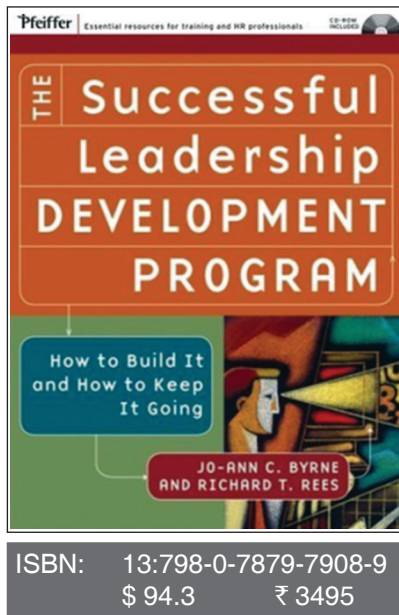


# Book Review

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Publication of Year: June 2006

Publisher: Pfeiffer

## **The Successful Leadership Development Program: How to Build It and How to Keep It Going (BY JC Byrne and RT Rees, San Francisco)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are many books on the market claiming to have the answers for developing the leadership potential in the reader. Some of these books do a better job than others, but still, reading a book is not all that it takes to develop the particular skills necessary for a specific job or profession. Jo-Ann Byrne and Richard Rees have created a process that will help companies and organizations develop a leadership development program rooted in their mission, vision and strategic goals. This program will be built upon the individual needs of employees and will be endorsed by senior-level management. This algorithm that Byrne and Rees have developed is the center of their book, *The Successful Leadership Development Program*. The book outlines the steps one should take in implementing a leadership development program in the workplace. This process is lengthy, but if done correctly can help implement a program that will be sustainable. Byrne and Rees have written a book that is easy to read and is well organized, so that the algorithm is easy to follow and steps are clear.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The *Successful Leadership Development Program* is not based on any one leadership theory. It is however based on adult learning theories that promote the knowledge of leadership through developmental programs. Most leadership theories available today are grounded in the idea that leadership can be taught, and this is the same foundation on which Byrne and Rees have written their book.

### **Best Target Audience**

Professionals who work in areas of employee training, leadership and professional development are going to gain the most from reading *The Successful Leadership Development Program*. The book offers them a step-by-step guide to creating a new program that will be intertwined into the fabric of the organization. The authors are able to provide great insight into

the process for professionals just starting their work in the field. This is a must-read for anyone thinking about implementing a new leadership development program into company culture.

### **Use of Book in Practice**

The Successful Leadership Development Program can be best utilized when an organization is thinking about, or has decided to, implement a new employee-focused leadership development program. This book clearly articulates the steps that should be taken in order for a program to have a lasting place in the framework of a company or organization. Based on personal experience, the authors are able to provide strong insight for professionals in the role of developing a new program.

### **Weaknesses**

Byrne and Rees are able to offer a great deal of insight that they gained through their personal experience developing a leadership development program. However, they do not ground their findings in literature. While the authors have not written this book as a strong piece of literature that offers support to theory, it would have made the book stronger if they would have provided some of the links between theory and practice in the text.

Another weakness of this book is that the authors interpret leadership development as being professional development. The book should be publicized as offering insight into developing leadership development (or professional development) programs in a work environment. The Successful Leadership Development Program was not written to identify particular needs of other groups, such as student organizations, sports teams, volunteer groups, or professional organizations. The frame used to look at the issues in this book is from a very hierarchical structure and may not translate to organizations that have a different structure.

### **Strengths**

The authors are able to offer real world examples from their personal experience developing a leadership development program. Byrne and Rees are able to foresee issues in the process that they know can be detrimental to the creation of a new leadership development program, and have created an algorithm that will hopefully solve some of these major issues before they become problems. For example, they make a strong point of generating buy-in from senior level administrators early on in the process so that issues do not arise when it comes time for the program to be pitched to these administrators for approval of the program.

The algorithm that has been developed allows for entry into the process at any of the different stages. Therefore, it is able to serve the needs of many different campuses that all approach the creation of a new leadership development program with different levels of buy-in and with different commitments to leadership development in the organization culture.

### **Reviewed by**

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