

Manfred Kets de Vries: *The Leadership Mystique – a users' manual for the human enterprise*. Prentice Hall, Great Britain. 2001.

Manfred Kets de Vries is one of Europe's leading management thinkers and writers. He is an academic of international standing (Econ. Drs. Amsterdam, DBA Harvard & Psychoanalyst of International Psychoanalytical Association) who currently holds the Chair of Human Resource Management at INSEAD. He is programme director of INSEAD's top management programme, *The Challenge of Leadership: Developing your Emotional Intelligence*, and director of the INSEAD/HEC joint programme, *Coaching and Consulting for Change*. He also consults widely on organisational transformation and strategic human resource management.

In *Leadership Mystique* he applies a clinical psychology paradigm to his considerable experience of leadership in organisations today. The result is an insightful, entertaining and thought provoking read as he addresses the many complex issues that underlie effective leadership, and considers the day-to-day behaviour of leading people in the human enterprise. He invites the reader to participate throughout by analysing his/her behaviour and understanding each step along the way. He addresses essentially those who aspire to lead more effectively.

The subjects he covers are:

- **The importance of emotional intelligence in the current world of work.** To motivate and hold people to commitment requires an awareness of an ability to manage one's own emotions as well as the ability to identify and manage those of others. Reference to Luborsky's 'core conflictual relationship scheme' is valuable here as it conceptualises one's inner emotional dynamic and the impact this has on interactions with others.
- **The changes faced by the organisational paradigm at present.** These he characterises as a move from control, compliance and compartmentalisation, to a focus on ideas, information and interaction. This requires a change in leadership style from authoritarianism to communication for the effective management of on-going change. It requires a breadth of interaction that addresses all manner of stakeholders.
- **Those things that make for poor leadership and the effect they have on the organisation.** Using the clinical paradigm he describes the dysfunctional behaviours of a leader as a

dramatic, suspicious, detached, depressive or compulsive personality and the resulting, potentially dysfunctional organisational culture. In a separate chapter – The Dilbert Phenomenon – he addresses the 'deadness within' as a leader and his/her organisation face a crisis of meaning typical of our rapidly changing world suggests how to achieve revitalisation.

- **The characteristics of effective leadership, how this is developed and how succession can best be achieved.** He notes three clusters of competencies – personal, social and cognitive – which he has identified in most effective leaders. He considers how best to identify these in others and then develop them to the required level for succession. He is adamant that a leader is responsible for the development of his/her subordinate leaders and ultimate successor.
- **Leadership in a global context and the best organisations for which to work.** He addresses issues of multiculturalism and notes how effective leadership naturally allows for this. He considers the research on organisations people regard as ideal employers and characterises them as 'authentizotic', that is they are true to their vision and values and provide employees the opportunity for self assertion to produce a personal sense of effectiveness and competency. The leader must thus walk the talk and empower and enable his followers to do likewise.

In conclusion Manfred Kets de Vries shows that leadership now requires very different behaviour from the leadership tradition we are used to. It requires leaders who speak to the collective imagination of their people, co-opting them to join in the business journey; leaders who are able to motivate people to full commitment and have them make that extra effort. It's all about human behaviour and thus the applicability of the psychological paradigm. It's about understanding the way people and organisations behave, about creating committed relationships, and about adapting one's own behaviour to lead in a creative and motivating way.

Leadership Mystique is primarily addressed at those who would be better leaders. It is also worth reading by those responsible for identifying and developing potential leaders in organisations, as it is for those simply curious to understand 'the human enterprise'.

Reviewer: Bryan Love (M.A. B.Comm.), Industrial Psychologist in private practice.