|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Publisher: | Portfolio |
| Date of Publication: | April 26, 2011 |
| Number of pages: | 256 |
| Book Club rating: | 3 |
| Reviewed by: | Emily Halderman |



***Plot Summary:***

The author, Seth Godin, describes three types of teams in an organization: management, workers and linchpins. General workers are replaceable because they work in standardized jobs that have not yet been automated, but will be in the future. Linchpins make themselves irreplaceable through their understanding of how parts of an organization or industry connect. Linchpins also find creative solutions outside of their job assignments.

Godin discusses how humans are genetically wired to be averse to standing out, due to fear-instilled learning experiences. He further explains how linchpin will overcome fears to finding solutions outside of their assigned roles.

What makes Linchpins Indispensable?

1. Providing a unique interface between members of the organization

2. Delivering unique creativity

3. Managing a situation or organization of great complexity

4. Leading customers

5. Inspiring staff

6. Providing deep domain knowledge

7. Possessing a unique talent

***Book Club Meeting Discussion:***

* Godin made an analogy that work is “art’ and concludes that flaws make art unique. The group interpreted that the author’s message was “done is better than perfect,” or that progress shouldn’t be slowed down to wait for perfection. Linchpins will find smaller solutions that can be mad in the interim to larger, perfect solutions.
* Fear is a large consideration/driving force to employees’ behavior at work. He states that fear is often holding back solutions because the American culture and genetics teach people, through fear that they need to fit in. The author states that a person cannot fit in and stand out with their career performance. Linchpin behavior overcomes compliance to the norm by finding solutions beyond their assigned roles.
  + The group discussed how individuals need to become “comfortable with the uncomfortable.” The linchpins understand that they can find missed opportunities by examining challenging problems, rather than turning a blind eye.
* Recitable information, easily googled, should not be considered a measure of intelligence. Rather, there should be an emphasis on problem solving in education and in the workplace. The group believes that education is improving, however, there is still benefits for standardized testing to measure progress.
* If creative solutions (as gifts) are provided to leaders who are not receptive, the linchpin may need to communicate solutions in a different manner for persuasive purposes. The linchpin may need to leave and find an organization that embraces their intent to make organizations better.

.

***Personal Comments:***

My opinion differs from the overall book group’s consensus. I found value in the information provided by this book. This book helps me articulate past work experience through the description of strong performers subsidizing weak/mediocre performers in the workplace. The author warned that strong workers will leave organizations if their additional efforts are not recognized or rewarded. I have experienced and witnessed this situation during my career. The distribution of workload and rewards are worth reviewing by any leader/manager wanting to retain good employees.

Although the book is a good reminder to work outside the box and implement creative solutions, I agree with other reviewers that some of the author’s messages do not reflect the reality of the project manager’s world. For instance, the author suggests that people should work hard to create a reputation and name recognition so that a resume will not be necessary for future jobs. Perhaps this works for authors and politicians, but I don’t believe this will work for the project managers applying for jobs where HR employees looks for reasons to eliminate candidates who do not comply with their hiring process/format. Suggesting that we should ignore the procedures to get a new job, assumes that the hiring employer will ignore standard procedures, as well. I find this recommendation risky and impractical.