

## BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

### Finance Explained for People Like Me

I never thought I would say this, but there's a new business book out that I find really useful.

Let me explain that I majored in art history in college. Our school had no core curricular requirements, but to "challenge" myself, I took an introductory economics class once. I think I got a C.

That's pretty much the extent of my schooling that's remotely related to finance.

So, when I started this job almost six years ago, I could have used *Financial Intelligence: A Manager's Guide to Knowing What the Numbers Really Mean* (Harvard Business School Press) by Karen Berman and Joe Knight. Written with the help of former *Inc.* magazine writer John Case, it's a plain-English crash course in finance. And I mean plain English: It starts out explaining what a CFO is. It then goes on to everything from leverage and liquidity ratios to working capital management. Throughout the book, it explains why it's useful to understand these financial topics using examples from day-to-day business and the high-profile fraud scandals of Enron and its like.

Towards the end of the book there are two chapters on how financial intelligence helps managers do their jobs better, and how to get started creating a financially intelligent department.

CFOs who want to promote financial literacy among the non-financial managers they work with might consider recommending this book. It reads easily without dumbing down, and it's comprehensive.

It's like *The Elements of Style* of finance.