



Systems Leadership

Creating Positive Organisations

Ian Macdonald, Catherine Burke and Karl Stewart

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This book is concerned with how people come together to achieve a productive purpose. Human survival has always depended upon our ability to form and sustain social organisations. People have a deep need to be creative and to belong. By creating positive organisations we can fulfil these needs and build a worthwhile society.

Such organisations do not occur by chance; a positive organisation is created by the hard work of leaders and members and influenced by the way the organisation is designed, especially its systems. All this needs to be based on an understanding of sound, general principles of behaviour.

This book outlines that work; how to build a positive organisation in terms of general principles and practical examples. Understanding and applying this work requires discipline (not dogma) and creativity. The authors show the significant positive results that can be achieved and detail a range of case studies. Unlike some books which are based on goals, objectives or visions this book concentrates on how this can be achieved. The authors observed and engaged with what good leaders and members actually do and have endeavoured to distil the essence of productive relationships based on core, human values.

This work has been applied in businesses, social service agencies, hospitals, city governments, national governments, armies, churches, public utilities, indigenous communities, schools and other unique organisations. It is intended to help leaders create more humane and productive organisations that can both meet their objectives and improve the human condition. It does so by presenting a coherent theory exemplified by numerous cases and practical experience. As more than one leader has commented, 'this stuff actually works'.

The CD supplied with the book contains 11 case studies which look at the application of systems leadership techniques in a range of organisational contexts.

Contents

Preface; Systems leadership: what use is theory? Part One Principles of Behaviour: Principles of behaviour. Part Two The Nature of Work and Organisations: What is work?; Human capability; Meritocracy; Associations and employment hierarchies; The work of the board with the executive team; Leadership, power and authority; Levels of work. Part Three Systems Leadership: The work of leadership - creating a culture; Leadership, policy and systems; Task formulation and assignment; Authorities and role relationships; Key systems; Teams and teamwork. Part Four Making Change Happen - Putting Theory into Practice: The process of successful change - how is it achieved?; Systems and symbols audit - organisational health check; How to design systems; Creating high performance teams; So what? What difference has this made?; Implementation - discipline or dogma?; Who is there to guard the guards? Essentials of a positive organisation; Complementary theories and practices. Conclusion; Bibliography; Index. Case studies are provided on the CD included with the book.

About the Author

Dr Ian Macdonald is founder and director of Macdonald Associates, an international organisational development consultancy. Dr Catherine Burke is Professor at the School of Policy Planning and Development, University of Southern California, USA. Karl Stewart has held various management roles including Managing Director of Comalco Smelting (now Rio Tinto).

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