

RATINGS

formerly Media Reviews

Video

Leading in a Time of Change

Reviewed by Jason Lewis for *Training Media Review*

"On or about November 6, 1954, Peter Drucker invented management," writes author Jack Beatty in his book on Drucker, and he's not far from the truth. Peter Drucker systematized the study of management and was the first person to recognize (in 1969 no less) that we're living in a "knowledge society." His partner in the video *Leading in a Time of Change* is no slouch, either. Peter Senge wrote *The Fifth Discipline* and *The Dance of Change* and is the director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT's Sloan School.

The video is a 42-minute conversation between Drucker and Senge on how to lead in a time of change. Together, they highlight key issues and share their wisdom and insight into change leadership. The principal themes are anticipating change, identifying mental models, planning for abandonment, choosing creativity versus problem solving, dealing with unexpected opportunities, linking opportunities to resources, preserving trust, and motivating knowledge workers.

Remember that both of these gentlemen are professors. For those of us who fell asleep during lectures, this video could be a bit challenging. There are no graphics, text, or commentaries. Facilitators may want to stop the tape after each theme and have participants discuss in groups or complete worksheets.

An excellent 42-page workbook, which neatly summarizes the major points of Drucker and Senge's conversation, includes worksheets and highlights of their discussion for self-directed learning discussion topics, as well as a page of facilitator's notes with suggestions for both short and long programs.

The video quality is first-rate. Closed captioning might help people who prefer reading. Narrator Frances Hesselbein's voiceovers serve as effective transition points.

Recommendation

Leading in a Time of Change is an outstanding product that could fit in a change management or leadership seminar for senior managers. The content is top-notch and relevant. The running time of nearly 45 minutes poses a practical challenge for compressed training schedules. At US\$195 the video is reasonably priced for the market, and the print materials are far more than an afterthought.

Video

Whale Done!

Reviewed by Bill Ellet for *Training Media Review*

Ken Blanchard is the paradigm for training gurus. Like most gurus, he is his own brand: consultant, speaker, writer, performer, businessman. He's prolific in several media. In print alone, a sampling of his works includes *Mission Possible*, *The Three Keys to Empowerment*, *High Five!*, and the crown jewel, *The One Minute Manager*.

Many of the Blanchard titles end in an exclamation point and the trademark sign. Anyone attending a training conference will likely notice The Ken Blanchard Companies booth located in prime exhibit hall real estate and swarming with smiling salespeople. Amid this unabashed commercial activity, Blanchard manages to sustain an earnest and important message. He is an unapologetic advocate of people.

Blanchard concerns himself with making relationships as constructive as possible. He believes that business outcomes are shaped by the complex interaction of people inside an organization. It's a belief that conflicts with the dominant model of management in the United States. Many professional managers are numbers driven. They may mouth the cliché, "People are our most important asset," but, for the most part, their training and rewards incline them to view people as just another input of the business process—an expensive one.

In *Whale Done!*, Blanchard attempts to analogize the relationship between killer whales and their trainers and people in the workplace. Depending upon your point of view, this video is a well-taken risk or an example of stretching a point. I believe it's the former.

The analogy is flimsy. Even Blanchard acknowledges that fish-to-people and people-to-people relationships may not have a lot in common. But that doesn't matter. The analogy provides a good setting, Sea World in Orlando, Florida, and a glimpse of the remarkable relationship between killer whales and the trainers who have learned that extraordinary feats are not performed just for buckets of chum. Like their cetaceous counterparts, people need more than the necessities, wages and salaries, to perform at a high level.

The program rests on the assumption that employee effectiveness (productivity?) can be substantially influenced by the quality of the relationships they have with their peers and managers. Most economists and the managerial class would dispute that assumption, as would technologists. But I'm with Blanchard.

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The program offers these actions that managers can take to develop and sustain productive work relationships:

- Build trust.
- Accentuate the positive.
- Redirect attention when mistakes occur.

The first video (21 minutes) makes the case for those actions by working the whale analogy. We hear testimony from veteran whale trainers and watch the whales roll and revel as they're scratched and stroked, or nod their great heads as their trainer speaks. In the second video (15 minutes), the difficult skill of redirecting attention is modeled in three vignettes, as is the praise response. The vignettes are differentiated according to these levels: employee to employee, team member to team member, and manager to staff.

The decision to split the theory and practice into two separate videos is a good one. Training videos often cover both aspects in about 20 minutes, an impossibly short time. *Whale Done!* doesn't meander; the combined time of the two videos is 36 minutes, providing more video time than usual for modeling skills.

The support materials give detailed plans and information for trainers with a range of experience. The plans envision training sessions of about six hours and nine hours, respectively. Those times are long by current standards, and the second plan would have to be spread over two days. Of course, you can adapt as you see fit. The session materials provide everything from scripts and exercises to background information. Despite the quality of the support materials, novice trainers may have trouble with the program because some employees might resist the whale analogy or dismiss the importance of relationships in the workplace.

In the support materials, you learn that Blanchard is an unusual guru. He can admit that he was wrong. He takes back the prescription of the one-minute reprimand advocated in *The One Minute Manager* and says he now recommends the positive approach of redirection—the skill that receives the most attention in the second video.

Recommendation

We don't need killer whales to learn that constructive, encouraging relationships are the key to workplace productivity. The analogy to their training is intriguing, however, and they provide a great backdrop for a training video. Perhaps one day, the professional managerial class will catch up with the wisdom of whales.

Leading in a Time of Change

★★★★1/2	Holds viewer interest
★★★★1/2	Acting/Presenting
★★★★	Ease of navigation
★★★★	Production quality
★★★★	Value of content
★★★★1/2	Instructional value
★★★★	Value for the money
★★★★1/2	Overall rating

Whale Done!

★★★★1/2	Holds viewer interest
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★★	Ease of navigation
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Course Details


Leading in a Time of Change: What It Will Take to Lead Tomorrow, video, 2001, 42 minutes, Jossey-Bass/Drucker Foundation, 800.956.7739, www.josseybass.com. Purchase: US\$195. Other material: workbook and facilitator note cards.

Whale Done!, video, 2002, 36 minutes (2 tapes), Vision-Point Productions, 800.300.8880, www.vppi.com. Purchase: US\$995 video, \$1295 DVD. Other material: leader guide, participant workbook (10), PowerPoint slides.

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