

Guy Charlton (2000). **Human Habits of Highly Effective Organisations Published by Van Schaik Publishers and selling for R149,95**

Guy Charlton is a training and developmental consultant at Knowledge Brokers International. He holds Master's degrees in clinical mental health and in management. Charlton is the author of four books.

In his recently published book, *Human habits of highly effective organisations*, Charlton addresses the very relevant topic of long term and sustainable growth that depends on an organisation's ability to attract, develop, motivate, measure and retain competent and committed people. The focus is thus on people as an organisation's most important asset and not on strategy, structure, systems or technology. People are the drivers of change. Their capacities to change can be improved by implementing six interdependent human habits, namely: effective leadership at all levels of the organisation, effective self-directed teams, the encouragement of diversity, focusing on enhancing people's competence to change, concentrating on sustained performance and a comprehensive human resource strategy. These human habits are discussed throughout the book. Each chapter includes summaries in the middle and end of the chapter as well as very useful graphics that summarise the essential matters of a given chapter. Charlton refers to various authors. They are leading business people, for example Sumantra Ghoshal (not Ghushal), Dave Ulrich, Tom Peters, Pat McLagan, Peter Drucker, John Kotter and Daniel Goleman.

There are some valuable models discussed in the book. The viewpoints on leadership of several practitioners, namely Warren Bennis, Bernard Bass, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, John Kotter, Tom Peters, Kouzes & Posner and Daniel Goleman are summarised in a well-researched competence model. This model should enhance understanding of effective leadership as well as sustained performance. The author's 720° Performance Questionnaire (PIQ) is furthermore a useful instrument to measure generic competencies in order to enhance performance.

Another instrument which "takes the sting out of culture/gender differences" (p. 105) is the Global Intelligence Model that concentrates on natural orientation or intelligence. It could be usefully applied in a team context to ensure diversity.

The positive contributions of Charlton, however, is often hampered by the author's style. Too much time and space are spent on trivial aspects, for example: the importance of leadership, whether a person is born with leadership qualities, the difference between managers and leaders etc. These kinds of information do not enhance the reader's ability to implement the six human habits.

There is often not a coherent flow of information. The references to authors are not well integrated into the text and give the appearance of addenda that tend to distract the reader from the main theme or focus of the work. The reader is enticed rather to read the books that are quoted instead, instead of reading Charlton's work.

Charlton's target group is too broad. The author tries to focus on the individual, team, organisation, families, politicians and sporting performance on a local, national and global scale. Although they might be interdependent and equally important, none of these areas are satisfactorily explored. The aim is seemingly on breadth rather than depth.

In the first part of the book, practical applications of valuable information (for example the Global Intelligence Model) are often either not given or provided in a non-business context. Examples are taken from the World Cup and the combat against famine in Africa. The last few chapters (6 to 9) are more practical in terms of business-related examples.

In conclusion it could be said that the book is worthwhile to read. It is well researched and there are some valuable points you may wish to attend to. However, in general the book is trying to be everything to everyone instead of focusing on a few cardinal aspects and providing suggestions how to apply them in a practical manner.

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