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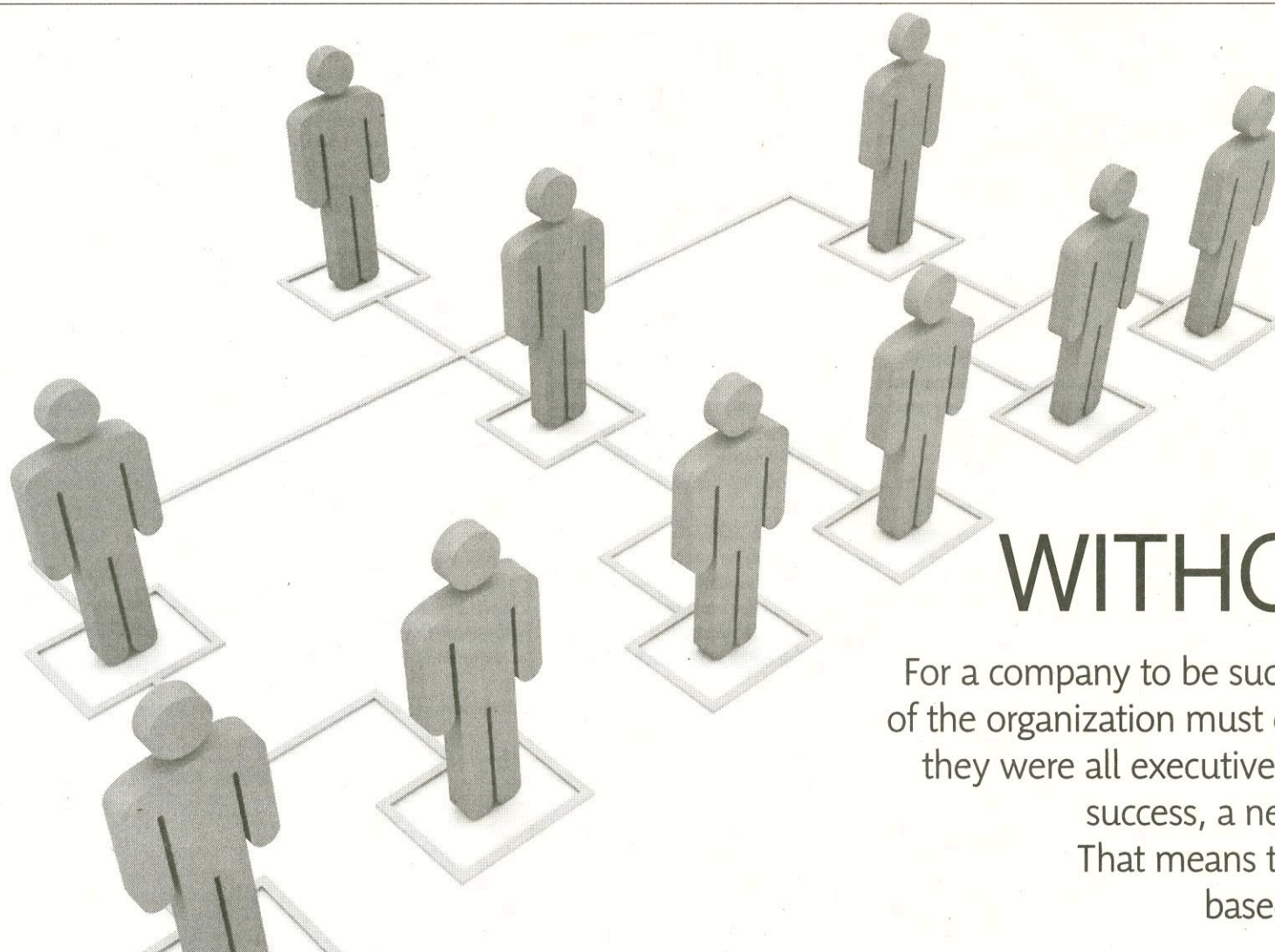
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## LEADERS WITHOUT TITLES

For a company to be successful, everyone at every level of the organization must enthusiastically work as though they were all executives responsible for the company's success, a new leadership advice book says. That means those at the top should manage based on potential, rather than rank



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**THE LEADER WHO HAD NO TITLE: A MODERN FABLE ON REAL SUCCESS IN BUSINESS AND IN LIFE**

By Robin Sharma  
Free Press, 224 pages, \$26.99

He was an odd figure. His clothes were mismatched, old and riddled with holes. His hair was stringy and unkempt, his teeth stained. He wore an aged plaid vest, which had a yellow handkerchief with little Mickey Mouse icons all over it. Around his neck dangled a silver necklace bearing three initials: LWT.

He was also a top salesperson at a chain of bookstores, an eccentric character featured in the latest book – a parable in form – from Toronto-based career coach Robin Sharma. The eccentric is the kind of mentor figure who, as in many fables, holds the secret to success, if the struggling hero of the story will only listen.

LWT is an acronym for Leaders Without Title. The idea is that for a company to be successful, everyone at every level of the organization must enthusiastically work to their ut-

most, as if they were executives responsible for the company's success.

