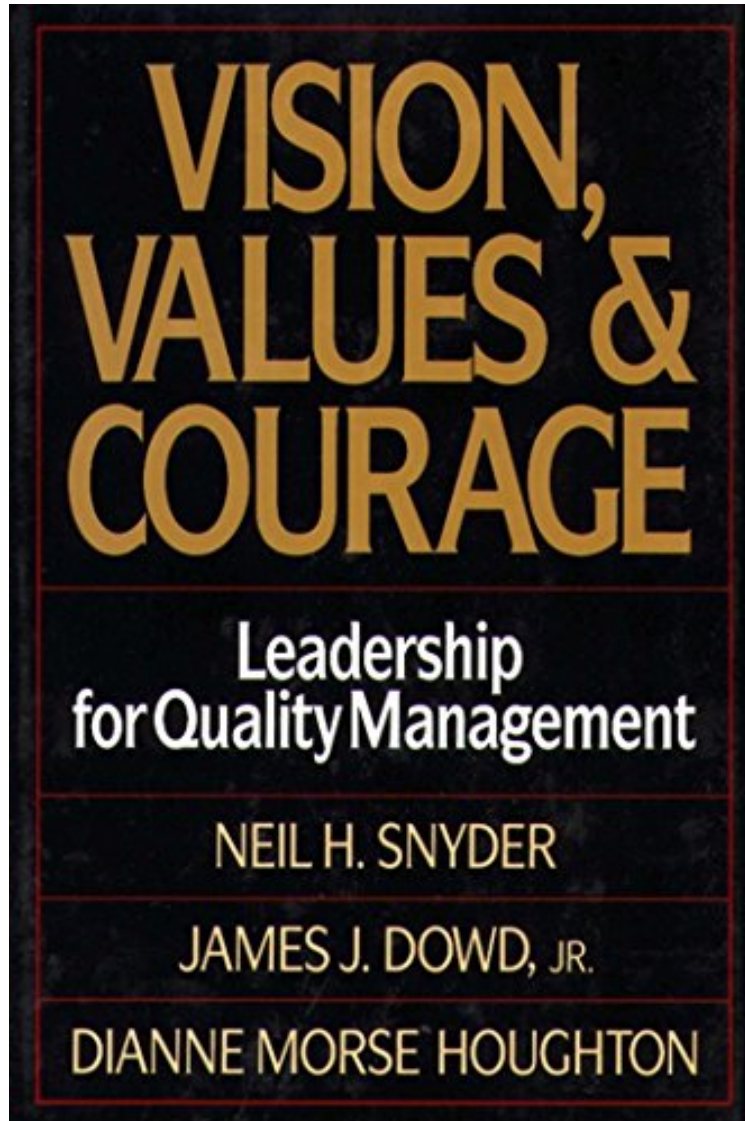


Vision, Values, and Courage: Leadership for Quality Management

Neil Snyder

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Neil Snyder : Vision, Values, and Courage: Leadership for Quality Management before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vision, Values, and Courage: Leadership for Quality Management:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Business mgmt texts: long on hyperbole, short on logic By A Customer Vision, Values and Courage's title alone summarizes the fascination of the "field" of management with marketable, but painfully vague concepts. Nowhere in the book are these concepts defined with any precision. (E.g., how do we know vision when we see it? How much courage is sufficient, and when does it become foolhardy? As for values, I have yet to meet a human without any. Telling me that a leader must have values is not particularly

