

Brilliant Leadership: Patterns for Creating High-Impact Teams

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Encouraging leaders to have confidence in themselves, maintain their individuality, and find their own management styles, Brilliant Leadership Styles is a supportive business guide.

Executive director Suzanne Martin's motivational leadership guide *Brilliant Leadership* outlines nine patterns followed by successful leaders.

Focused on maximizing team productivity, this guide covers leadership techniques including communication, feedback, and deep listening, emphasizing customization as it identifies the patterns that different types of leaders are drawn to (for example, patterns related to feedback, values, and stories). There's coverage of values like connection and resilience, too, alongside detailed guidance on navigating employees' different operating models. Each chapter concludes with a series of contemplative reflection questions for further engagement.

While various leader archetypes are covered as models, the book also stresses the importance of authenticity: making sales in one's own voice, instead of imitating other salespeople, is crucial to success, as is learning to focus one's energy on what matters most while cutting out distractions. Personal anecdotes are used to illuminate such approaches further, as are testimonials from leaders at Google and YouTube that cover both battle stories and lessons learned, as with a story regarding Google's system for ranking priorities in triage situations, illustrating that a person cannot say yes to everything.

The prose is engaging and diverse, mixing tales of job interviews with memories of a colleague's interest in artificial intelligence and a story about how one executive juggled their responsibilities without getting burnt out. It extracts practical insights from each illustration: the tale of a manager learning about an HR ethics complaint regarding a handwritten note is used to reflect on the idea that "when people have a lack of information, they make up their own story about things like tone and subtext." Still, the transitions between stories are rushed, so that some ideas are not afforded enough room to breathe and develop. This is also true of its fast treatment of tools including CliftonStrengths and the Hogan Assessment. Nonetheless, the book's declarative, straightforward tone and rhetorical questions are effective for getting its points across, and its punchy bullet points are handy for easy recall. Popular culture references also humanize its work, as with references to Cards for Humanity and "cosplaying as Blake from *Glengarry Glen Ross*."

An insightful and encouraging business guide, *Brilliant Leadership* includes tools for personal discernment so that each person can cultivate their own style of leadership.

JOSEPH S. PETE (May 10, 2024)

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