

The Deblieux Report

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2018 READING LIST FOR FRONT-LINE LEADERS

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Leadership is a profession. As a front-line workplace leader, you are a professional. The “professional” label brings with it a responsibility to remain current, to be curious, to learn from research, colleagues, and experiences. Reading is one part of being a professional. It explores ideas. It introduces concepts. Most importantly, it encourages curiosity.

No time for reading? Consider this. The average book is ten chapters. One chapter a day is thirty-six and a half books a year. Take weekends off for twenty-six books in the year. Here’s the point, a little reading is better than no reading for a professional workplace leader.

Here is a nudge for 2018. Twelve good reads to broaden your horizons in the year to come.

1. A Manager’s Guide to Preventing Liability for Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Beth K. Whitenbury, J.D.
Understanding your responsibility to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of workplace discrimination is no longer an option. This book takes you back to the basics. It gives you a foundation. Most importantly, it takes away your assumptions. (Eleven chapters)
2. How to Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie
This book was first published in 1936. Except for an occasional reference to Teddy Roosevelt as President, every word of it applies today. I re-read it every year. It is about the most important thing you do every day – building and maintaining relationships with people. (Thirty chapters)
3. Leading with Questions: How Leaders Find the Right Solutions by Knowing What to Ask, Michael J. Marquardt
The day you became a leader, people began leaning toward telling you what they think you want to hear, not what you really need to hear. Questions are your tool for hearing what you need to hear. Questions seem simple. They are not. Marquardt opens your eyes to the art of asking effective questions. (Ten chapters)
4. The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace, Gary Chapman and Paul White
Managers think they show appreciation on a regular basis. Their teams do not agree. “Thank you” is not enough. More importantly, it is not always the right way to show appreciation. Effective leaders know how and when to use each of the five appreciation languages described in this book. (Fifteen chapters)

5. **The Cost of Bad Behavior**, Christine Pearson and Christine Porath
This is the most academic book on this list. It is about respect. You cannot succeed as a leader without knowing what it takes to create and maintain respect. You may think you know how to do it. This book will make you better at it. (Seventeen chapters)
6. **The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari**, Robin Sharma
This is a great story. It is about you. It is about your priorities. Your success depends on your priorities being in the right place. Read it for yourself, your team, your loved ones. (Thirteen chapters)
7. **Get Out of Your Own Way**, Mark Goulston, M.D. and Philip Goldberg
We all have them. We all deny them. We all struggle with them – bad habits. Effective leaders look in their own “selfie-stick” to learn what they do that works and what they do that does not work. Read this book to take a look at your own habits. (Forty chapters)
8. **Managing Transitions: Make the Most of Change**, William Bridges, Ph.D.
Your organization depends on you to lead change. You must embrace it. You must lead it. Bridges does a great job, in simple, easy to follow terms of providing a template for helping people transition from the old to the new. (Eight chapters)
9. **Ego vs. EQ: How Top Business Leaders Beat 8 Ego Trips with Emotional Intelligence**, Jen Shirkani
Emotional intelligence is about how you impact others and how you manage your relationships with others. Your success depends on you being effective at both of them. You risk your success when you let your ego get in the way. Shirkani challenges you to think about the impact of your words, actions, behaviors, and decisions. (Eight chapters)
10. **Never Coach on an Empty Stomach: Bite-size Actions to Energize People and Teams**, Richard A. Greenberg
You are a workplace coach. You create an opportunity for each member of your team to succeed. In this short and to the point book, Greenberg gives you a formula, an approach to hone your coaching skills. (Seven chapters)
11. **Confucius Says: There Are No Fortune Cookies in China**, Edward V. Yang
I met the author, Mr. Yang, on a flight from Chicago the day this book was published. We downloaded it as he regaled me with stories of his incredible life experiences. He advises senior leaders on how to conduct business in China. His brief book gives you insights into a culture you may not know much about. Learning about other cultures is not an option. It is your responsibility. (Seven chapters)
12. **Time Management Magic: How to Get More Done Every Day, Move from Surviving to Thriving**, Lee Cockrell
Time is your lifeblood. You cannot buy it, save it, or borrow it. You must spend it. The only question you need to ask is, “Am I spending my time on the things that make the most difference for the success of my team?” Cockrell, a former Disney executive, guides you through his system for getting to a “yes” answer. (Seven chapters)

There you have it. Twelve books to get you through the year. 173 chapters of reading. An average of fourteen chapters per book (a little higher than the average of ten). That works out to one-half of a chapter each day – not an onerous task. Take weekends off and read about three-quarters of a chapter each weekday. Enough numbers. You are a professional. A professional is curious. A professional is hungry for new knowledge, new insights, new techniques. Find a good reading spot. Find a good reading time. Energize your curiosity bug from within. Start with this list or your own list. You and your team will be glad you did.

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