



# weLEAD Book Review

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## Know-How

***The 8 Skills That Separate People Who Perform From Those Who Don't***  
**Crown Publishing - 2007 (290 pages in hardback)**

**Author Ram Charan**

**ISBN 1978-0-307-34151-8**

Know-How is a fascinating book written by a unique author. Ram Charan started out life working in his family's shoe shop in India. The work environment he labored in was very basic. At the end of the day, if there was no "cash in the till" the family did not eat. He learned early about a special connection between the need to make a profit and the daily decisions made to make this possible. He never forgot this lesson and even though he received an engineering degree he found his true calling and life direction as an organizational consultant and teacher.

Know-How provides an important linkage in the study and understanding of leadership. It is well known that leadership is like two sides of the same coin. One side is personality, communication and what we tend to call the soft-skills regarding relationships. The other essential side is the ability to think quickly, effectively and opportunistically. Ram Charan focuses on the need for both. He remarks, "Personal attributes are just one small slice of the leadership pie, and their value is greatly diminished without know-how, the eight interrelated skills that bring leadership into the realm of profit and loss. He continues, "*Know-How* is about what you must both *do* and *be* to lead your business in what is shaping up to be the most challenging business environments in decades."

Most of the book is a discussion of the 8 skills. These "know-hows" are not instinctive and are not taught in business schools. They are developed and cultivated over time until they *become* instinctive and judgment improves. For example, one of the skills is learning to judge people correctly, especially recognizing their real talents. This *know-how* includes seeing the person as a *whole* and not only their presence, outward appearance or through the perceptions of other people. Without this know-how good people often flounder and struggle because they have been placed in the *wrong* jobs.

Charan writes well and each chapter ends with a bullet point review of its contents, or questions to stimulate further thought. Know-How is also seasoned with the author's personal experiences and relevant modern examples. This book is a keeper and is one of the few that merges the dual significance of a leader's personality with the cognitive skills needed to be highly successful.

***weLEAD Rating – highly recommended***

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