



## Leaders

*Do you have what it takes to lead your organization to success?*

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

### ***Leaders Who Make a Difference: Essential Strategies for Meeting the Nonprofit Challenge***

*By Burt Nanus and Stephen M. Dobbs. 350 pages. Hardcover. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104.*

**W**hat makes a nonprofit leader? According to Nanus and Dobbs, the leader is the person who marshals the resources to move the organization in the right direction. Leading is very different from managing, they point out. Because managers are responsible for processes and operations, they are interested in what needs to be done and how to do it. Their attention needs to be present-oriented.

In contrast, the leader is concerned with strategies and direction, with where the organization is headed. The leader's attention must be broader and longer term, with one eye on the challenges just over the horizon and the other on the organization's growth potential. Though always cognizant of current operations, the leader is more occupied with building the organization for the future, securing new resources, taking advantage of emerging opportunities, and adapting to change.

A leader may focus on one or more of four areas at any time: the organization's inner world, the outside world, the quality of present operations, and future possibilities. In addition, a leader has six distinctive roles: visionary, strategist, politician, campaigner, coach, and change agent. To be effective, leaders must master all four areas and all six roles.

Likewise, the authors tell us, there are four traits all leaders must have. They must be honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. These, of course, are all learned skills. Leaders are self-taught, and do much self-reflection.

Nonprofits have become increasingly indispensable to U.S. society, note Nanus and Dobbs. More than ever before, we need leaders who can build nonprofit organi-

zations, sustain relationships, provide agreement on vision, and design new strategies.

The authors take you through a fascinating journey of ways you can accomplish these goals. You need to communicate openly, involve all stakeholders, recognize opportunities, think strategically, embrace change, and be accountable.

Organizational success may be the best measure of leadership effectiveness, because leaders are inherently results oriented. However, there are other ways to tell if leaders are effective: Do they respond quickly to changes in client and community needs? Do they provide innovative programs to deal with those needs, and follow through to see that changes are made? Do they attract good people to the organization? Do they foster effective teamwork to make things happen?

Each of the 10 chapters begins with a brief bio of a successful nonprofit leader. Reading about these people is inspiring and a wonderful introduction to the topic of the chapter. These and many other anecdotal examples more than compensate for the leanness of statistical evidence to back the authors' theses. Nanus and Dobbs aren't really telling us anything new about successful leadership, but they do put everything in one very readable source. This is critical reading for anyone involved with nonprofit leadership, or anyone aspiring to be a leader. ■

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