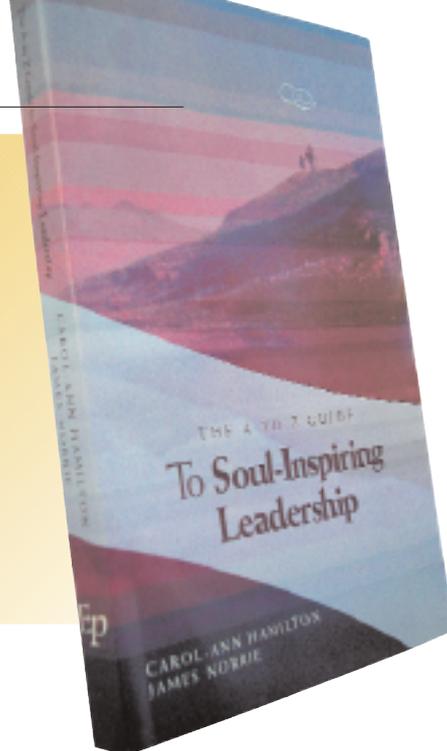


## *The A to Z Guide to Soul-Inspiring Leadership*

By Carol-Ann Hamilton and James Norrie  
Epic Press 2003, 270 pages, \$23.95

Reviewed by Anne Pappmehl



Much of today's workforce is gripped by a "crisis of the soul." Faceless corporations, ethically challenged senior management and disenchanting workers. Record numbers of people are taking on contract or temporary work, or becoming independent consultants. Increasingly, senior managers and executives are fleeing six-figure incomes and corner offices for a simpler life that allows more time for family, friends and hobbies.

These are all symptomatic of how we approach job structure say Hamilton and Norrie, whose book, *The A to Z Guide to Soul-Inspiring Leadership*, is a practical anecdote to this dehumanizing corporate malaise that treats workers like machines.

At first glance, one might be inclined to dismiss this book as yet another New Age, touchy-feely manifesto on some blue-sky concept with nothing much to do with business, but hear me out. It's a global phenomenon – people are not finding fulfillment in their work. As the authors note, "only a fraction of workers around the world achieve their full potential."

The basic premise of soul-inspiring leadership is that by letting people bring their true selves to work, the benefits also accrue to the organization. And that's good for the bottom line.

The book is based on the authors' study of high-performance and high-results workplaces, where the common denominator to success seems to reside in having workplaces that provide opportunities for personal growth. You've heard the formula: happy and inspired employees give more to the company and let the compa-

ny prosper. Well, you can't argue with success. The authors provide plenty of case studies and examples in this A to Z guide.

B is for balance. Think of your life as a pie. Work is but one slice of it, together with relationships, health and fitness, personal growth, finances and fun. In today's society, work seems to take up a disproportionately large slice. "Particularly worrisome," say the authors, "is the growing trend towards viewing being busy as a status symbol." This is not the positive kind of busy that comes from hard work and initiative, but rather the soul- and health-destroying kind as we complain about our cell phones ringing incessantly. "Left unchecked, we succumb to what the Japanese call 'karoshi,' or death from overwork."

The solution? "Forward-looking organizations believe the costs of investing in team members' welfare are far outweighed by gains, including reducing the risk of losing top talent to burnout."

I is for imagination. "Soul-inspiring leaders ... are not constrained by a view of the world as it is today, but rather are liberated by a world that they want to create." Our business processes and cycles are geared to meet analysts' expectations and ensure predictability of results, but this is precisely what impedes companies and the workers in them from being all they could be. Profit is not an end goal

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but a natural outcome of doing things right. How does the company leverage imagination? One way is by obtaining ideas from everyone and everywhere: employees, suppliers and even competitors.

K is for knowing, but on a more intuitive level. Why is this important? "Have you not had times when you knew with inner clarity what course of action you should take in a given situation – even if you did not have all the information that you thought you needed?" Most of us have had this experience and regretted it when we didn't heed our internal warning system. This chapter teaches how to apply one's inner wisdom in a leadership role as well as in one's personal life.

And so it goes. There are plenty of exercises, anecdotes and illustrations to demonstrate each concept. There are also probing questions at the end of each chapter and lists of dos and don'ts. If you are looking to make your organization a little more humane or simply to find out what you can do on an individual level to be a more effective leader, you should read this book. **F**