



Know-How: The 8 Skills That Separate People Who Perform from Those Who Don't

Ram Charan

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The new grand theory of leadership by Ram Charan . . . The breakthrough book that links know-how--the skills of people who know what they are doing-- with the personal and psychological traits of the successful leader.

How often have you heard someone with a commanding presence deliver a bold vision that turned out to be nothing more than rhetoric and hot air? All too often we mistake the appearance of leadership for the real deal. Without a doubt, intelligence, vision, and the ability to communicate are important. But something big is missing: the know-how of running a business--the capacity to take it in the right direction, do the right things, make the right decisions, deliver results, and leave the people and the business better off than they were before.

For well over four decades, Ram Charan has been learning in the most visceral way the underlying reasons why leaders succeed and fail. As one of the most influential advisers to top management teams of leading companies around the world, he has had a front-row seat to observe the cause and effect of leadership practices and behaviors.

Ram Charan's insight into the real content of leadership provides you with the eight fundamental skills needed for success in the twenty-first century:

- Positioning (and, when necessary, repositioning) your business by zeroing in on the central idea that meets customer needs and makes money
- Connecting the dots by pinpointing patterns of external change ahead of others
- Shaping the way people work together by leading the social system of your business
- Judging people by getting to the truth of a person
- Molding high-energy, high-powered, high-ego people into a working team of leaders in which they equal more than the sum of their parts
- Knowing the destination where you want to take your business by developing goals that balance what the business can become with what it can realistically achieve
- Setting laser-sharp priorities that become the road map for meeting your goals
- Dealing creatively and positively with societal pressures that go beyond the economic value creation activities of your business

Know-How is the missing link of leadership. By showing how the eight know-hows link to, interact with, and reinforce personal and psychological traits, Ram Charan provides a holistic and innovative portrait of successful leaders of the twenty-first century.

Know-How: The 8 Skills That Separate People Who Perform from Those Who Don't **Details**

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Loy Machedo says

Loy Machedo's Book Review - Know-How by Ram Charan

When I saw the title of the book crowned by an Indian Author, I had a strange reaction. My prejudices dismissed the book. Not because I have any problem with Indian names, rather the fact that there have not been many successful Indian authors out there who make to the best sellers list. Or at least come out with a non-fictional material that would make you sit down and think. The rare occurrences of a Black Swan have been in the form of Stay Hungry Stay Foolish & Connect The Dots by Samir Bansal, which were if anything, good books but with only Indian examples. I have Samir's 'I have a Dream' and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's 'Ignited Minds' & 'Wings of Fire' sitting among the tons of books in my library – but I have yet to read them and be convinced otherwise.

So with this skeptical mind, I approached Ram Charan's 'How'. And I will be the first one to eat humble pie and say, I was wrong. To my pleasant surprise, Ram Charan not only delivered a great symphony of value based business practices, he topped it with real life example – that too ones you do not hear everyday. If you have any doubts, look at the personalities who have showered praise on this book -

- Ron Meyer, president and COO, Universal Studios
- A.G. Lafley, chairman and CEO, Proctor & Gamble
- James McNerney, Jr., chairman, president and CEO, The Boeing Company
- Bill Conaty, senior vice president, human resources, General Electric
- Larry Bossidy, retired chairman and CEO of Honeywell International and co-author of Execution and Confronting Reality
- Geoffrey Colvin, editor-at-large, Fortune magazine
- Stephen R. Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and The 8th Habit
- Michael J. Critelli, chairman and CEO, Pitney Bowes
- James M. Kilts, Centerview Partners, former chairman and CEO of Gillette
- Ivan G. Seidenberg, chairman and CEO of Verizon

Author Ram Charan has developed a holistic approach to what executives and managers must do and be to become successful leaders. According to Charan, leadership is a messy phenomenon because there are a number of things that influence it.

Ram Charan, a consultant with a Harvard Business School MBA and doctorate, has identified, eight skills - he calls them "know-hows" - essential for leadership success:

- 1) Will the Dogs Eat the Dog Food? Positioning and Repositioning the Business to Make Money. The ability to find an idea for the organization that meets customers' demands and makes money.
- 2) Before the Point Tips: Connecting the Dots by Pinpointing and Taking Action on Patterns of External Change. The need to look at the big picture and then work through the messy details. Detecting patterns in a complex world to put the business on the offensive.
- 3) Herding Cats: Getting People to Work Together by Managing the Social System of Your Business. Getting people to align their efforts is a lot like herding cats. The ability to get the right people with the right behaviors and the right information to make better decisions and business results.

