



# **The Leader's Checklist: 15 Mission-Critical Principles**

*Michael Useem*

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**From the award-winning author of *The Leadership Moment* comes a definitive checklist to help today's leaders act decisively when it counts the most.**

In this fast-reading and illuminating book, world-renowned leadership expert Michael Useem provides 15 guiding principles that form the core of the Leader's Checklist. He helps you to personalize your checklist to the unique needs and demands of your organization. To demonstrate the power of the Leader's Checklist, Useem examines accounts of extraordinary leadership, including the triumphant rescue of 33 miners in Chile.

Based on solid research and years of leadership development work with a wide array of companies and organizations in the United States and abroad, *The Leader's Checklist* will help you develop your ability to make good and timely decisions in unpredictable and stressful environments—for those moments when leadership really matters.

## The Leader's Checklist: 15 Mission-Critical Principles Details

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## **May-Ling says**

i thought this book was terrible and after hearing useem speak (he was fantastic), i see why he has fans that might give this a higher rating than it deserves. the biggest problem i have is that you can't really have a checklist for leadership, because it's not a process. useem refers to the checklist manifesto a few times in this book. going into surgery or flying a plane are processes that lend themselves to checklists. you are about to do something, so you go through this list one by one a check things off. they are straightforward tactics to get the job done. implementing change in the workplace or leading a team isn't like that. it's okay to have general leadership principles, but ticking items off a list won't get you there.

besides that, the writing isn't great and he's very repetitive, citing the same 2-3 scenarios in the intro, middle of the book and then with interviews at the end. you'd get a better sense if you just read through the 15 items and then the two interviews at the end (not the one with the author). my favorite item on the checklist is to honor the room, and it's something i'll take away to think about further - so at least i got a nugget of information.

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## **Audra says**

The book fulfilled my expectations. The author appeared in the book as a narrator. I did enjoy the book because it expanded my mind when it comes to leadership. It was on par and better in some ways than other books in this genre. I was pulled into the book.

The author's presence was very fitting and appropriate. The themes are business, leadership. They were the focal point of the book. It ended exactly how I expected.

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## **Trevor Sterner says**

Had some interesting stories, and good (albeit somewhat generic) ideas. The general premise of how you would actually use a checklist was unclear (do you literally bring it to a meeting and check off the points, much like the frequently referred to pilots checklist). All in all, not a bad read, but by no means groundbreaking.

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## **Muzzy says**

This would make a really good free ebook that people could download in return for giving the author their email address. I'm glad I didn't have to pay \$14.99 for my copy. I look forward to taking it to a used bookstore and exchanging it for a book that will teach me something new.

It's a typical pamphlet by a typical business-school academic, written in the style of business school. Someone should have told the author that 15 is too large a number for anyone to remember. That's why

there's only seven habits of highly productive people.

It doesn't help when most of the items on his checklist are trite truisms like Principle 1, Articulate a Vision, or Principle 15, Place Common Interest First.

At only 108 pages, there's no there there. The chapter called "Maintaining the Leader's Checklist" is just over two pages long.

Nor does the author give any practical how-to advice on how to implement any of these principles. Instead, the second half of the book gives case histories and interviews with famous leaders. I was looking forward to reading the interview with Chile's Minister of Mining, who was in charge of the rescue of the 33 miners at San Jose. Unfortunately, the minister's answers generally range from "be optimistic" to "stay positive."

I won this book as a door prize. By the time all the other winners had picked their books, the selection had been reduced to a choice between this book and that Steve Jobs bio. Since we've already been immersed in Jobs hagiography, I went for the unknown little paperback by Michael Useem. I should have grabbed the hardcover bio about Steve Jobs in the hopes of getting a better exchange value.

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### **Lawrence Chen says**

I have to say I am start to wondering the capability of Wharton school. I already finished "Why good people cannot find job." "Customer Centricity", plus "leader checklist" none of them satisfy me. Good people book blame the climate, so what is your point? any suggestions about reachable solutions. none. customer Centricity, I paid nearly 18\$ for nothing. for this checklist, I do not think this 15 points really matters. what matters is what difference between leaders, all success basis were fairly the same. This summary makes no sense. as for why I left 2/5 stars. It did help me review some points about leadership, especially within crisis Management. totally disappointed

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### **June says**

I have read many books by Michael Useem, having had a class taught by him at Wharton. He is amazing as a teacher and a writer (I highly recommend the Leadership Moment). This was my least favorite book, as it is mostly a checklist. However, that is why I bought it.

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### **Katie says**

The content was good but is best consumed in the two lists you can find in articles about this book. Though the interviews with the fire captain that responded to the twin towers and the Chilean mining minister involved in heading up the rescue of the trapped miners was interesting.

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## **Adriano Ariganello says**

Much of this book uses examples from recent tragedies to show a bias for planning and action over inertia. I don't disagree with the philosophy, but beyond that, it's just a recap of well covered news stories with a loose frame of 'leadership'.

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## **Andrea James says**

This is more of a pamphlet than a book. I read this book on a jet-lagged plane journey and found that it's fairly suitable reading for that spaced-out state of mind but probably did not offer much more than that.

It felt like a magazine article that doesn't say anything strikingly insightful but provides some light reading. So unless you find yourself too tired to concentrate on difficult material, I wouldn't particularly recommend this book.

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## **Auriella says**

I was expecting to read about some new ideas to inspire my leadership but it really just talked about how a few people in history used their leadership for good or bad. I may use some of these "checklist" items but not because I learned them here.

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## **Naomi says**

As a MBA with a leadership concentration and 10 years experience in leadership and leadership development(focused primarily in the business development area), I found this book a fascinating short read. I read no less than 30 leadership books a year. The book contained lists which I thought were laid out the best in any leadership book I have read. They were concise, which in working with someone in any level of administration, it is best to have. The Owner's Manual List said it all and could be utilized as a teaching tool with leaving the rest of the book aside. One criticism I did have with the book was that I found the example stories/interviews to be a bit disorganized and jumbled. I think that utilizing those with someone in leadership would be way too wordy and either briefly read over or skipped all together.

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## **Scott says**

Pretty much contained the obvious with no real revelations. As a professor, he probably had to publish something and this was it. The price was right, though. Wharton Press gave it away. Had I paid, I'd probably only given one or two stars.....

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## **Joel Weinert says**

I was unable to finish this book. To say the least, this book lacks conciseness. The 5th time the Author introduced the Chilean Mine disaster as if de novo, the frustration got the best of me. A book about leadership should presume the reader is at least of average intelligence and can remember subjects and events previously in the book, which this author clearly does not.

In addition, the principles lack examples that would help apply them. If you'd like fantastic guidance, read "The Effective Manager" by Mark Horstman.

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## **Ken says**

This book was disappointingly simplistic and repetitive. It was .99 cents from Wharton Digital Press and I understand why...

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## **Luca says**

Good book, short to the point with well defined insights with respect to such a checklist. It is a very readable book and easy to understand as to what constitutes such a leader's checklist. And 15 key principles it is certainly not overwhelming. It is not magic but a vey useful checklist. Would certainly recommend it to have it with you.

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