

Who Really Matters: The Core Group Theory of Power, Privilege, and Success

Art Kleiner

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THE CORE GROUP THEORY
OF POWER, PRIVILEGE,
AND SUCCESS



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Art Kleiner : Who Really Matters: The Core Group Theory of Power, Privilege, and Success before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Who Really Matters: The Core Group Theory of Power, Privilege, and Success:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I thought it would be a ground breaker but the ...By Robert Kirkl thought it would be a ground breaker but the gist of book could have been said in about 50 pages. The book just

simply doesn't have a ton of information about how to manage upwards or enough tips to figure out how to get in the right crowd. Just know what your getting into, this book is not a game changer but it is interesting for about 50 pages. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. excellent on the craft of intervention

By Chris Newfield This book offers a great bunch of descriptions of organizational predicaments, and keeps a steady focus on the individual with great expectations - what can that person really accomplish in a large organization without actually getting to run it? By the time I got to chapter 23 I saw that I'd committed almost every one of the mistakes Kleiner lists - bullying the core group, badmouthing them, fleeing into a slapdash Skunk Works, fomenting revolution . . . There's quite a bit to say about what's so valuable about the book, but I especially admire its insight into the ethics and the craft of intervention. Once you read the precise anatomies of organizational situations you've been suffering, I think you'll be especially convinced by Kleiner's explanations of why carefully constructed intervention is the only path that leads anywhere in the world of organizations. The book is full of good ideas about what effective intervention looks like and how it becomes possible. It took me a long time to be in a position to be able to appreciate the depth of what this book is saying, and I am convinced that it will offer readers a short-cut that I wish I'd had. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A clear lens to view corporate behavior and specific its leadership.

By Mary Ann Hazen Kleiner again did not disappoint me. His writing is to the point and offers clarity to viewing the interactions of corporate leaders and the corporate workers.

In a breakthrough Organization Man for the twenty-first century, bestselling author Art Kleiner reveals that every organization is driven by a desire to satisfy a Core Group of influential individuals and explains why understanding this group's expectations is the key to success. When corporate leaders announce, with seeming sincerity, "We make our decisions on behalf of our shareholders," their words are taken at face value. But as recent news stories prove, this imperative is routinely violated. In *Who Really Matters*, Art Kleiner argues that the dissonance between a declared mission and actual operation can be seen at organizations large and small. All organizations have one motive in common. Every decision—which projects to back, who to promote, or how to spend money—is affected by the perceived wants and needs of a core group of people "who really matter." The composition of the group can differ from organization to organization. Often, the most senior people in the hierarchy are members—but not always. Sometimes, the people who "matter" can extend far down the corporate ladder, or even reach outside the company to include key customers, labor union leaders, and stockholders. Kleiner gives readers clues about how to identify a core group's real mission by observing its day-to-day actions, listening to the fundamental message it sends employees, examining its management of new members; understanding the ideas that shape its policies about management, money, and the way the world works; and avoiding the taboos governing the way it operates. Whether you're a member of the Core Group—or want to be—this deft, engaging blend of argument and observation, anecdotes and advice, is the one guide you'll need to achieve your career goals and aspirations by navigating the hidden pathways in any organization, large or small.

From *Publishers Weekly* The old saw "the customer comes first" is a flat-out lie, argues Kleiner, a contributing editor at *strategy+business* magazine and the author of several business books, in this fresh look at the structure and politics of business. He contends that "a depressing number of business corporations have evolved into organizations with one primary purpose: To extract wealth from all constitutions (not just the shareholders, but the employees, customers, and neighbors as well) and give it essentially to the children and grandchildren of some of its senior executives." Such corporate selfishness works because the key decisions in are being made by the "Core Group"—executives or employees whose needs and desires determine company behavior. Others within an organization immediately sense who is in the Core Group and adjust their behavior accordingly; "Day after day, in all the small decisions we made, all the employees contributed to keeping these individuals more or less at the center of the Core Group." Using examples of individuals and companies, Kleiner shows how employees can better understand the mechanisms of the Core Group to advance their careers; sometimes, he says, if they lack the respect of Core Group members, they might even conclude that leaving their current position is more advantageous. The book also provides executives with strategies for managing unions, shareholders and others in a time when recent scandals have tarnished the image of big corporations. Not just another bit of conventional business wisdom, this volume should prove most beneficial to experienced managers who are accustomed to holding workshops and seminars on change. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Art Kleiner has uncovered a central truth about the way organizations work. His concept of the Core Group clarifies one key reason why rational people often act in seemingly irrational ways within the confines of an institution. Like any deep insight, it makes explicable what had previously been mysterious."—Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* and coauthor of *Built to Last* "Fresh, pragmatic, wise and eminently accessible . . . *Who Really Matters* cuts through our needlessly complex views of organizations and brilliantly reveals what's at the core of both their promise and dysfunction. Kleiner's astute and grounded analysis makes it possible for all of us who work within or around organizations to be more skillful and successful while maintaining our personal values and purposes."—James Flaherty, founder of New Ventures West

and author of *Coaching: Evoking Excellence in Others*; Seminal idea, brilliantly presented, and wonderfully useful. — Warren G. Bennis, author of *Geeks and Geezers*; Provides a much needed new perspective on leadership, power, and authority in showing clearly how Core Groups unconsciously guide and control organizations. This is a must read for all managers and would-be leaders. — Edgar H. Schein, Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management; This original and carefully-argued text suggests how to penetrate the apparent and understand the real driver of corporate conduct. Most important are the practical suggestions for how to effect change. This addition to the conventional wisdom should be part of everyones library — buy it! — Robert A. G. Monks, shareholder activist and author of *Corporate Governance and The New Global Investors* From the Inside Flap In a breakthrough Organization Man for the twenty-first century, bestselling author Art Kleiner reveals that every organization is driven by a desire to satisfy a Core Group of influential individuals and explains why understanding this group's expectations is the key to success. When corporate leaders announce, with seeming sincerity, "We make our decisions on behalf of our shareholders," their words are taken at face value. But as recent news stories prove, this imperative is routinely violated. In *Who Really Matters*, Art Kleiner argues that the dissonance between a declared mission and actual operation can be seen at organizations large and small. All organizations have one motive in common. Every decision — which projects to back, who to promote, or how to spend money — is affected by the perceived wants and needs of a core group of people "who really matter." The composition of the group can differ from organization to organization. Often, the most senior people in the hierarchy are members — but not always. Sometimes, the people who "matter" can extend far down the corporate ladder, or even reach outside the company to include key customers, labor union leaders, and stockholders. Kleiner gives readers clues about how to identify a core group's real mission by observing its day-to-day actions, listening to the fundamental message it sends employees, examining its management of new members; understanding the ideas that shape its policies about management, money, and the way the world works; and avoiding the taboos governing the way it operates. Whether you're a member of the Core Group or want to be — this deft, engaging blend of argument and observation, anecdotes and advice, is the one guide you'll need to achieve your career goals and aspirations by navigating the hidden pathways in any organization, large or small.