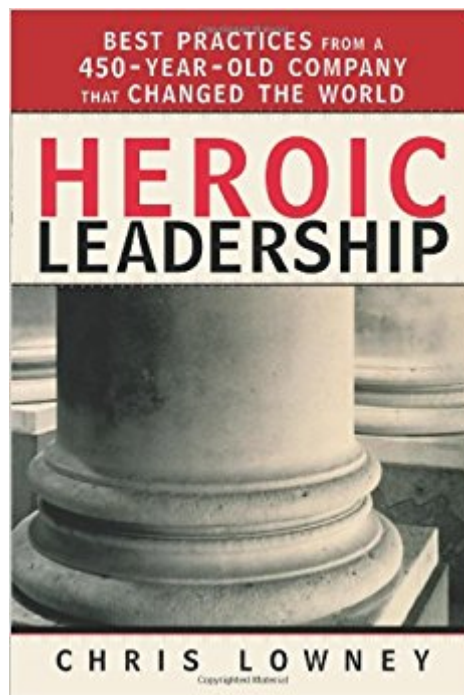




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Heroic Leadership: Best Practices From A 450-Year-Old Company That Changed The World



Synopsis

Leadership Principles for Lasting Success Leadership makes great companies, but few of us truly understand how to turn ourselves and others into great leaders. One company—the Jesuits—pioneered a unique formula for molding leaders and in the process built one of history's most successful companies. In this groundbreaking book, Chris Lowney reveals the leadership principles that have guided the Jesuits for more than 450 years: self-awareness, ingenuity, love, and heroism. Lowney shows how these same principles can make each of us a dynamic leader in the twenty-first century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What can a 16th-century priest tell a 21st-century business executive about leadership? Plenty, believes this author, who points out that from a 10-man "company" founded by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1540, the Jesuits are now the world's largest religious order, with 21,000 professionals. In this absorbing, lucid book, Lowney, who left a seven-year stint as a Jesuit seminarian to become a managing director at J.P. Morgan, explores how the Jesuits have successfully grappled with challenges that test great companies—forging seamless multinational teams, motivating performance, being open to change and staying adaptable. As he takes the reader on an engaging romp through slices of Jesuit history, Lowney references four Jesuit pillars of success: self-awareness (reflection), ingenuity (embracing change), love (positive attitudes toward others) and heroism (energizing ambitions). Despite the emphasis on the four pillars, this is no formulaic

"12-steps-to-success" tome. Rather than focusing on what leaders do, Lowney shows how the Jesuit approach focuses on who leaders are. His conversational voice draws the reader in as he unfolds leadership lessons from some unlikely Jesuit role models, including explorer Benedetto de Goes, linguist Matteo Ricci and mathematician and astronomer Christopher Clavius. Lowney's passion for history is appealing, and he is careful not to sugarcoat his historical role models. Professionals looking for a One-Minute type of business book won't find it here, but more reflective businesspeople of faith will find Lowney's insights a breath of fresh air. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Entertaining and well researched, this is a must-read for any business leader, and an inspirational read for anyone who wants to be a better human being.”
• Walter Gubert, chairman of the investment bank, J. P. Morgan
“Lowney does a wonderfully engaging job of making clear the connections between our current leadership challenges and the principles employed so effectively by the Jesuits.”
• Edward J. Kelly III, president and ceo, Mercantile Bankshares Corporation
“In this absorbing, lucid book, Lowney . . . explores how the Jesuits have successfully grappled with challenges that test great companies. Reflective business people of faith will find Lowney's insights a breath of fresh air.”
• Publishers Weekly, starred review
“This 450-year-old institution [seems] as current today as it was four centuries ago. Lowney shows us how every employee can and should be a leader and that love-driven leadership does work.”
• Richard K. Green, former president and COO, Blistex, Inc.
“This informative, fascinating book tells how Jesuits produced both outstanding individual leaders and a culture of leadership. This is a book to be enjoyed, pondered, and put into practice.”
• John W. Padberg, S.J., director, Institute of Jesuit Sources
CIP
“In his book, Heroic Leadership, Chris Lowney uses the history and tradition of the Jesuit order to articulate a model for authentic, moral leadership. As Governor of Colorado, Heroic Leadership helped me think about how to lead better than any other book out there.”
• Bill Ritter, Jr. Former Governor of Colorado

This book was very repetitive and was not what I had expected. It discusses the traditions of the Jesuits and how that impacted the key leader in the book who used those lessons to help succeed in corporate america. I put the book down about half way through.

In my opinion this book holds the key to our nation's future ... a return to moralistic, inspirational and

humble leadership motivated by the good in mankind. It reads easily, like historical fiction; yet it is true. For those in the military services, it is an excellent example of the power of "mission command."

