



The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders

John H. Zenger

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A No-Nonsense, Battle-Tested Program for Developing Exceptional Leadership Skills--Both In Your Organization and Yourself. The ability to lead, far more than just a natural gift, is a concrete and learnable skill - one that can be acquired by studying and applying specific proficiencies and attitudes. The Extraordinary Leader draws on responses from 200,000 questionnaires to define the skills that comprise effective leadership, and then provides a systematic and innovative program for attaining, developing, and implementing those skills. The Extraordinary Leader reveals leadership as a skill, one that can be consciously learned and developed by anyone. This breakthrough book identifies the competencies necessary for effective leadership by analyzing the responses of tens of thousands of workforce members as they describe, in effect, "What makes a great leader?" Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman - two of today's preeminent leadership experts analyze the answers and provide a broad and universal model for achieving exceptional results. They outline the five core competencies that form the basis for successful leadership and detail techniques that include: Methods that top organizations use to develop leaders from within their own ranks. A major weakness in most leadership development programs has been the tendency to aim low and strive for incremental improvements in individual areas of weakness. When the results inevitably fail to impact the bottom line, organizations abandon programs as unsuccessful and again resume their misguided focus on uncovering and eliminating leadership weaknesses instead of identifying and developing leadership strengths. The Extraordinary Leader provides research-based strategies for strengthening leadership both in individuals and in organizations and, in the process, delivers a solid yet flexible leadership development program that will provide long-term value to virtually any organization.

The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders Details

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Rob Carr says

The central theory of this book is good. The demonstration of the importance of excellent performance over good and the idea of how you get the competencies to that level was powerful. However the book does wander at times and tries to do a set of categorisations of leader types and business types that don't really work.

Samuel says

So, so. A few interesting points, but too much repeating the same ideas over and over. Also, I dislike those "the N bullet points to achieve X " sections

Michelle says

I like reading leadership books. They always make me think and reflect on how I am leading my team. The authors break leadership down to five main traits, which they call "tent poles": character, personal capability, focus on results, interpersonal skills, and leading organizational change. Each chapter addresses a different insight and will provide you with reflection and action items to enhance your leadership. An overall solid read. I'm looking forward to reading another book by Zenger/Folkman next called, "The Inspiring Leader".

Ian says

This book is being used as a textbook for my organization's leadership training program. It's an excellent research-driven investigation of what makes a great leader and what bad or good leaders can do to become great.

There are some familiar insights like build on your strengths and leaders are made, not born. However, there were a lot of new insights for me as well:

1. Great leaders are secure enough to hire companions who are as good or better than them.
2. Great is a huge difference from good.
3. Leadership improvement is not linear or incremental.
4. To be great, the leader must also fit the organization. You may be a great leader at one organization, but fail in another.
5. Character is central and essential to leadership.

Accompanied with directed discussion and accountability, this book has changed the way that I work, lead, and even follow. An excellent read for anyone interested in leadership at any level. Even if you're just a husband or father, this book could be insightful.

Michael says

I definitely recommend this to anyone that really wants to be a leader and a true leader at that! This book goes far beyond just one's employment. I have thought up and hopefully have begun to implement these traits in both my personal and church life. No question I have had many a manager in my life, but can only say that a true leader can be counted on one hand. If you are in a leadership position of any type right now, I highly suggest you read this book and make sure that you really are fulfilling what a leader should be doing for your employees. If you want to be a leader, read it for sure!

Paul W says

An insightful assessment of the competencies required for effective leadership.

A key message in the book is that when assessing performance the focus should be on reinforcing strengths rather than on weaknesses (except in the case of "fatal flaws"). This insight contrasts with the approach adopted, until recently, in most performance assessment processes.

However the book also has a number of inconsistencies and challenges.

The authors criticise, rightly, as "patently ridiculous" assessing leaders based on too many (175) behaviours (p86). But they then list 83 competencies under 16 behavioural headings (pp103-108) with other behaviours scattered across other pages.

The authors also seem to flip between universalist theory (adopting these behaviours will work for everyone) and contingency theory (you need to select leaders with the behaviours required to match an organisation's specific circumstances)

The other challenge is that ultimately, the authors' assessment of leadership is based on people's perceptions of effective leadership. They do not adequately link perceptions of leadership effectiveness with measureable results or outcomes.

Despite these points, the book is a rewarding read with insights on leadership and practical suggestions for leadership development

Amy says

Fabulous, really fabulous. States and calls for pillars of leadership that build on strengths versus weaknesses (unless they are fatal flaws). loved this, so so true! have incorporated this into my leadership acumen years ago and am still learning. Build on your own and your staff's strengths and diversify, will result in exponentially stronger and greater people, teams, outcomes..

Aurora says

If I could have, I would have given this book 3/5 stars. It was a very good management/leadership/business book - a lot of good food for thought.

Nitin says

Read in parts. Found it useful

Christopher Gohman says

Want to learn about yourself and how you can be a leader in the workplace? This book is for you. Combined with personality and emotional intelligence indicators, it really helped me develop my world-view for the work place and how I can be an effective leader

Cora says

A fabulous resource for leadership development.

Ron Oltmanns says

This is an insightful and useful book on leadership. Zenger and Folkman have done a lot of field research on leadership and leveraged 360 feedback data to distinguish what people see in their peers and leaders and what makes them forgettable, average or extraordinary. They come up with 16 competencies that matter and five domains that these are grouped within to build a useful leadership model that can be used (and has been) in leadership building efforts within organizations. I recommend this book.

Rick Yvanovich says

Leadership can be taught and this book is one step in your journey to piece the leadership puzzle together

Paco Nieto says

I think it is a good book for general leadership referral, like it is the departing point for other leadership development topics.

Darice says

I appreciate the Zenger Folkman philosophy of building on your strengths instead of focusing on your

weaknesses.
