an in-depth review of how to actually manage and conduct an ethnographic project. Importantly, anyone struggling to communicate the value of ethnography to stakeholders or clients will find a helpful ally here. I highly recommend this book to just about anyone interested in ethnography in business, including: 1) students and young professionals who are trained in ethnography and want to apply it in a business setting; 2) veteran researchers who want a quick, good reference book and a fresh perspective; 3) non-researchers (e.g., product managers,

designers, engineers) who want to understand how ethnography fits into business and design and how it can help improve their products and services.

This book closes a gap in the literature: a book for practitioners who are not necessarily social scientists but who want to understand and use ethnography for understanding real-world problems. Hardly theory-free, and more than a practical manual, this is an engaging and useful book that will help you think differently about how to understand what's going on with organizations, consumers, communities, and the like.

This is by far the best introduction to private sector ethnography I've ever read. If you're in any way responsible for the success of a product or service, then I highly recommend this book. It will teach you how to understand your clients deeply and apply that understanding to creating optimal buying and after-purchase experiences.

I just finished reading this book and found it incredibly helpful. Not only does it validate some of my own experiences in the private sector, but it also serves as a valuable "translation" document for any academic researcher seeking to connect with those outside of the academy. The author strikes the perfect balance between attending to foundational issues of ethnography (use of theory, justifying sampling, ethical practices) and giving practical advice (tools to use in the field, recruiting participants, explaining what ethnography is and why it works). I particularly appreciated the focus on understanding your audience and clients and how to meet their needs (not something we are well versed in at the university.) I would recommend this book not just to ethnographers, but any qualitative researcher interested in consulting. I'll be bringing my copy to my qualitative research classes in the fall and passing it around to the students.

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