enlightening when one might wish to distinguish between leaders such as, say, Ted Turner and Adolph Hitler. In fact, it resembles the old rejoinder of international relations scholars to the notion of the "national interest": ask 20 different people what the term means, and you'll get at least 20 different answers.) Hence, any exploration of concepts devoid of even minimal clarity becomes virtually tautological. (To be sure, these particular "concepts" are words that may be especially intractable, but that should hardly have prevented massive reconceptualization of the work before inflicting it on the market.) Then again, anyone with at least a smattering of knowledge of social sciences and methods is immediately painfully aware within the first few pages that without a clear argument based on clear concepts, it becomes impossible to construct basic hypotheses (not even attempted here) or to collect evidence systematically, let alone engage in insightful analysis--be it descriptive or causal--of patterns or lack thereof. The case studies, as with so many management books, simply skew the sample towards successful leaders and do not even bother to worry about all those potential leaders with the allegedly necessary vision, values and courage, but who failed to raise their business career to the level of the other titans. (The proportion of failed leaders may not be easily measured, but logical rigor demands the recognition of this severe, and some would say devastating, limitation for the study.) Note that all this is not Dr. Snyder's fault, but the basic, essential flaw in the entire field of business management studies and the culture it encourages among its proponents and educators. (Working in a top 5 business school's library, I can confirm that nearly every book on reserve assigned to management courses is virtually as fluffy.) Snyder's book simply repeats the prevailing paradigm in style and content, a paradigm that paralyzes the rest of the literature from providing actual education. The case studies are mildly intriguing as thumbnail biographies, but when it comes time to answer the question, "what conclusions can be learned from this book?", the embarrassing answer is: nothing you'd stake your professional reputation on. The book does have its own value, however: I got a dollar for it at the local used bookstore, and feel quite confident that, at that price, I made out like a bandit, notwithstanding the loss on the original investment.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Business mgmt texts: long on hyperbole, short on logic
By Customer
Vision, Values and Courage's title alone summarizes the fascination of the "field" of management with marketable, but painfully vague concepts. Nowhere in the book are these concepts defined with any precision. (E.g., how do we know vision when we see it? How much courage is sufficient, and when does it become foolhardy? As for values, I have yet to meet a human without any. Telling me that a leader must have values is not particularly enlightening when one might wish to distinguish between leaders such as, say, Ted Turner and Adolph Hitler. In fact, it resembles the old rejoinder of international relations scholars to the notion of the "national interest": ask 20 different people what the term means, and you'll get at least 20 different answers.) Hence, any exploration of concepts devoid of even minimal clarity becomes virtually tautological. (To be sure, these particular "concepts" are words that may be especially intractable, but that should hardly have prevented massive reconceptualization of the work before inflicting it on the market.) Then again, anyone with at least a smattering of knowledge of social sciences and methods is immediately painfully aware within the first few pages that without a clear argument based on clear concepts, it becomes impossible to construct basic hypotheses (not even attempted here) or to collect evidence systematically, let alone engage in insightful analysis--be it descriptive or causal--of patterns or lack thereof. The case studies, as with so many management books, simply skew the sample towards successful leaders and do not even bother to worry about all those potential leaders with the allegedly necessary vision, values and courage, but who failed to raise their business career to the level of the other titans. (The proportion of failed leaders may not be easily measured, but logical rigor demands the recognition of this severe, and some would say devastating, limitation for the study.) Note that all this is not Dr. Snyder's fault, but the basic, essential flaw in the entire field of business management studies and the culture it encourages among its proponents and educators. (Working in a top 5 business school's library, I can confirm that nearly every book on reserve assigned to management courses is virtually as fluffy.) Snyder's book simply repeats the prevailing paradigm in style and content, a paradigm that paralyzes the rest of the literature from providing actual education. The case studies are mildly intriguing as thumbnail biographies, but when it comes time to answer the question, "what conclusions can be learned from this book?", the embarrassing answer is: nothing you'd stake your professional reputation on. The book does have its own value, however: I got a dollar for it at the local used bookstore, and feel quite confident that, at that price, I made out like a bandit, notwithstanding the loss on the original investment.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Vague, yet at the same time a classic for the 21st century
By A Customer
Neil Snyder wrote *Vision, Values, and Courage* to summarize the particular character traits that enabled Sam Walton, Ray Kroc, and Walt Disney to not only outpace their competitors, but also to position themselves in a league of their own as pioneers of business. While Snyder's book delves into these men's visions for their businesses, he at best provides a cursory summary of their amazing stories. Nonetheless, Snyder writes well and convinces his audience that vision, values, and courage are not only the stuff of which dreams are made, but the stuff that molds true leaders. While his book does provide a superior character sketch of men who made themselves great, it is not a self-help manual. This book should be read as a complement to Steven Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Only then can the reader apply the philosophy of a Ray Kroc to his own personal quest.

