

Book Review for 7/05/04 by Malcolm Abel

Title: "Be, Know, Do: Leadership the Army Way"

Author: Frances Hesselbein and General Eric K. Shinseki (USA Ret.)

Publisher: Jossey-Bass

Length: 171 pages

Price: \$24.95

Reading time: 3-4 hours

Reading rating: 6 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 3 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

The US Army trains more leaders than any other organization in the world. Each and every day the Army does two things: train soldiers and grows leaders. This book proposes that the principles and practices of effective leadership in the Army are relevant to all civilian organizations, including businesses.

Good management and communication skills used to be the essentials in running a business. But, the global business environment of the 21st Century changed all of that. Business management has been replaced by a need for leadership competencies which can prevail decisively in accordance with real consequences.

"Be, Know, Do" adapts the Army's primary leadership manual to offer practical advice on transforming one and one's organization to be more effective when dealing with the unforeseen crises of the turbulent, global environment. Leadership matters. It creates the trust, teamwork, confidence, motivation, and the clear focus necessary for success. Each of the seven chapters follows the same format. The chapter topic is explained with numerous military examples with a conclusion showing how the topic relates to civilian organizations. Many links are made with traditional business leadership authors such as James Kouzes and Barry Posner.

This book is very effective in demonstrating the importance of leadership versus managing, leading versus telling. The consequences in an uncertain and ever changing business environment require leaders who are driven by three little words: be, know, and do.

Be is about who you are inside, your character, which causes others to willingly do or do not what you want them to do. Know means that you must always strive to learn, to master the key skills to gain the trust and commitment of others. Do is the logical end, to bring the be and the know together to act with purpose and direction, to achieve the objective.

"Be, Know, Do" is for everyone in business. In the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment, leadership is not managing 9-5. Instead, leadership must be a way of life for those who are successful in business and for those businesses which succeed in the future.

Malcolm Abel is professor of business law in the college of Business at Western Carolina University. His scholarly interests include public law, hospitality law, and women and the law. For previously reviewed books, visit our Web site at www.wcu.edu/cob/reviews.