Title: The Communicating Leader: The key to strategic alignment (2nd Ed)

Author: Gustav Puth

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Reviewer: XC Birkenbach

The aim of the book according to the author, is "meant to be a usable tool, an instrument in the toolbox of the real leader and leadership student". The book is written in conversational style (as intended by the author) and the 219 pages of the 10 chapters are logically packaged into three parts. While the main emphasis is naturally on leadership and communication, the coverage includes topics typically encountered in Organisational Behaviour or Management texts, e.g., organizational culture, managing change, motivation, conflict management and strategic management.

The layout of the text is neat with a one-page framework summary at the start of each chapter as well as a chapter summary at the end of each chapter. A list of references is also given at the end of every chapter.

While the content areas mentioned above are covered in traditional fashion, the author has sketched them against the backdrop of the demands of a changing society and, specifically, the changing world of work.

It is my view that the author has succeeded in his aim to provide an instrument in the toolbox of, especially, practicing managers. The book is replete with menus of "how to do it" (and what not to do). This includes common sense advice on effective listening, principles of a supportive communication style, keys to developing business leadership, the do's and don'ts of imparting a vision etc. For a first-time reader of this sort of subject matter, concepts like corporate culture, change management, motivation, and conflict management are discussed in a user friendly manner.

In summary, the book is written and presented in a style that should be welcomed by practicing managers and would-be leaders. It is certainly excellent as a guide to the do's and don'ts of many leadership tasks. For this reason it is highly recommended to the target audience. Students in the undergraduate courses such as Organisational Behaviour would also benefit by reading the book. Senior students are probably not going to find enough depth in the subject matter and may even find the presentation of some ideas naïve.

In conclusion, a few matters for the author to consider. On page 159 the Thomas-Kilmann conflict management style grid is confused with the work of Blake and Mouton. Also, the 40/30/20 formula for calculating the conclusion that senior managers spend less than 3% of their time (*and energy*) on building a corporate perspective needs greater explanation. The logic of this has certainly eluded the current reviewer. Finally, although the author points out that the book is written in "conversational style", my view is that some of the referencing should have been more rigorous. For example, much of the chapter on change (Chapter 6) is based on the work of Bill Bridges. Yet, Bridges is referred to only once on p.115 as having made a distinction between change and transition. Readers who are not familiar with Bridges' work may not recognize that the model of transition and the rest of the accompanying ideas in the chapter are the work of the original author.