- 4) Leaders Are Made, Not Born: Judging, Selecting, and Developing Leaders. Discovering and developing a person's natural talent. The ability to calibrate people based on their actions, decisions and behaviors and matches them to the job's non-negotiables.
- 5) Unity Without Uniformity: Molding a Team of Leaders. Making a team more than the sum of its parts. The ability to coordinate competent, high-ego leaders seamlessly.
- 6) The Buck Starts With You: Determining and Setting the Right Goals. The ability to balance goals that give equal weighting to what the business can become and what it can realistically achieve.
- 7) It's Monday Morning, Now What's Setting Laser-Sharp Dominant Priorities. Defining the path and aligning resources, actions and energy to accomplish the goals.
- 8) Driving on Brokeback Mountain: Dealing With Forces Beyond the Market. Anticipating and responding to societal pressures you don't control but that can affect your business.

Citing case studies from his consulting practice, Charan identifies personal traits of leaders that help or interfere with the know-hows.

1. Ambition. The drive to accomplish something but not win at all costs.
2. Tenacity. The drive to search, persist and follow through, but not too long.
3. Self-confidence. The drive to overcome the fear of failure and response, or the need to be liked and use power judiciously but not become arrogant and narcissistic.
4. Psychological Openness. The ability to be receptive to new and different ideas but not shut other people down.
5. Realism. The ability to see what can be accomplished and not gloss over problems or assume the worst.
6. Appetite for Learning. The ability to grow and improve know-hows and not repeat the same mistakes.

Charan ends the book with a letter to a future leader, Michael, in which he advises that "given the transparency of today's world, any shortcoming in his know-hows, personality traits, or character will be revealed very quickly." He encourages Michael to be self-reflective; speed his progress through learning by experience, through others; be open to new ideas, people, situations, and problems; embrace fear and disappointment; and to focus on the know-hows of business.

Overall Rating

For someone who began his life as a son of a humble shoe maker in India, who today is one of the most respected minds in the Business World - that too in one of the most competitive nations, I have to but salute this genius. Over all his book is an amazing, profound and well written masterpiece that clearly makes you think and deeply reflect. Given the amount of content, the wisdom in its pages and the timeless principles mentioned in its pages – I rate this book a 10 out of 10.

Loy Machedo
loymachedo.com

Eddy says

Good book. The 8 skills are useful and I appreciated them being condensed into such a short list.

Some of the more interesting things in the book are the examples of GM as "successful" business leadership.

This of course is related to timing. When the book was written, the comments were applicable. I'd be interested to know what Charan has to say about GM now.

Overall, a good book with very useful information that I will likely revisit from time to time.

George says

Ultimately, this was a good book and I will take some notes from it before I return it to the library; however, it really needed lots more editing. A business book like this needs to be excellent if it is going to be blocks of text -- otherwise, wow, capitulate to the short attention span format of every other book and move on, man. This book (the stories, the examples) wasn't good enough to warrant all the endless text. My advice: look for a summary online and move on.

It gets three stars because the ideas are actually good (practical, relevant, justified). This book is for any leader that wants to be thinking about their skills in the context of 8 important competencies that, Charan argues, are critical for self development over the long term. The 8 core know-hows are smartly presented and explained and do make sense in the context of today's environment. He just uses about eleventygajillion more words than necessary...

Roland says

A book I have to read again. When I know more about the business.

It holds some interesting ideas, and the know hows are sensible, but I can't really use them right now. On the other hand, I know what to keep in mind until I need them.

Maximillian says

Splendid! Stunning! Yup, jika Anda berada di posisi sebagai seorang pengambil keputusan, berikut personal yang ada di sekeliling Anda adalah orang-orang hebat (not just good, but GREAT!), Ram akan memberikan "pencerahan" bahwa kaki yang berpijak di bumi berikut kepala yang menembus langit adalah strategi yang tepat!

Leader Summaries says

Desde Leader Summaries recomendamos la lectura del libro Saber hacer, de Ram Charan.

Las personas interesadas en las siguientes temáticas lo encontrarán práctico y útil: liderazgo, características de un buen líder.

En el siguiente enlace tienes el resumen del libro Saber hacer, 8 habilidades esenciales para los líderes que quieran mejorar los resultados de sus empresas: Saber hacer

Mike Violano says

Sage advice from one of the great thought leaders in management and leadership. Practical and insightful with illuminating anecdotes. A good companion read for Charan's "Profitable Growth is Everyone's Business".

Molli says

Overall, probably a great book for people who are already executives, or have a good deal of management experience. While concepts did make a lot of sense, they still seemed over my head insofar as any practical applications were concerned.

