

ULTIMATE LEADERSHIP

WINNING
EXECUTION STRATEGIES
for YOUR SITUATION

RUSSELL E. PALMER

Ultimate Leadership: Winning Execution Strategies for Your Situation

Russell E. Palmer

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“All the management advice in the world won’t help you much if you can’t adapt it to actual situations. That’s where Russ Palmer stands out. These are smart, practical leadership principles that are tried and tested in real-world business circumstances.”

—Edward Whitacre, Jr., Chairman Emeritus of AT&T, former Chairman and CEO of AT&T and Southwest Bell

“It is very fitting that Ultimate Leadership is authored by Russ Palmer, the ultimate leader. It was with his guidance and friendship that I successfully transitioned from four orderly decades as a Marine to the arcane world of corporate America.”

—General P.X. Kelley, USMC (Ret.), 28th Commandant of the Marine Corps

“Russ Palmer’s Ultimate Leadership is truly the last book you’ll ever need on the subject. Russ shows once again why he is the dean when it comes to explaining why leadership matters. Ultimate Leadership is the ultimate statement on how leaders in business, government, and nonprofits alike can keep up with changes and conquer diverse organizational contexts.”

—John J. DiJulio, Jr., Frederic Fox Leadership Professor, University of Pennsylvania, former director, White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

“This book about leadership from a contextual viewpoint is nothing short of brilliant. Russ’s easy-to-read book is filled with practical examples of leading from the context of a particular situation. The steps to extraordinary leadership are not hugely different, but the applications are endless. Thank you, Russ, for making sense out of a very disputable subject.”

—Gerard R. Roche, Chairman of Heidrick & Struggles

“This book is refreshing proof that the essential personal traits of successful leaders are identifiable. Russ Palmer presents them in a manner providing great reading and much food for thought.”

—Gordon Bethune, Chairman, Aloha Airgroup, former CEO, Continental Airlines

“Leadership is essential for all seasons, but its effective exercise depends much upon the season. In a masterful account, Russ Palmer draws on his rich store of personal experience to show how adaptive leadership makes the difference. For understanding what actions are required of all leaders—and how those actions must also be tailored to circumstance—Ultimate Leadership is the essential read.”

—Michael Useem, Professor of Management and Director of the Center for Leadership at the Wharton School, and author of *The Go Point: When It’s Time to Decide*

Go Beyond Generic Leadership: Become an Outstanding Leader in Your Unique Environment

To succeed, leaders must understand and apply the core principles of leadership—but that's not enough. You need to shape your approach for any unique situation. Too many leaders don't know how to do that—and that's why they fail. *Ultimate Leadership* shows how to adapt the principles of leadership to different challenges, contexts, and organizations.

Russell E. Palmer—who has had three very different, highly successful careers as head of one of the world's largest accounting firms, Dean of the Wharton School, and an entrepreneur—helps you identify the leadership model most appropriate for your environment, and how to lead accordingly. You'll learn better ways to lead your equals, help an organization weather crises, transform its culture, lead entrepreneurial organizations, lead global organizations...even lead non-profit and academic institutions.

Then, drawing on interviews with an extraordinary spectrum of outstanding leaders, Palmer helps you master the attribute every leader must have: the ability to inspire your unique organization, even in the face of the most daunting challenges.

- Achieving empowerment, even in classic “top-down” organizations

Exercising strong authority without falling victim to ego or closed-mindedness

- Transforming an organization of peers

Driving changes in a strategic direction when key power centers disagree

- Turning danger into opportunity

Mastering the art of rapid, focused, hands-on execution for organizations in crisis

- Leading cultural change that sticks

Reconnecting structures, processes, and strategies with the new realities you face

- Learning from the Wharton experience

Succeeding in an environment with widely diverse, highly influential stakeholders

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Shauntelle James says

I wanted to read this book to get a sense of how organizations operation from the top-down approach. I am seeing that the leaders are the heart of the organization. Leaders are under tremendous pressure to communicate with colleges and motivate their team members. They are also expected to be shining examples. A good leaders knows when to relax and when to take charge during crisis. Leaders must be creative and innovation if they are going to compete. There several contexts and approaches to leadership; and no one way is considered correct. Leaders are expected to think ahead and be prepare for any challenge. They must also understand the importance of placing themselves in a winning position. Leaders must know how to recognize a good employee. Becoming a leader is a process that is learned through trail-and-error. From what I have learned so far about leaders, I would say I still have a lot to learn.

