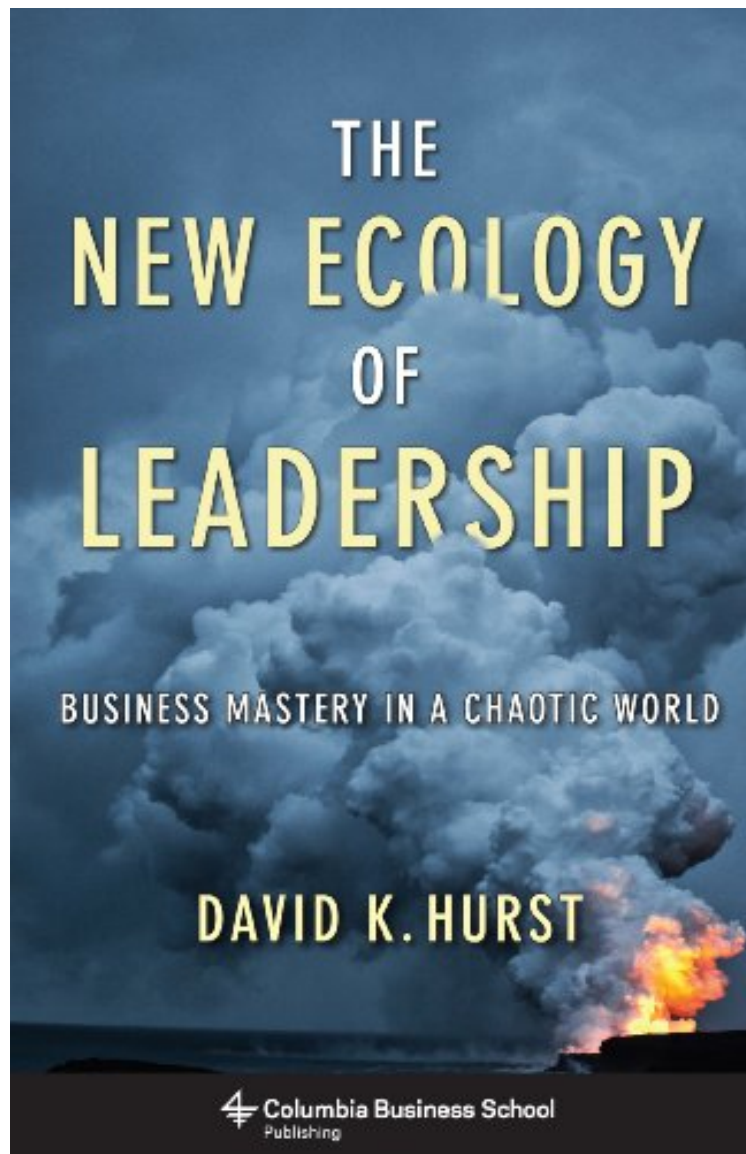


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The New Ecology of Leadership: Business Mastery in a Chaotic World (Columbia Business School Publishing)

David K. Hurst

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David K. Hurst : The New Ecology of Leadership: Business Mastery in a Chaotic World (Columbia Business School Publishing) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Ecology of Leadership: Business Mastery in a Chaotic World (Columbia Business School Publishing):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Fresh, Vigorous, Expansive, Bold, Honest Examination of the

Contextual Realities of Management By Karen Morris

The world, no that's inadequate, the Universe, does not need another how-to management book enumerating the 5, 7, 11 [insert number of choice] secrets of leadership. We do not need another architecturally unsound theory tottering on the foundations of over laden case-studies. We need a fresh, vigorous, expansive, bold, honest, examination of the contextual realities of management. Business executive turned management educator, David K. Hurst has given it to us. Years ago I developed a controversial and objectively unsubstantiated theory that many executives read the first few chapters of management books on planes then fall asleep bored and fatigued by it all. If you number among them "The New Ecology of Leadership" is much more bite than you can chew. This is a lot of book. Hurst variously critiques, synthesizes, rejects or applies principles of management practice. An intellectual itinerant we follow Hurst's mental excursions across theories and approaches to management practice that have been articulated and advanced over the last 100 years; more than this, Hurst offers us his own mental framework and guide to tackling challenges in context. At the core of this framework is the notion of the "ecocycle". Hurst offers us an experience-based lens on the shifting challenges that organizations face in the cycle of birth, renewal and decline. Different management "practices" are required in different contexts to overcome the demands of change while resisting stasis in stability. Hurst illustrates his arguments about the nature of growth, innovation, change and decline in organizations using memorable analogies drawn from nature and describes the attributes and behaviors of the leaders and communities of actors in organizations in the language of anthropology and psychology. Hurst demonstrates that the narrative of organizational success or failure is the collective stories of its people and these are written as much with passion as with reason. The tendency to over emphasize the rational in conversations about management actually distorts our understanding about how organizations evolve and indeed decline. Hurst also points out that the narrative arc of businesses' life-cycles draw their cohesion from the interplay between trust and power. Hurst suggests new ways of viewing the dynamics of passion and reason, power and trust to help leaders sustain success in widely divergent contexts. This is not a book for the insecure looking for potted answers or 4-point plans but it will excite those who are curious and eager to look with Proustian "new eyes" at the ecology of management.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Unusually insightful way of thinking about firm performance

By Bartley J. Madden

David Hurst's book provides an unusually insightful way of thinking about firm performance over time. The book is elegantly crafted in straightforward language. The author focuses on how thought is changed by action and experience not by abstract ideas. This is important and brings all sorts of practical managerial benefits as we better appreciate how our minds are "rational in an ecological way," i.e., causality is tied to context. The book's short and effective chapters will help you to analyze firms' life-cycles in general, and in particular, develop new angles for addressing the hyper-important challenge of sustaining a firm in a highly profitable "zone" in which stability and change are complementary. Readers will benefit from the wide intellectual net Hurst casts and the manner in which he explains how the ideas of important thinkers fit with the ecological lens.

Bart Madden

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. finally a book for the times

By James G

Ties together so much of the old with practical implementable new solutions for the future. Not either...or, but both...and! Been waiting for this book for 20 years.

David Hurst has a unique knowledge of organizationstheir function and their failureboth in theory and in practice. He has spent twenty-five years as an operating manager, often in crises and turnaround conditions, and is also a widely experienced consultant, teacher, and writer on business. This book is his innovative integration of management practice and theory, using a systems perspective and analogies drawn from nature to illustrate groundbreaking ideas and their practical application. It is designed for readers unfamiliar with sophisticated management concepts and for active practitioners seeking to advance their management and leadership skills. Hurst's objective is to help readers make meaning from their own management experience and education, and to encourage improvement in their practical judgment and wisdom. His approach takes an expansive view of organizations, connecting their development to humankind's evolutionary heritage and cultural history. It locates the origins of organizations in communities of trust and follows their development and maturation. He also crucially tracks the decline of organizations as they age and shows how their strengths become weaknesses in changing circumstances. Hurst's core argument is that the human mind is rational in an ecological, rather than a logical, sense. In other words, it has evolved to extract cues to action from the specific situations in which it finds itself. Therefore contexts matter, and Hurst shows how passion, reason, and power can be used to change and sustain organizations for good and ill. The result is an inspirational synthesis of management theory and practice that will resonate with every reader's experience.