Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Make the Noise Go Away: The Power of an Effective Second-in-Command

Larry G. Linne
Ken Koller, contributor
iUniverse
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Parable-style business books are quick, easy reads ideally suited to the busy executive. By telling a simple story, the author can realistically demonstrate business principles that might otherwise seem dry and lifeless, and teach a lesson in the process.

Larry Linne's *Make the Noise Go Away* follows the tradition of such best-selling business books as *The One Minute Manager* by Ken Blanchard and *Who Moved My Cheese* by Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. In fact, the foreword to *Make the Noise Go Away* was written by Blanchard.

Linne employs the parable exceedingly well in his book. Jim, the CEO of a company he founded, goes on a weekend retreat with Brett, hired by Jim three years prior to be his second in command. The purpose of the retreat is for the two executives to share their thoughts about how Brett "made the noise go away" for Jim, and how their working relationship could be even better. The "noise" in Jim's head, writes Linne, "showed up as lack of communication, things falling through the cracks, people not thinking, and others not showing they really cared about the business."

During the retreat, Jim and Brett identify and detail eleven key principles that make the second in command so valuable, including "upward communication," problem solving, keeping priorities, and aligning with the values of the leader. The principles are revealed in short chapters that showcase good-natured banter between the two characters.

Make the Noise Go Away also includes valuable guidance on hiring a second in command, as well as a little twist at the end of the book that brings home the importance of this role. Linne himself spent a major portion of his career as a second in command, which lends additional credibility to the story.

What makes the telling of this parable particularly effective is the fact that the author uses the technique to reach a dual audience. Readers in either position—first in command or second—will better appreciate the other as they witness the honest, open relationship between the two characters.

During the time that Jim and Brett collaborate on defining key principles, their complementary strengths become clear. In the end, the reader observes that both executives not only practice what they preach but also depend on one another to be successful, a lesson that makes this book both powerful and relevant.

Barry Silverstein