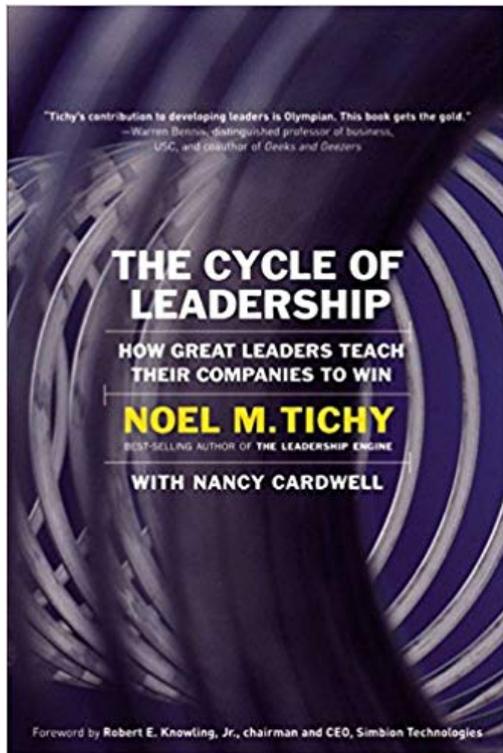


The Cycle of Leadership: How Great Leaders Teach Their Companies to Win by Nancy Cardwell, Noel M. Tichy



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ISBN: 0066620562

ISBN13: 978-0066620565

Author: Nancy Cardwell, Noel M. Tichy

Book title: The Cycle of Leadership: How Great Leaders Teach Their Companies to Win

Pages: 464

Publisher: HarperBusiness; 1 edition (August 2002)

Language: English

Category: Biography & History

Size PDF version: 1550 kb

Size ePUB version: 1686 kb

Size FB2 version: 1381 kb

Other formats: doc lit lrf doc

In *The Leadership Engine*, Noel Tichy showed how great companies strive to create leaders at all levels of the organization, and how those leaders actively develop future generations of leaders. In this new book, he takes the theme further, showing how great companies and their leaders develop their business knowledge into "teachable points of view," spend a great portion of their time giving their learnings to others, sharing best practices, and how they in turn learn and receive business ideas/knowledge from the employees they are teaching.

Calling this exchange a virtuous teaching cycle, Professor Tichy shows how business builders from Jack Welch at GE to Joe Liemandt at Trilogy create organizations that foster this knowledge exchange and how their efforts result in smarter, more agile companies, and winning results. Some of these ideas were showcased in Tichy's recent Harvard Business Review article entitled, "No Ordinary Boot Camp."

Using examples from GE, Ford, Dell, Southwest Airlines and many others, Tichy presents and analyzes these principles in action and shows how managers can begin to transform their own businesses into teaching organizations and, consequently, better-performing companies.



Reviews of the **The Cycle of Leadership: How Great Leaders Teach Their Companies to Win** by Nancy Cardwell, Noel M. Tichy

Skunk Black

Those who are familiar with my reviews of other business books already know that on several dozen occasions, I have strongly recommended *The Leadership Engine* (1997) which Tichy wrote with Eli Cohen and Nancy Cardwell. He teams up with her again in this book, expanding and enriching his concept of leadership development at all levels throughout any organization, regardless of its size or nature. Hence the importance of what Tichy calls a "Virtuous Teaching Cycle": Everybody teaches and everybody learns; all practices, processes, and values promote teaching; all teaching is interactive to generate the effective exchange of knowledge; thereby, maximum use is made of everyone's skills and talents to ensure all-level alignment for smart and rapid response to needs, problems, opportunities, etc. Tichy asserts (and I agree) that hypertransformation (in established organizations) and hypergrowth (in start-ups) are essential to business success. The challenge in established organizations is to overcome what Jim O'Toole characterizes as "the ideology of comfort and the tyranny of custom." For start-ups, the challenge is to achieve appropriate scale while ensuring that new employees are brought on line and up to speed ASAP. In ten chapters, and with precision as well as eloquence, Tichy explains how various organizations (notably GE) have met those and other challenges.

Unlike other authors who address many of the same issues, Tichy also includes a substantial Handbook (pages 285-394) which consists of ten Sections: The Teaching Organization, The Hand You have Been Dealt, Building Your Teachable Point of View, Pulling It All Together, Building a Team Timetable Point of View, Architecting the Leadership Pipeline, Scaling the Teaching Organization, Building Teaching into the DNA, Global Citizenship, and finally, Start the Journey. In the Handbook, Tichy explains and provides decision-makers with just about everything they need to know to design, implement, and then strengthen their own Teaching Organization, one within which the Virtuous Teaching Cycle sustains leadership development at all levels.

