

Foreword

In the vast literature on leading, there are classic leadership texts and contemporary leadership texts. Smith and Cockburn's *Dynamic Leadership Models for Global Business: Enhancing Digitally Connected Environments* draws from the best of classic leadership texts and synthesizes it with much recent leadership research. That is to say, in line with the kind of integrated leadership Smith and Cockburn advocate, the book itself pulls together ideas and examples that will make a difference to leading today in a world that is global, that is digitally linked, and that certainly needs dynamic leadership.

Yet Smith and Cockburn don't rest there. More ambitiously, they seek out concepts, examples, and practices – again drawing from the classic and the contemporary – from sources not so often associated with leadership. In such a fast-changing world good leaders can't just focus on leadership skills, but need to cultivate cultures of experimentation, innovation, and learning. Smith and Cockburn make a strong case for updating the best of action learning and research and the knowledge management movements. Leaders must be learners to cope with uncertainty in a time when knowledge from the past may have exceeded its use-by date in contemporary situations.

The integration of such non-traditional leadership material – as a necessary part of the idea toolkit and skill-set of today's dynamic leaders – is an important point of difference for the book. This matters since, unless authors can offer distinct insights and guidance, it is not worth adding to the huge and ever-growing leadership literature. However, there is still room for good books since, as Smith and Cockburn point out, the plethora of articles, books, and leadership development programs, have manifestly failed. The world is still crying out for good leaders and crying tears because of the poor quality of so many leaders in business, politics, and life.

As well as being concerned with the present, good leadership also has to develop foresight for future developments and emerging challenges in the business and natural environmental. Smith and Cockburn attend to this need for temporal double vision: they pay consistent attention to the present with diverse and contemporary case studies – to keep a finger on the pulse of today's challenges and best practice responses; and they track likely future trends across the areas and arenas relevant to leadership. The movement of innovation from being a killer app to being an essential part of core business through leader-inspired cultures of creativity is one such area. A more forward-oriented concern is with how to embed the paradigm-shifting opportunities opened by the sciences of complexity into business as usual.

A final unique selling proposition for *Dynamic Leadership Models for Global Business: Enhancing Digitally Connected Environments* goes back to core strengths of Smith and Cockburn: finding relevant knowledge and integrating both the time-tested and the newly-minted. As a result, what they usefully term today's "socio-digital technologies" and sustainability are chapters standing alongside a

more future-oriented chapter on generational demographics, which pulls in issues of social justice and methods such as epidemiology. There's hard graft in this densely-referenced book that can save you from making leadership such hard graft, so hard to learn, and so hard to enact. Take out a copy and road test it for yourself.

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David McKie teaches *Strategic Communication, Leadership, and Creativity* at Waikato Management School. He recently co-authored two books: one in 2009, with Dr Vikram Murthy, was entitled “*Please Don't Stop the Music: An Ensemble Leadership Repertoire and Strategic Innovation for Uncertain Times*”; the other in 2007, with Dr. Debashish Munshi, was called “*Reconfiguring Public Relations: Ecology, Equity, and Enterprise*.” It won the prestigious international NCA PRIDE award for “*Innovation and Education*” and he also had a chapter in the 2009 NCA PRIDE award-winning book. Overall, he has published, or co-published (including forthcoming), five books, over 25 book chapters and over 50 refereed journal articles. As CEO of RAM (Results by Action Management) International Consulting David also works as a leadership, change, and strategic communication consultant in Asia, Australasia, Europe, and the U.S.