To some people, that's an appalling, rather than appealing, concept. Like the fable's protagonist, American Blake Davis, an Iraqi war vet struggling with his psychic wounds after returning home, they don't want to be workplace champions but simply want to survive, cocooned in their low-level position.

"In the theatre, they say 'no role is a small role.' Same applies in business, Blake," the rumpled eccentric, Tommy Flinn, tells the young man.

"The only way any organization – and any human being, for that matter – will succeed through these times of revolutionary changes will be to start operating under a revolutionary new model of leadership. And this model is about creating an environment and culture where everyone needs to show leadership. Everyone needs to drive innovation. Everyone needs to inspire their teammates. Everyone needs to embrace change. Everyone needs to take responsibility for results. Everyone needs to be positive. Everyone needs to become devoted to expressing their absolute best."

That advice may seem over-the-top, but this is a fable, after all. And given the genre, there is a one-day journey in which Blake meets four unusually successful people who share their secrets of being a leader without title, transforming him from a slacker to a dy-

namo. Oh, and Tommy Flinn dies of the cancer he has been concealing, but only after giving Blake the LWT necklace and his Porsche.

He tells Blake: "We all need to lead where we are planted and shine where we find ourselves ... And regardless of whether you have a formal title or not, you have total control of how you show up in your current role. The highest of human abilities is the ability each one of us has to choose how we respond to the environment we find ourselves in. And when each of us chooses peak performance and personal leadership, the organization itself gets to world class speedily."

Blake starts his day's journey meeting his new mentor at a graveyard, where he is warned about the dangers of reaching his last day in life "with the brilliant song that your life was meant to sing still silent within you." From there, it's off to a plush hotel, where Blake encounters Anna, a housekeeper – actually, the Picasso of housekeepers, who considers herself an artist fulfilling herself in what others might consider a lowly position.

"I could come up with a million reasons to be discouraged, dissatisfied and disengaged with my job," she says. "I could complain that 'I'm just a housekeeper' and that all I do each day is clean the hotel rooms of people with lots of money. But one of the greatest freedoms each of us has as people is the freedom to

choose how we view our roles in the world and the power we all have to make positive decisions in whatever conditions we happen to find ourselves."

Anna made the decision to give only her very best to the job. That commitment works wonders for her, making her a happy person, cherished by both management and guests. She has moulded the job into something meaningful for her, becoming a goodwill ambassador for the hotel, helping to manage its brand with her actions.

Beyond pushing this change in thinking – that you must see yourself as a leader without title – to enjoy and be successful at work, Mr. Sharma shares three associated principles:

### TURBULENT TIMES BUILD GREAT LEADERS

Business and life are unpredictable, so expect turbulence. But keep in mind those challenging times are opportunities to transform a temporary mess into a long-term success. The key is to embrace the chaos – welcome the danger, and take intelligent risks.

### SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE DEPTH OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Business is a human venture, and human connections are vital for success. "With the pace people work, it's easy to sacrifice relationships in pursuit of results. But the irony is that, the stronger the bonds between you and your teammates – as well as with the

customers you work for – the stronger the results," Mr. Sharma writes.

If you are good to other people, he says, it will pay off. But you want to be good to people because it's the right thing to do as a human being, not to manipulate them into feeling obliged to give you what you want.

### TO BE A GREAT LEADER FIRST BECOME A GREAT PERSON

You can't lead without title until you learn to lead yourself toward your potential. "Work really hard on yourself so that all the buried treasure slumbering deep within you begins to reveal itself to every element of the world around you," he writes.

Those principles are each backed by a series of subsidiary ideals to follow, summed up each time with an acronym. For example, to become a great person you must SHINE: See clearly; health is wealth; inspiration matters; neglect not your family; and elevate your lifestyle, going through life first class.

Beyond that, there are lots of tips, most of them familiar to readers of Mr. Sharma's other books, such as the advice to get up early each day and read thoughtful, inspirational material in preparation for the day.

In the end, it's probably too much to assimilate in a single reading, and all that will stay is the central theme – become a leader, whatever your position, so that you can fulfill yourself

and help your organization succeed – and the fact that inspirational notion was wrapped in a reasonably interesting, if hokey, story.

**Just In:** Craig Womack and Jason Womack, the father-and-son team of personal coaches, explore the importance of keeping your promises – and how to do that effectively – in *The Promise Doctrine* (self-published, 77 pages, \$19.95 (U.S.)). They offer a useful template for keeping track of your promises and progress on them. Beyond that framework, however, there is not much that the average reader wouldn't already be familiar with.

**Just In:** Contributors from MBA schools including MIT, Kellogg and Stanford share their knowledge on topics from strategy to managerial accounting in *What The Best MBAs Know* (McGraw-Hill, 338 pages, \$42.95), edited by Peter Navarro of the University of California.

*The Little Black Book For Success* (One World Books, 139 pages, \$24.95), by a trio of senior managers – Elaine Meryl Brown, Marsha Haygood, and Joy McLean – offers some laws of leadership for black women.

In *Punctuation At Work* (Amacom, 202 pages, \$16.95), Richard Lauchman, who has trained professionals in business writing for 25 years, offers some principles for improving your own writing.

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