I first read this book about a year ago when participating in a class on understanding the Jesuit heritage of my place of work. I re-read it on the plane a couple of days ago returning from an overseas location where we recently established a program. The first time around I thought it was wonderful; re-reading it, I found it both wonderful and also profoundly relevant to our new enterprise. Lowney takes as his thesis the idea that the same precepts that have animated the success of the Jesuit order can likewise inspire personal and business accomplishment. I have to say he has me convinced. He boils down concepts - like *Cura Personalis*, *Magis*, and *Ad maiorem dei gloriam* - that will be familiar to those who attended Jesuit schools to what he describes as the four integrated "pillars" of leadership: Self-awareness, Ingenuity, Love and Heroism. He then uses the history of the Jesuit order to demonstrate how, through application of the four pillars, the Society of Jesus grew from a motley band of 10 likeminded University students of different nationalities, with no agenda beyond doing work "to help souls," to become arguably the most successful and influential Catholic religious order. Lowney's work is not without controversy, especially his contention that the Jesuit's' leadership lessons can be replicated minus their overtly religious agenda. No doubt the order's founder, Inigo (Latinized to Ignatius) of Loyola - for whom doing it "for the glory of God" was all that mattered - would disapprove. However secular research would suggest that the 16th century Basque had some very profound insights that have application beyond turning back the tide of the Reformation and making converts worldwide. I have to say I find Ignatius to be an intensely attractive character, not least because he advocated active engagement in the world, not withdrawal from it. Here's a guy who for most his life just can't get it quite right - and who along the way experiences some incredible reverses - but who never stops trying to perfect his muddled thinking. He just keeps plugging away until it starts to become clear. And it turns out that it's his very lack of success that leads to his deepest insight: that an intensive regimen of active self-reflection will help him make better decisions. What resonated with me during my most recent reading was how the Jesuit order faced the daunting task of preserving their purpose in remote lands among peoples with unfamiliar traditions - the same challenge facing my organization. Lowney provides many examples of how the Jesuits succeeded at that task. The training that the novice Jesuit undergoes involves frank self-examination, the letting go of attachments (the concept of "indifference" or the freedom to choose any course of action unencumbered by ingrained habits

and prejudices), while learning, through active and repeated self-reflection, to validate one's own instincts to action. This creates a confident, prepared and self-reliant individual, eager to embrace life's challenges. In addition, the Jesuits teach a methodology for self-reflection - the Spiritual Exercises and the Examen - that can be used (the Examen everyday) to reinforce their initial training. Their selection process is tough - they take only the best and most purposeful. Those who are selected are encouraged to innovate and shown how love adds passion and purpose to the pursuit of heroic ambitions. The result, says Lowney, is an organization that can adapt easily to radically different circumstances while preserving its core values (the same "preserve the core, stimulate progress" that Built to Last author Jim Collins sees as the hallmark of companies of enduring greatness). At times during my visit to our new overseas location I found myself wondering if our task was just too daunting, the culture just too alien, to hope to transplant our unique brand. After reading how the Jesuits managed it, I feel more confident than ever that my organization can do likewise and should do likewise - not shrinking from full-out engagement - through the innovative application of our fundamental values to this new environment. Thanks Chris, and Inigo, for the reinvigorating lesson!

This book presents a roadmap of leadership as seen through the eyes of a former Jesuit Seminarian and JP Morgan Investment Banker. Drawing upon his experience at both institutions, moreover the Jesuits, Chris Lowney details major tenets of leadership that should be the cornerstone of any organization. Weaved throughout this book are stories of how the Jesuits traveled throughout the world for over 500 years teaching their unique style of leadership. This is a must read for any College, University, or Business as true leadership philosophies are taught. I have sent this book to many CEO's and friends throughout the years and in all instances this book has gotten great reviews.

Awesome book. It gives you the incredible history of the Jesuit order. As Jesuit history unfolds you learn their leadership principles; principles that you can incorporate into your own work life.

To view leadership from the perspective of a human being, not a money-seeking robot, this book is the one to read. In today's world, we need to remember that we are leading PEOPLE and not leading a machine. When we forget our people, we lose everything. The book is fantastic -- history, philosophy, and great advice.

This book is a good read. I think it needs to be balanced with another book from Ignatian Spirituality, but it is a great introduction to integrating your spiritual life and your professional life.

I often felt frustrated in my "Seven Habits" flavored time and business management courses because they never got deep enough for me on leadership. For instance, there was that "first thing's first" habit, or according to another author, that "organize your A's, B's and C's priorities." But none of these scratched this itch: How do I decide what's an A? What's the "first thing"? And how do I communicate those priorities to my folks as a leader? Heroic Leadership is sort of Pattonesque - don't tell your folks how to do things, just tell them what needs doing. But it goes that important step further about setting the bar high on building organizations. As I look around and see quality in some places and not in others, I can see how the heroic leadership piece is being played out. We also don't talk enough about the value of introspection. The worst people I've worked for had an enormous blind spot for their own pig-headed-ness. Rather than accept the fact that there might be ideas different from their own, they just shoveled crap from on high, and got on your case when you didn't accept it with a smile on your face. Leadership books talk about 360 evaluations, but none gets at the heart of the matter the way this book does. I'm buying/sharing copies with colleagues of mine who are developing leadership programs at a couple of our major military graduate institutions. Very good stuff, highly recommended.

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