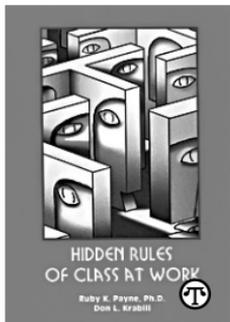


# How Class Rules The Workplace

(NAPSA)—Most American workers walk around with blinders on, says Ron Jimmerson, Human Resources Manager at Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids, Michigan. For that matter, so do many of the bosses and CEOs.

“All these people from different



classes are coming together in the workplace and they don't understand where the conflicts are coming from,” says Jimmerson. “They don't see that there are hid-

den rules.”

Jimmerson learned about those rules as well as other class-related issues from Ruby Payne, known to thousands of teachers and school administrators for her book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, which has sold more than 600,000 copies in the past eight years. Dr. Payne's no-nonsense examples and practical solutions for educators hit a nerve in businessman Don Krabill, founder and CEO of Geocel Holdings, who recognized that the same economic realities were having an impact on the workplace. The two collaborated on *Hidden Rules of Class in the Workplace* (2002), a book tailored to people in all kinds of businesses, including law enforcement and social services.

The book explains how hidden rules of the middle class and wealth influence hiring, firing

and promotion. It defines hidden rules as unspoken cues and mindsets that are based on economic class and seldom, if ever, articulated.

“People know that something is holding them back in their career, but they aren't sure what it is,” says Payne, who also conducts more than 200 seminars a year. She says that wearing certain styles of clothes, discussing the boss in a certain way or even using casual speech can have a negative effect.

Krabill points out that bosses often fail to explain such problems to an employee from a working class or poverty background because they assume the employee should know better. For example, an employee who works hard but curses or uses bad grammar may find herself written off by a middle-class supervisor. Krabill also remembers an intelligent, hard-working young man with a rural Oklahoma background who kept to his homespun speech patterns after being hired.

“Finally I had to tell him that he couldn't succeed in this position and say ‘I might could have’ because he was representing our company to the rest of the world,” says Krabill, who heads companies in the U.S. and Great Britain. The young man decided to make his language more formal and eventually went on to have a 20-year career with the company.

Books are available at [www.ahaprocess.com](http://www.ahaprocess.com) or at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).