

A LEADERSHIP LIBRARY

Assembled by and Recommended for you by
Jim Smith, PCC, The Executive Happiness Coach®



In September, 2008, I was asked by several clients to recommend good books on Leadership. I like what's on my list, but my tomes tend toward EQ and the soft skills, and I want to present a well-rounded list. So I put out a request to my coaching network that asked: "What is the ONE title you have on your leadership bookshelf, that you love to recommend, and why?"

The following reflects my own recommendations and those of several dozen others. Titles marked with *** were recommended by several people -- these are definitely keepers! Enjoy! Jim

*****A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future**

Daniel H. Pink

It's not specifically about leadership, though it deals with some leadership issues and is a most interesting read. This book makes you THINK, and leaders need to be thinking out of the proverbial box.

Beyond the Wall of Resistance: Unconventional Strategies that Build Support for Change

Rick Maurer

It focuses on transforming resistance to achieve positive outcomes and build lasting relationships. It has great practical information and is a straightforward, easy read and well written with lively business examples.

Blind Spots: Why Smart People Do Dumb Things

by Madeleine L. Van Hecke

The book helps us recognize our own blind spots and suggests ways to overcome them so we make better decisions. The "how to get through the forest when the trees are in the way" book.

Bo's Lasting Lessons: The Legendary Coach Teaches The Timeless Fundamentals of Leadership

by Bo Schembechler and John U. Bacon

Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies

Jim Collins and Jerry I. Porras

Good information about building visionary companies that blends the business with the people & culture aspect of a good company. It helps leaders understand there is more to just having a company than rules.

*****Developing The Leaders Around You: How to Help Others Reach Their Full Potential**

John C. Maxwell

Maxwell's book all have an underlying Christian theme (he is, after all, a pastor) but the leadership fundamentals are sound and practical.

Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done

Larry Bossidy, Ram Charan and Charles Burck



Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy Revised and Updated

David D. Burns

******First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently***

Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman

*****Good to Great: Why some companies make the leap... and others don't.***

Jim Collins

Collin's classic (the "sequel" to *Built to Last*) details what he found when analyzing the long-term great companies of our time – it wasn't the industry or technology that made them great – it was Level Five Leadership (defined in the book) and a simple set of core strategies. Best part is that any organization can adapt these strategies to their own situation.

Judgment: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls

Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis

A must-have for any level leader.

1. Leading the Leaders

2. Management/Mismanagement Styles: How To Identify a Style and What To Do About It

3. Managing Corporate Lifecycles

Ichak Adizes, PhD

A casual reader may be quick to dismiss Adizes' "PAEI" model as overly simplistic; however, its linkage to the types of leadership needed at each of the stages of the corporate lifecycle is where the power of leadership lies.

Leading Change

John Kotter

Wisdom on Best Practices for change from one of the gurus of management.

Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership

James A. Autry

Managing from the Heart

Hyley Bracey, Jack Rosenblum, Aubrey Sanford and Roy Trueblood

A simple old one that still works.

Now, Discover Your Strengths

Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton

"Sequel" to *First Break All The Rules*. This book started the strengths revolution and builds on Peter Drucker's principle of maximize strengths in order to make weaknesses irrelevant. Using strengths brings benefits that are hard to buy, such as engagement, innovation and productivity.

People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflict

Robert Bolton

People Styles at Work: Making Bad Relationships Good and Good Relationships Better

Robert Bolton and Dorothy Grover Bolton



Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work

David Rock

It applies all the newest brain research to leadership and ways of thinking. Unique and useful.

******Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion***

Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee

An easy to understand book that discusses EQ in terms that anyone can understand and provides examples of the benefits. Some of the EQ books get into how the brain works and can get people lost. This and *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* are simpler.

Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life

Barry Oshry

This is a simple book that addresses the 'dances' of top, middle and bottom in organizations. Everyone is a Top, Middle or Bottom and can be more than one or all of those roles, so it's interesting to see how those dynamics change relationships and what you can learn from them.

******The Answer to How is Yes: Acting on What Matters***

Peter Block

Block offers a healthier way of making decisions using a leadership model in which convening, engaging and defining the question replace vision, charisma and reliance on techniques and tools for leadership. Block suggests that a major problem of the traditional leadership models is that people are pressured into making decisions quickly. In his view sometimes the answer to two alternatives is Yes, meaning the process needs to flow a bit before the final answer emerges. This is to counter the danger of making premature decisions.

