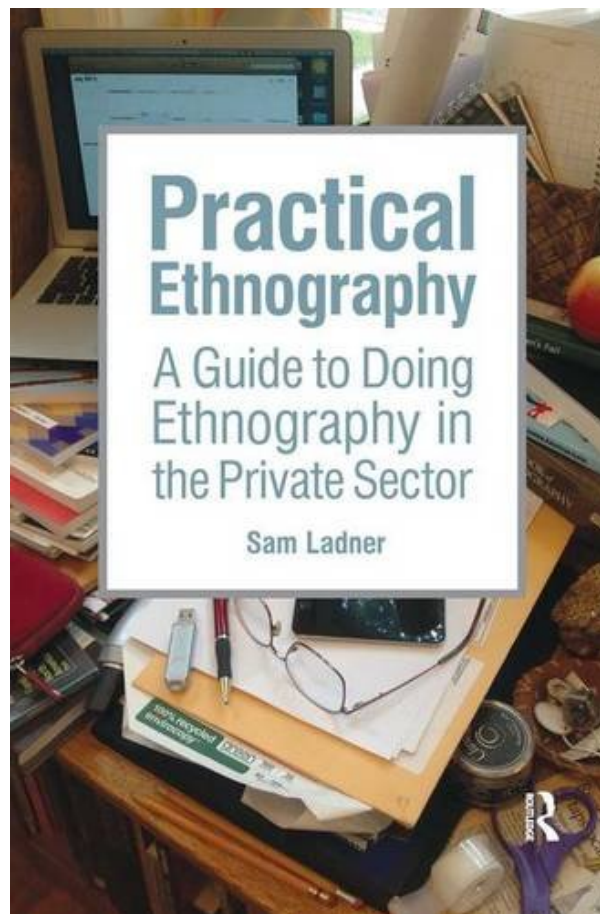
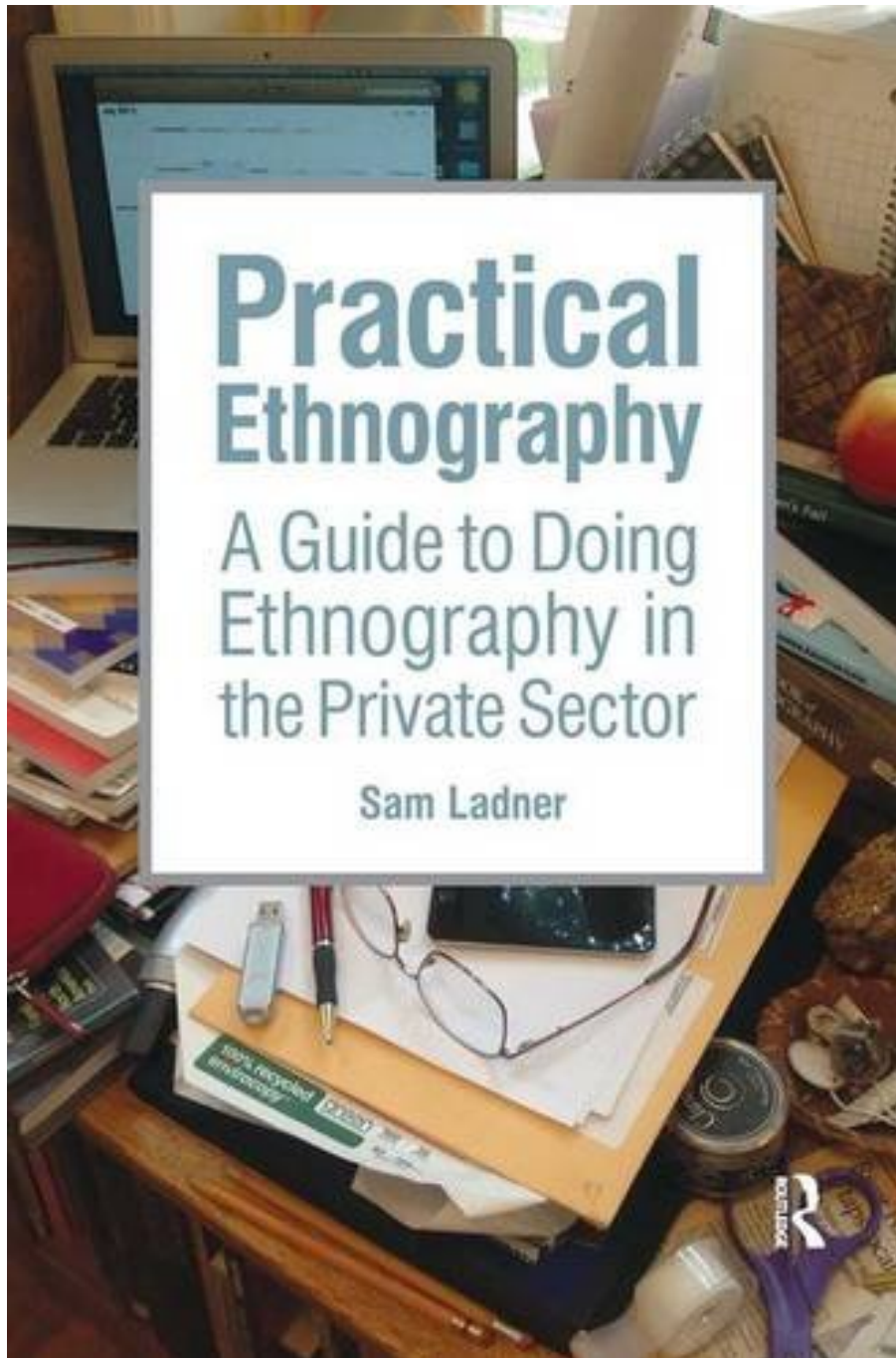


PRACTICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: A GUIDE TO DOING ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR BY SAM LADNER



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Review

“In this admirably concise yet comprehensive book, Ladner has created a strong perspective on the praxis of private sector ethnography. She has generously shared her own tradecraft, which practitioners, experienced and novice alike, will find useful to hone their skills, across the project lifecycle. This volume marks another phase in the maturing of the field and lays down a foundation for further development, documentation and reflection on its practices.”

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“This book will be key reading for professionals who want to apply ethnographic methodologies in a business setting, and/or enter the commercial anthropology area. I don't know any book that represents my experiences as accurately as Sam Ladner's Practical Ethnography and yet delights me with many well-told narratives that instruct both seasoned ethnographers as well as novices. If you work in this field, this book should be in your library.”

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"This unusual but useful handbook by sociology Ladner (Microsoft) discusses doing ethnography in corporate and nonprofit environments. Principally aimed at practitioners, it references but does not duplicate previous handbooks of ethnographic methods, most of which are aimed at academic practice. ... Especially useful are sections on technologies available to enhance data collection, down-to-earth descriptions of analytical procedures, and how the style of reporting influences whether a client will actually use research. This work does not replace other handbooks on ethnographic fieldwork but is a fine supplement for those entering this very different kind of research area. Summing Up: Recommended."

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—Amy Santee, *Anthropologizing*

About the Author

Sam Ladner, PhD, works as both an academic and a practitioner. A sociologist specializing in the social aspects of technological change, she has published articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Time & Society* and *The Canadian Journal of Communication*. Ladner successfully operated her own research firm, Copernicus Consulting, until recently joining Microsoft as a Senior User Researcher in the Microsoft Office division. She served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Ted Rogers School of Information Technology Management at Ryerson University in Toronto, where she also taught qualitative research methods as an adjunct professor. She holds a PhD in sociology from York University, an M.A. in communication from Simon Fraser University, and a Bachelor's of Journalism from University of King's College.

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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.practicaethnography.com/>.

- Sales Rank: #457813 in Books
- Published on: 2014-03-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .80" w x 6.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 211 pages

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent balance

By Thomas Wendt

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.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

But it allows me to use my background in anthropology to do my current job in solutions consulting BETTER, and think about the p

By Stephanie Oberlander

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.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Great for researchers, product managers, designers, engineers, etc...

By Amy L. Santee

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.

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