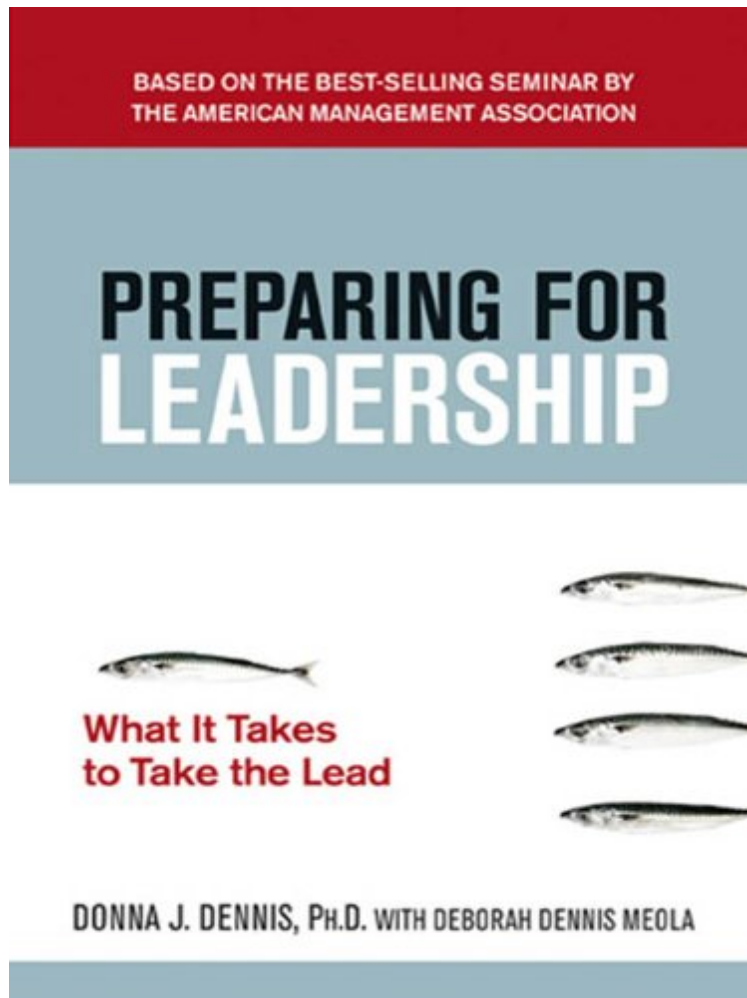


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Preparing for Leadership: What It Takes to Take the Lead

Donna J. Dennis, Deborah Dennis Meola
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What makes a great leader? Confidence? Trust? Vision? The ability to inspire? The answer is complex yet understandable. The good news is that most great leaders are made, not born, and many of the characteristics associated with effective leadership can be assessed, trained, and developed. Based on the best-selling seminar by the American Management Association, this book gives readers practical advice on how they can:bull; get noticed by learning how to look and talk like a leaderbull; become expert teambuilders, coaches, and communicatorsbull; gain and use power and influence positivelybull; guard against the pitfalls of intraorganizational politicsbull; identify and

build strategic alliances; elicit support; motivate others. Containing practical tools including assessments, tips, and checklists, this book shows readers how to take their organizations into the future, inspire those around them...and achieve beyond what is expected.

From the Back Cover What makes a great leader? Confidence? Trust? Vision? The ability to inspire? The answer is complex, yet it's something that can be learned. The good news is that most great leaders are made, not born, and many of the characteristics associated with effective leadership can be assessed, trained, and developed. Based on the best-selling seminar by the American Management Association, *Preparing for Leadership* gives you practical advice for how to:

- Get noticed by learning how to act and talk like a leader.
- Become an expert teambuilder, coach, and communicator.
- Gain and use power and influence positively.
- Guard against the pitfalls of intraorganizational politics.
- Identify and build strategic alliances.
- Elicit support.
- Motivate others.

Containing practical tools including assessments, tips, and checklists, *Preparing for Leadership* shows you how to take your organizations into the future, inspire everyone around you...and achieve way beyond what is expected! Donna J. Dennis, Ph.D., is a leadership development professional whose clients have included Kraft Kennedy, the Layne Christensen Company, Johnson Johnson, and British Petroleum. She is an Executive in Residence with the Institute for Corporate Productivity in St. Petersburg, Florida. Ms. Dennis lives in Princeton, New Jersey. Deborah Dennis Meola is a freelance writer who lives in Skillman, New Jersey. About the Author Donna J. Dennis, Ph.D. is a leadership development professional whose clients have included Cisco Systems and British Petroleum. She is an Executive in Residence with the Human Resources Institute. Deborah Dennis Meola is a freelance writer. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction Congratulations! You have been entrusted with the development of others—you are a leader. The satisfaction that comes from inspiring others to succeed is the reward awaiting a successful leader. Leaders do not spring into the world fully formed. In fact, it often takes successful leaders years to reach their stride. Leadership requires lifelong learning, flexibility to shift styles, and high levels of self-awareness and reflection. A sense of humor doesn't hurt either. The impact of strong leaders on an organization goes right to the bottom line; they can transform an organization to be resilient, growth oriented, and innovative. Poor leadership can be downright destructive, causing conflicts, turnover, and confusion in the workplace—even health issues in employees. In fact, bad leadership can cause more harm than no leadership at all, often destroying a piece of the company in the process. Leadership requires action to achieve results while balancing competing needs—a tough challenge, to be certain. This book is a guide on leadership. It includes practical assessments, tips, and evaluations you can use. It will help you think about current challenges you face and possible solutions for dealing with those obstacles. The Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) conducts an annual survey of North American companies in which executives are asked to rank 120 different issues facing businesses. Leadership is consistently ranked the highest. In fact, leadership has landed in the number one spot every year since 1997.1 Why is it the top business issue year after year? Why is it so difficult to lead other people? Why do companies spend millions annually to develop leaders? What about leadership is so elusive? What can you do as a leader to keep your impact high, and what new skills will you need to stay on top as a leader? There are different ways to analyze leaders' performance to learn from their actions; it's possible to break out their behaviors and actually figure out what the actions of a good leader look like. Another option is to look at what is gained from good leadership: group satisfaction, productivity, goal attainment, and financial performance are a few of the things that come from strong leadership. Whichever measurement you prefer, the results are the same. Good leaders make a difference to the overall bottom line. Stated another way, it is worth your time to develop as a leader. Whether you are a new leader or a seasoned professional, this book will help you face the issues of the current business climate. Here's a practical guide to align your leadership skills for today and tomorrow. The first step toward improving your own leadership skills is to assess your current situation. Ask yourself: What are the biggest obstacles to your role as a leader? Is it the fast pace of change in your workplace or increased globalization? Leaders often list challenges as obstacles to good leadership, such as balancing managerial control with a need to spark innovation, managing remote or virtual employees, and talent retention. These would be characterized as forces within the organization. When you look at the fast pace of change, mergers and acquisitions, and increased globalization, typically these are outside business forces that challenge leaders. Make a list of the current obstacles you face in your organization from inside or outside the company. With these in mind, it is now possible to look at ways to increase your leadership effectiveness that will help you with these and any future trials you face. Excerpted from *PREPARING FOR LEADERSHIP* by Donna J. Dennis with Deborah Dennis Meola. Copyright copy; 2009 by American Management Association. Published by AMACOM Books, a division of American Management Association, New York, NY. Used with permission. All rights reserved. <http://www.amacombooks.org>.