In his Introduction to the Handbook, Tichy quotes a brief statement from Thomas Stewart's most recent book, *The Wealth of Knowledge*:

"The knowledge economy stands on three pillars. The first: Knowledge has become what we buy, sell, and do. It is the most important factor of production. The second pillar is a mate, a corollary to the first: Knowledge assets -- that is, intellectual capital -- have become more important to companies than financial and physical assets. The third pillar is this: To prosper in this new economy and exploit these newly vital assets, we need new vocabularies, new management techniques, and new strategies. On these three pillars rest all the new economy's laws and its profits."

Tichy includes this brief statement because it is directly relevant to his own objectives in *The Cycle of Leadership* but also because, unless and until an organization has all three pillars (not one, not two but all three), it cannot survive major challenges which await them, many of which have yet to

be revealed. That is to say, the Teaching Organization can only be built on the foundation they provide.

"Winning leaders are teachers, and winning organizations do encourage and reward teaching. But there is more to it than that. Winning organizations are explicitly designed to be Teaching Organizations, with business processes, organizational structures, and day-to-day operating mechanisms all built to promote teaching." However, Tichy doesn't stop there. More importantly, the teaching that takes place is a distinctive kind of teaching. It is interactive, two-way, even multi-way. Throughout the organization, `teachers' and `students' at all levels teach and learn from each other, and their interactions create a Virtuous Teaching Cycle that keeps generating more learning, more teaching, and the creation of new knowledge."

Those who share my high regard for this book are urged to check out Peter M. Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990) and *The Dance of Change: The Challenges of Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (1999), William Isaacs' *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together: A Pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and in Life* (1999), Carla O'Dell's *If Only We Knew What We Know: The Transfer of Internal Knowledge and Best Practice* (1998), and Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence Prusak's *Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know* (1997).

Best West

The review has nothing to do with the content at all. It has everything to do with the worst quality printing job I have ever seen in a book. The text is so light and inconsistent the book will be hard to read. HarperCollins Publishing needs better quality control of their products.

Ironfire

Tichy expands upon the widely accepted phenomenon of the "learning organization" by suggesting that teaching is key to today's winning organizations. He explains that leader-initiated and maintained teaching with employees at all levels is critical to a "smarter, faster, bigger" organization. In today's knowledge economy, the ability to be the most informed and adaptable company is crucial for success. Tichy argues that all employees of a company regardless of rank have to work together and share what they know if they are to have a competitive advantage. By sharing, all employees know what it takes for the company to succeed.

Mightsinger

Tichy described the "interactive teaching/learning process" as a form of "synergy" whereby "1+1=3" (10). Synergy is defined as the "process of mutual exploration and exchange during which both the teacher and the learner become smarter" (10). Though he uses this term to illustrate the teaching and learning process, he esteemed the four "E's" when choosing potential leaders. The criteria included the following: "Energy" (coping ability for change), "Energize" (ability to excite/inspire), "Edge" (making tough calls), and "Execute" (always delivering, never disappointing) (129). To better support his argument for interactive synergy, Tichy should have included another "E" category-- Educate (the ability to teach, mentor, and guide). Tichy, himself, framed teaching as "opening people's eyes and minds...teaching new ways to see the world and pointing them to new goals...teaching them to teach their own knowledge and teach others" (74). His statement was void of an element in interactive/circulatory teaching.

Tichy referred to Roger Enrico's process of teaching ten "rising leaders" for a consecutive number of long hour days (11)." After a period of teaching, Enrico would send his students home to "work on projects" and brought them back for "follow-up sessions" (11). This illustration was a poor choice on Tichy's part because it has nothing to do with "synergy" and does not appear to align with his definition of a "teaching organization." Not only does Tichy use irrelevant examples and definitions, but he also seemed unclear about the process of the "Virtuous Teaching Cycle." In his introductory statement, Tichy said, "Virtuous Teaching Cycles are dynamic, interactive processes in which everyone teaches, everyone learns and everyone gets smarter, everyday" (xxiv). Yet his next statement about the leadership process does not incorporate this philosophy: "No institution can be

great unless it has a great leader at the top who develops leaders at all levels of the organization" (xxiv).

People who described themselves as "always paranoid" or "never let anyone best him" would seem to be less likely to participate in an interactive process of teaching as depicted by Tichy. The book falls short in conveying a true "interactive teaching process." Not only were there no tangible examples of companies using this approach, but also the main ideas of "greatness" and "winning" represent selfish gain and have nothing to do with having a "teachable point of view." The truth is that without Christ as the teacher leading by example, no one can possibly participate in a process that separates one's pride and power for the humbling experience of learning in an interactive process with a subordinate. Jesus said it clearly: "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (John 13:13-16 NKJV).

Yozshujinn

I bought this for my husband who needed it for a leadership seminar at work. He had no complaints.

Yanthyr

For the Leader and Entrepreneur in me ... I love this book!

Rias

On time, same sharp they described it as, no wear!

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