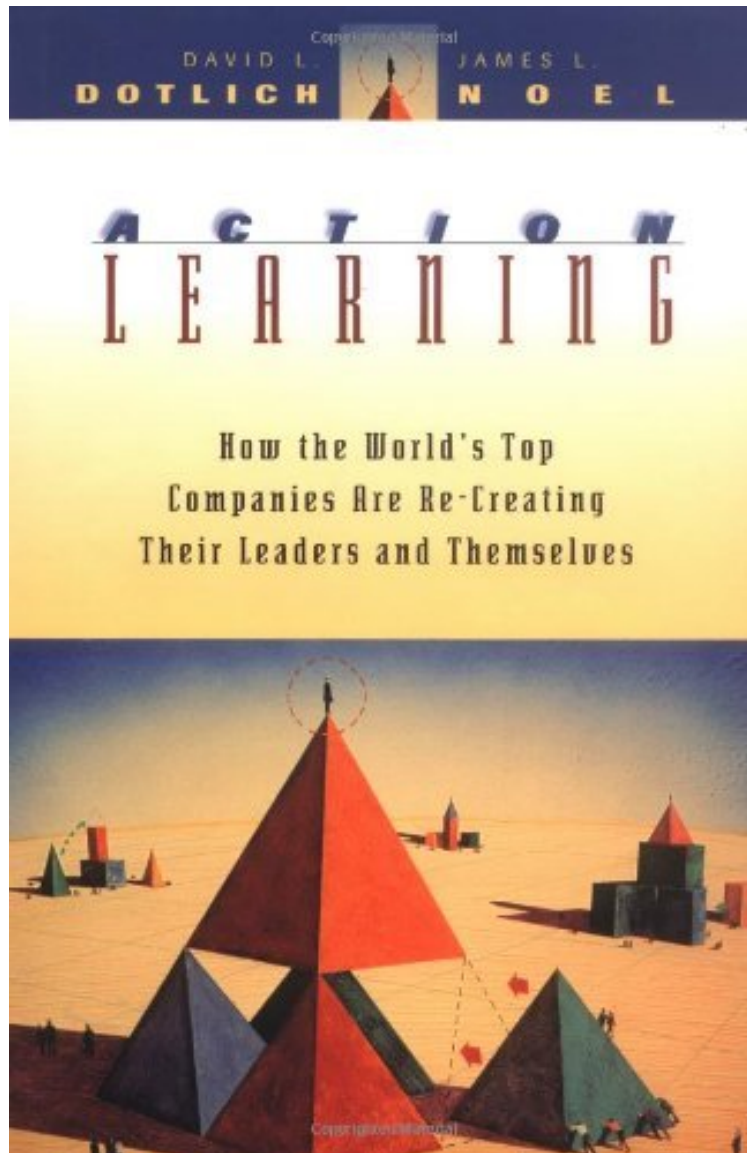


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Action Learning: How the World's Top Companies are Re-Creating Their Leaders and Themselves (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership)

David L. Dotlich, James L. Noel
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David L. Dotlich, James L. Noel : Action Learning: How the World's Top Companies are Re-Creating Their Leaders and Themselves (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Action Learning: How the World's Top Companies are Re-Creating Their

Leaders and Themselves (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership):

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Action Reading

By Jennifer E. SertlFor over the past hundred years there has been the debate over whether leadership is a competency that can be trained and fostered or whether it is an innate skill that individuals are born with. Dotlich and Noel add fuel to that fire as they assert that there is a mechanism called Action Learning that can create within organizations the necessary shifts in attitudes and behaviors at the leadership level for substantial organizational renewal. Action Learning, simply stated, is fostered experiential learning. In that there is nothing new here. What is new, however, is the way in which Dotlich and Noel have created a "whole body" syllabus for organizations that includes key learning activities that are tied to business objectives. Where many leadership programs are deficient is in tying key attitudes, behaviors, and competencies into key business situations. Making the learning relevant and urgent is the key. The tie between learning and business application must be more than cognitive. It has to be an experience that includes intellect, emotion, risk, feedback, and reflection. "When we are fully engaged in a process, we are much more likely to be profoundly influenced by it." The way in which Action Learning creates this engagement is through tackling a significant business issue with people from cross-functions within an organization. The context of the book is the demonstration of the Action Learning principles as they were applied by Dotlich and Noel on several organizations going through major transformation. Some of the richest scenarios come from Citibank's challenge to become unified in how it approached business, General Electric's mandate to become global thinkers, and Johnson Johnson's need to upgrade and develop executive talent here and abroad. Each of these industries utilized the Action Learning framework to tackle the necessary changes brought on by the complexity of today's business. The term framework is intentionally as there is no template for this process. Action Learning is pliable, versatile, and malleable in order for it to flex to the urgent needs of the business. What makes up this framework is consistent. Action Learning is comprised of a process that selects key issues, creates cross-functional teams, designs presentations, and involves senior management. The time frame for this process can span nine weeks to nine months. In the process the individuals are given key assignments, attend specific seminars and learning events, and have a dedicated coach and sponsor. The sponsor is the key ingredient that ensures Action Learning success. The sponsor is the senior executive who endorses Action Learning and creates an atmosphere affirming the process and creates a top-down awareness of what's at stake for the business not address the key issues. The dedicated external coach offers the second key ingredient-reflection and feedback. In the midst of chaos-business today, there is often little time for individuals to reflect upon actions taken and impact of those actions. The coach observes individual and team dynamics and offers key questions for awareness and reflection. Some of the most powerful questions include: Is your team on the right track? Will your project make a significant difference in cutting costs or raising revenues? Have you made any breakthroughs? Through Action Learning, Dotlich and Noel claim that leaders in organizations can re-create that frames of reference in order to more effectively adjust to emerging business issues and are more effective leaders. They have identified ten contrasting mindsets that illustrate the gap between traditional leadership and re-created leadership. These include: Providing direction versus providing directions; Owners versus managers; What might be versus what is; Involvement versus isolation; Generalist versus functionalist; Reflection versus doing; Emotion versus intellect; Faith versus skepticism; Receptive versus rejecting; Free speech versus censorship. Re-created leadership that is realized through the Action Learning process enables leaders to be more agile and responsive to employees, customers, ideas, and opportunities. I recommend this book for anyone who is responsible for business strategy, anyone who is leads a cross functional team, and anyone who participates in curriculum design. The Action Learning framework and the accompanying scenarios offer ideas, important key questions, and a context for personal and organizational success.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Good content, but what's new?

