



weLEAD Book Review

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What the Customer Wants You to Know ***How Everybody Needs to Think Differently About Sales*** **Penguin - 2007 (192 pages paperback)** **Author Ram Charan** **ISBN 13-978-0141036878**

Ram Charan is a celebrated author and rightfully so. I had the privilege to read another one of his business books that he co-authored, entitled Execution. As in his Execution book, this writing deals with how to look at things differently. Talk about a paradigm shift.

As you read the title of this book, it suggests that this book is geared towards those currently in or are deciding to pursue a profession in sales. Admittedly, this is one topic I am not familiar with or never gave much interest to and when I was asked to read it, I reluctantly agreed to so. I am glad that I did because as I found out, this is not written for just sales persons, or for the sales department of an organization.

Mr. Charan captures your attention right away by giving a scenario of a salesman who thought he had won a huge sales contract... only to find out the contract was given to his competitor. From this point on and throughout his entire writing he stays with this story and integrates it with his real world corrections of the sales process.

Mr. Charan writes about a *process* that has been tested and implemented with success. He shares his knowledge, and examples of real organizations currently using this process. This process as he calls it is "Value Creation Selling" and creating a "Value Creation Sales Team." He explains how a unique sales process is performed differently from most organizations. The sales team consists of multiple departments and personnel. The individual sales person becomes the leader of the process that a team uses to execute the sale. The focus is not on just the sales person making a quota or bringing in required revenue, but what a finely tuned team can do to help... not only their potential customer, but also the customer's customers.

Now, I will warn you that this is not a quick-fix book about how to accumulate fast revenues or find the secret to undiscovered customers who will make your business profitable. It is about a *process*, a methodical process that involves different departments, department heads and executives working together towards a common goal, the goal of solving your potential customer's problems that can lead towards a long and profitable partnership. Mr. Charan makes it quite clear also that all who are involved in the process are part of a collaborative team who help with the presentation to the potential customer.

This book helped open my eyes to start seeing that my sales department is not a separate entity of my organization and that I am *part* of the sales team as well. There will be time needed to implement the new sales techniques. Extensive research will be needed by a host of participants and the new paradigm shift will require the new sales team to generate solutions, not revenues as their top priority.

This book is not just for sales persons or the sales department; this book is for the *new sales team*.

Reviewed by Ken Altenbach

weLEAD Rating – highly recommended

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