

Executive Influence: Impacting Your Workplace for Christ

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Politics and religion have been considered taboo topics at work. With regard to politics, this is probably no longer the case. Today, tabloid headlines scream with government scandals and talking-head politicians dominate the television talk shows, making politics fair game for water-cooler conversation. Can the same, however, be said for religion? Probably not, particularly in the executive suite. The fear remains that using the workplace as a pulpit will be seen as exerting undue influence over subordinates.

In this book, however, the authors contend there is a middle ground between overly aggressive evangelism and deafening silence. Hamel, a former pastor and author, and Crane, a businessman and former owner of comps.com, maintain that the ministry is not the only avenue for people of faith to travel when finding ways “to spread the salt and the light.” The theme of this book could be summarized in this quote: “The operating phrase for Christians in executive roles is ‘using the position without abusing the power.’ “

Toward that end, the authors have collected ideas and philosophies from fifteen successful CEOs and businesspeople, including Bill Pollard of ServiceMaster; Dr. David Parsons, former Air Force pilot and pediatric surgeon; Merrill Oster of Oster Communications; and Anne Beiler, CEO of Auntie Anne’s Pretzels. These Christian leaders share insights on how they have proclaimed their faith, not just at church on Sundays, but throughout their personal and professional lives. Such thorny issues as accepting others who have different religious beliefs, navigating the ups and downs of operating family-owned businesses, and managing high-tech corporations with integrity are discussed in well-organized and well-written chapters. Each chapter concludes with an “Other Voices” section, with short vignettes from more leaders offering additional insights.

Readers who share the authors’ and contributors’ faith will find this book useful, because it offers many ideas on becoming a better steward of that faith. For those who do not, it is still thought-provoking, tackling the question of what is, and what is not, appropriate when sharing personal beliefs on the job.

VICKI GERVICKAS (May / June 2003)

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