Today, quality is the battleground on which global competition takes place, yet without effective leadership no quality

program can succeed. This penetrating book exposes the problems that arise when leadership in business fails to do its job, and offers powerful, inspirational examples of firms that have confronted this problem and prevailed through leadership that aims at producing quality results. By highlighting the practices of such noted leaders as Walt Disney and Michael Eisner at Walt Disney, Ray Kroc at McDonald's, Sam Walton at Wal-Mart, David Kearns at Xerox, and Robert Galvin at Motorola, the authors reveal how each of these legendary leaders possessed three crucial leadership characteristics -- vision, strong values and beliefs, and the active courage to make their visions a reality. These characteristics, they show, make the difference between superior performance and "business as usual." With eloquent case studies, the authors demonstrate that unusually successful business leaders show the way for their employees by nurturing cultures that encourage and reward quality performance and by exhibiting personal characteristics that inspire excellence. A leader dedicated to a single vision, the authors show, inspires personal commitment to a common purpose. Walt Disney had a vision of a company that would never stop creating, innovating, and growing. Values and beliefs serve as the basis for direction and action in a business. Superior leaders, the authors argue, are expert in the promotion of values -- such as Ray Kroc's obsession with high-quality, inexpensive food in a clean environment. The courage to make things happen is exhibited most dramatically by Sam Walton's perseverance in mass market retailing. The payoffs for these superior leaders included the loyalty and commitment of their employees, quality, and profits. The authors' approach to leadership for quality management -- with its focus on vision, values, and courage -- emphatically demonstrates what leaders must do to consistently produce quality results if they want their organizations to prosper and grow.

From Publishers Weekly The authors here address American business managers: "To be effective, executives must adjust their thinking . . . They must learn to lead, not manage." Snyder and Dowd, University of Virginia business school professors, and Houghton, a Washington, D.C., consultant, define the components of effective leadership: vision that allows employees to see the future connected clearly to the present; beliefs and values that give meaning to action; and the courage to act on those beliefs. In scholarly prose the authors assess the total quality management theories of W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran and Philip B. Crosby, and they offer case studies of such noted business leaders as Ray Kroc, Sam Walton, Walt Disney and Michael Eisner. This is a valuable study that will interest general business readers as well as management specialists. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. Charles G. Tewksbury President, Institute of Textile Technology In their well researched, candid analysis of the personal attributes that set leaders apart from managers, Snyder, Dowd, and Houghton have isolated the essential "nuggets" -- personal beliefs and behaviors that truly effective leaders exhibit. Vision, Values, and Courage is a must reading for the student of management, whether a young person preparing for a career in business leadership or a seasoned leader. Jeffroy C. Walker Managing Partner, Chemical Venture Partners A fascinating synopsis of how vision and leadership differentiate world class companies like McDonald's, Xerox, Wal-Mart and Disney from stagnant giants like Sears and IBM. The 'best practices' identified by the authors are models that I will use when working with the CEOs of the companies in which we have investments. Carolyn Gunn Training and Development Manager, Hewlett Packard Vision, Values, and Courage struck me as very real and tuned-in. I found the depth and richness of examples from beyond-the-business world stimulating and utterly refreshing, providing a valuable balance to the anecdotal and company-specific material. Harry E. Figgie, Jr. CEO and Chairman, Figgie International This fabulous book demonstrates how vision, values, and courage are the quintessential traits American managers must possess if we are to regain world leadership. A "must" read. Dennis F. Ratner CEO and President, The Hair Cuttery All entrepreneurs must embrace these concepts.