The Courageous Follower: Standing Up To and For Our Leaders

Ira Chaleff

A really clear look at followership—a must for all leaders to understand for two reasons: first, it's important to know what might be going on in the heads and hearts of your followers, and second, even leaders need to follow others sometimes.

The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done

Peter F. Drucker

The definitive book by the 'father' of modern management and the man who created the leadership/management distinction.

The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization

Peter Senge

A great resource for those that are burning themselves out running on that hamster wheel at breakneck speed to compensate for situations that may be addressed by stepping back to understand the larger systems that may be in play and addressing their efforts at a higher level.

******The Leadership Challenge (The Leadership Practices Inventory)***

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner



The One Thing You Need to Know: ...About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success

Marcus Buckingham

The Oz Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability

Craig Hickman, Tom Smith and Roger Connors

The Success Principles™: How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be

Jack Canfield and Janet Switzer

True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership (J-B Warren Bennis Series)

Bill George, David Gergen and Peter Sims

Because all true leadership is transparent—it comes from within and *True North* starts from within the Leader and their specific experiences. Very well documented as the author interviews 120+ top ranking executives and adds those to his own experience as a Fortune 500 CEO.

What It Takes To Be #1: Vince Lombardi on Leadership

by Vince Lombardi Jr.

******What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful***

Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Reiter

I believe in the concept of "feedforward" to modify observable behaviors since the past is history and cannot be changed. Also, I appreciate the Global Leadership Inventory in the Appendix based on Accenture research.

******Who Moved My Cheese?: An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life***

Spencer Johnson and Kenneth Blanchard

It is trite. It is cliched. And it is essential daily knowledge—needed to move forward with purpose each and every day and through every situation... Recognizing when a situation has changed and choosing to move in a different direction is a skill that great leaders have. This is a one-hour read (a story) that will net hours of discussion!

Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment: How to Improve Productivity, Quality and Employee Satisfaction

William Byham and Jeff Cox

It has been around a lot but it still works.

And my personal recommendations (in addition to a couple already on the above list:

Note: While many of the great leadership books listed above are... well, GREAT... it's tough to get many leaders to slog thru 250 pages of mostly academic research. I have many of the above on my own shelf, but also have several "one-hour reads" or excerpts from larger books that I ask my clients to read and then discuss & apply.



How Full Is Your Bucket? Positive strategies for work and life

Tom Rath and Don Clifton

This is one of them (truly – this book is a short form of: *First, Break All The Rules*). You want a positive culture? You gotta start with how you personally show up!

The World is Flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century

Thomas L. Friedman

If I have a leadership team thinking about strategy, I have them read the first 170 pages of this book. The rest is optional, but the ten Flatteners are important for any future thinking.

The Tipping Point: How little things can make a big difference

Malcolm Gladwell

Again, from a strategy standpoint, this book has valuable insight, applicable to marketing as well as culture shift in an organization.

The Emotional Intelligence Quickbook: Everything you need to know

Bradberry and Greaves

I love Boyatzis and McKee (my MBA in Org Behavior comes from Case!), but come on, how many busy leaders do YOU know who are willing to slog thru 200 pp of brain theory to get to a few gems about leadership. I give my clients this book – in 30 minutes they are conversational about EQ, and it's tons easier to work with them on their interpersonal skills from there.

Improvise This! How to think on your feet so you don't fall on your face

Mark Bergren, Molly Cox, and Jim Detmar

Have your leader read Chaps 1 and 6 (What is “Yes, and..?”) and then watch the fun begin. A fabulous discussion and behavior modification tool, esp for leaders who are High D (DISC) or STJ (MBTI) and who need to loosen up a bit without feeling like they are losing control.

Death By Meeting: A leadership fable

Patrick Lencioni

I love this book! I've seen its application transform the whole meeting paradigm at several organizations.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Patrick Lencioni

Lencioni is one of the masters of the 'short-story as management allegory' genre. If you are familiar with the stages of team formation (forming, storming, norming, performing, transforming), you will recognize them at the root of Lencioni's team model. But he takes a different approach, coming at the challenge of team formation from an 'absence of' perspective, then addresses what to do at each level of building a team. I use his model constantly when working w/ leadership teams. It is simple, people can grasp it easily, and it works.

Happy developmental reading!

Enjoy! Jim