Ana-Maria Bujor says

The book has some basic general information about the qualities a CEO needs in order to succeed, especially when it comes to big companies. Some interesting case studies, pretty clear structure, some good lessons about empowering employees and raising leaders.

however, this book did not do very much for me as it is quite general in its scope, while the case studies are written from a very uninvolved perspective. As they are all very short, I can only wonder what else happened there. I prefer my business books to give some fair share of blood, sweat and tears, however there is very little about the author's activity and experience. I want to understand why he is the one delivering these lessons. After having finished The hard thing about hard things and Creativity Inc, I feel like this book does not deliver on the psychological strains of being a CEO. The one attempt at presenting an emotional situation (the employee that got killed) falls flat. Overall it has some interesting parts, but very little on the practical side.

David says

Ram really brings to light the characteristics of a CEO. If you are interested in being a CEO, are a CEO or what to know what makes a strong CEO, take the time to comprehend what Ram is telling you in this book.

Jay says

"Know-How" describes 8 "skills" that the author feels are needed to truly lead a company. These skills have little to do with book learning, and little to do with the charisma we often think of with business leaders. Instead, the most important skill according to the book is the ability to reposition the company or its products, especially as things change. I'm not sure anyone could argue this point. The other 7 skills are mostly traditional leadership skills, like understanding the social networks in your company and creating teams. There are plenty of long, real-world examples, some of which are becoming a bit dated and suspect. I did appreciate the list of "skills" and some of the case studies, although they did get overwhelming. This isn't a how-to book, it is more of a descriptive model of leadership skills. "Know-How" did not seem unique in

books describing leadership traits, but is a good example.

David Robins says

A well-written summary of the challenges of a (high-level) business leader, and how to address them. Much is of course still applicable at lower levels as well, such as developing the social system and dividing up problems so they can be usefully worked on by subordinates.

Tommy Kiedis says

Ram Charan sits at the intersection of practice and theory. We would do well to meet him there.

Jack Welch said, Ram Charan "has the rare ability to distill meaningful from meaningless and transfer it to others in a quiet, effective way." So true! We see his unique talents and *Know-How*. In this book Ram Charan says:

Know-how is what separates leaders who perform – who deliver results — from those who don't. It's the hallmark of people who know what they're doing, those who build long-term intrinsic value and hit short-term targets. *Know-How*, page 1.

What are these eight critical factors? (1) Positioning and Repositioning (the central idea of your business); (2) Pinpointing external change (detecting business patterns); (3) Leading the social system (people and culture); (4) Judging People ("Calibrating people" and matching them to roles) (5) Molding a Team; (6) Setting goals; (7) Setting Laser-Sharp Priorities; (8) Dealing with Forces Beyond the Market.

Don't let the familiarity and "obvious" nature of some of these factors detract you from reading *Know-How*. His insights on goal setting and priorities are worth the price of the book and then some -- and the balance of his work is similarly impacting.

Ram Charan demonstrates why we need thought leaders -- those whose operate conceptually and help us see what we don't -- and act on it. *Know-How* is the kind of book of which Francis Bacon said must be "chewed and digested." There is so much insight, wisdom, business acumen, and leadership savvy you have to wrestle with it, embrace it, and implement it.

Know-How is praxis at it's best.

5 Reasons To Read *Know-How*

1. Summary -- End-of-chapter summaries are outstanding as quick guide for key learnings and implementation. His summary of the eight "know-hows" at the conclusion of his book is fantastic.

2. Insight -- Charan is helping me see beyond what I normally see. His insight and perspective on how to address business-related threats, for instance, was extremely beneficial.

3. Praxis -- Charan builds theory and offers practical application from a lifetime of observation and deep engagement in the business environment.

4. Depth -- *Know-How* provides in-depth analysis of each of the eight factors. This is why we appreciate blogs, but need books. The good ones take us deeper. This is a good one.

5. Thought -- Charan reminds me that leadership is a thinking game. I must pull back from the day-to-day (or in the day-to-day) and assess so I may better engage and lead.

Brandy Doyle says

Frames up the qualities of strong leadership with great examples of companies who've done well and those who haven't. A book probably every leader should read, either for affirmation of or direction for what they should be doing.

Erin says

The title is misleading. I thought the book was going to be about a person's traits that separate themselves, but it talks more about corporate America mentioning some CEOs along the way. It doesn't really teach you what characteristics of a person make them successful; it just gives different cases in business where CEOs succeeded or failed, but doesn't really dig deep into why.
