

***Liquid Leadership: From Woodstock to Wikipedia—
Multigenerational Management Ideas That Are Changing the Way We Run Things***
Brad Szollose

SYNOPSIS

For the first time, we have at least four generations in the workplace. And the cultural gaps between generations are wider than ever before, due to the quickening pace of technological change in the digital age. Each generation essentially grew up in a unique world, which deeply affects their perspectives on why, how, when and where we work. How can leaders, faced with this new reality, bridge the divides among diverse employee groups and engage them to do great work?

According to Brad Szollose, the answer is Liquid Leadership—a fluid, adaptable approach that allows leaders to avoid getting caught up in workforce culture clashes and leverage employees’ differences to create more effective teams. This can be achieved, writes Szollose, through abiding by his *seven immutable laws of Liquid Leadership*:

1. A liquid leader places people first
2. A liquid leader cultivates an environment where it is free and safe to tell the truth
3. A liquid leader nurtures a creative culture
4. A liquid leader supports reinvention of the culture
5. A liquid leader leads by example
6. A liquid leader takes responsibility
7. A liquid leader leaves a lasting legacy

The book makes a strong case for each law with interesting—and often amusing—anecdotes from the author’s experience as a consultant and tech entrepreneur. In addition, he cites numerous (albeit, in some cases, well-worn) case studies of organizations that have either championed or failed to embrace technology and culture shifts over the past half-century, tying them to the current challenges of leading multigenerational employees.

Liquid Leadership is not a how-to guide on leading various generations or incorporating the seven immutable laws into your routine. The book’s aim is to redefine your perspective on leadership, with an emphasis on the “water-like” attributes of adaptability, transparency and strength. The book’s many examples and insights will certainly help point the way, but precisely how you’ll apply this new perspective is up to you to define.

Review by Keith Cucuzza, Bridge Consulting

KEY POINTS

Here is a sampling of viewpoints, tips and food for thought that *Liquid Leadership* has to offer:

- The idea of the CEO as messiah has shifted. Leadership today is about sharing ideas and responsibility.
- Knowledge hoarding is out. Knowledge sharing is in.
- The *family* organizational chart was collapsed in the eighties, directly leading to the flattening of corporate hierarchy, because of the changed attitudes of the youngest, most vital workers.
- Because of readily available technology in their toys since birth, Gen Y thinks, operates and sees opportunities we can’t. Their brains are wired differently.
- Innovation can thrive only in environments where it is safe to tell the truth.
- Create a safe haven. Take W. L. Gore’s company motto to heart: “Internal fairness, external competitiveness.”
- Manage the *intangible*. If number crunching and goal setting were enough, everyone who crunched numbers and set goals would be rich and successful.
- Start destroying the bottlenecks of communication and approval. *Trust* is your key to a lasting legacy.