By A CustomerThis is a terrific book if you have no idea how best to train people in a corporate environment. But if you do, then this book is old news. The ideas and concepts are absolutely right, but unfortunately the authors try to imply they invented this method and no one else has ever done it. I currently work for a training company, and we have used all of these techniques for years. In fact, many of the authors' examples are over 10 years old. On the other hand, let me repeat that the authors' educational techniques are right. But they never went into enough detail to really tell a company how to do it themselves. I wonder why? They need to tone down the sales job. At the end of the book, I wanted to get an unlisted telephone number to keep them from calling to sell me Action Learning techniques.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. How to change mindsets/organizationsthe ongoing challenge

By A CustomerUnlike traditional leadership development, this approach immerses executives in a process of change; learning-by-doing in a controlled environment. Based on experiences of major corporations, the authors present a model of action learning and show how it has been applied. Action learning is tied to organizational change and building new mindsets-the ongoing challenge in today's hyper-competitive global economy. The process is also issue-focused. This book shows how to test and use this enormously valuable process. Recommended readings are provided. A worthy contribution to leadership and organization development.

A Strategic Boot Camp for Leadership Development "David Dotlich has worked with top management of the best companies to deliver Action Learning programs for over fifteen years. His insights into how leaders develop and his experience as a coach and executive are captured in this excellent book." --Arnold Kanarick, executive president and chief human resources officer, The Limited Plug into a dynamic leadership development process custom made for today's rapidly changing, technology-driven business environment. Unlike traditional classroom-style programs, Action Learning engages managers in emotionally intense, team-oriented experiences that directly address the immediate strategic needs of the organization. Here, authors Dotlich and Noel detail the many Action Learning sessions they've conducted at Shell, Ameritech, Citibank, and other leading corporations that have used Action Learning to quickly and successfully implement a variety of tactical and quantum change initiatives. Readers benefit from a clearly defined framework they can use to construct an Action Learning program of their own--a program that gives companies the power to re-create themselves by first re-creating their leaders.

From Publishers Weekly This straightforward book begins with the solid premise that the only way that organizations will be able to evolve to meet the challenges of today's business environment is for the people who run them to change as well. Dotlich, a consultant, and Noel, vice-president of human resources at Citicorp, are both clear about how that change should happen through "action learning," their term for learning that takes place in a controlled environment where theory is combined with the knowledge that managers already have. They lay out 12 steps to follow for that learning to occur. At this point the book starts to falter. Instead of giving managers a broad prescription for change, Dotlich and Noel should have provided a how-to action plan to follow, which would have been more useful than the generalizations and anecdotes gleaned from their consulting work and personal experiences. Although they do a good job of setting up the rationale for change, the authors might have gone further in showing us how to effect it.

Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Simply stated, action learning is learning by doing, and by that definition, it is not anything new. Even as a management training technique, it has been utilized for quite some time. In the training context, action learning involves teams that are assigned to solve a problem; and the process that evolves in finding the solution becomes as important as the solution itself. Dotlich and Noel are both consultants who specialize in planned organizational change, and they have used action learning as a technique for more than a decade. They argue that change cannot happen unless the behavior and attitudes of the leadership of an organization are transformed, and they demonstrate that action learning can effect this so-called re-creation. The authors use examples and exercises to show how to apply the action learning model. They also stress that a 12-element organizational framework must be in place for action learning to work. Elements include sponsorship by a key individual or group within the organization and having a strategic mandate. David Rouse "David Dotlich has worked with top management of the best companies to deliver Action Learning programs for over fifteen years. His insights into how leaders develop and his experience as a coach and executive are captured in this excellent book." --Arnold Kanarick, executive president and chief human resources officer, The Limited