Bryan Downey says

The topics covered in this reading really do cover host of different situations that you could be exposed to in your leadership endeavors. I particularly liked the comparisons in how business is done in different parts of the world. While my job typically doesn't deal with issues outside of the US it still a little nugget of knowledge that I now have. I highly recommend this book.

Maria Miaoulis says

Well-written and injected with stories from his own business experiences, this book offers ideas and advice that will help you succeed in your goals. A must-read!

Leader Summaries says

Desde Leader Summaries recomendamos la lectura del libro Liderazgo contextual, de Russell E. Palmer. Las personas interesadas en las siguientes temáticas lo encontrarán práctico y útil: liderazgo, características de un buen líder.

En el siguiente enlace tienes el resumen del libro Liderazgo contextual, Cómo aplicar distintos estilos de liderazgo según el contexto en el que se desarrolla una empresa: Liderazgo contextual

Robert says

The last time I checked, Amazon offers 53,047 books on the some aspect of business leadership and many more will be published in months and years to come. Most experts seem to approach the subject in one of

two ways: either in terms of specific attributes (vision, courage, faith, authenticity, credibility, etc.) or in terms of impact such as President Franklin Roosevelt's leadership of the United States out of the Great Depression and then to an Allied victory in World War Two.

Palmer focuses on one attribute that has not as yet, in my opinion, received the attention it deserves. In this book, he shares his perspectives on what he calls ultimate leadership: "My central premise is that the principles of leadership can be effective in a wide variety of situations [hence the importance of each context], they often need to be applied in a very different manner depending on the circumstances and the constituent groups involved. The principles of leadership and this context-driven approach to leadership form the book's basic themes. In other words, this book argues that for leaders to be effective – whether they lead a multimillion-dollar corporation with thousands of employees or a small not-for-profit organization with half a dozen volunteers – it is important that they focus not just on the principles of successful leadership, but also on the context in which the principles are applied. Understanding the context enables leaders to execute effectively."

The most effective leaders are those who resemble a cultural anthropologist when encountering a serious problem or a major opportunity. Invoking one metaphor, they have lots of "tools" in their "toolbox" and have mastered the skills required by each. Invoking another metaphor, they have a multi-speed "transmission" as well as a powerful "engine" and instantly responsive "brakes": they can quickly shift gears, vary speed, and change direction whenever necessary. Invoking still another metaphor, the most effective leaders see themselves as "conductors" who enable musicians playing entirely different instruments in teams (wind, brass, and percussion) that produce entirely different sounds to perform the same symphony. Each tool, gear, or instrument has its own context.

The same is true of business leaders who realize that those within the given workforce have separate, often quite different self-interests. Therefore, they understand how to supervise each associate to help achieve the ultimate objective, whatever that objective may be. Some people seem to need more reassurances and more frequent encouragement than do others. Effective leaders recognize such varying needs and try to accommodate them. Although Palmer correctly stresses the importance of understanding and then responding appropriately to both context and environment, what he characterizes as "ultimate leadership" does not preclude high standards of character and performance to which everyone in a given organization – starting at the top -- is held accountable. It is no coincidence that year after year, many of the same companies appear on the lists of those that are most valuable and most highly admired. A close examination of those companies reveals that however different they may be in most respects, all of them have "ultimate leaders" at all levels and in all areas of their operations. Palmer would be among the first to point out that that is also not a coincidence.

Josh says

I know this book is highly reviewed and valued...I just didn't get much out of it. I understand the idea of presenting leadership in various scenarios; I don't feel like that was accomplished here. Leadership is briefly discussed, and then a plethora of scenarios are supposedly laid out to illustrate the flexibility necessary to apply leadership in each of this disparate scenarios. The problem that I had was that I was unable to see beneath the surface of the scenarios to the leadership beneath...how did any particular scenario apply to the information in the first chapter was my constant question. I freely admit that it may have been a problem on

my part, but that doesn't change my reaction to the book.

Julie Baswell says

I could not even finish this book it was so boring and unfocused. I learned nothing in the half that I did read.

Keith says

Palmer observes that depending on the organizational style, a different style of leadership is more appropriate. Then he focuses on two styles of leadership. The autocratic top-down style, and the peer style.
