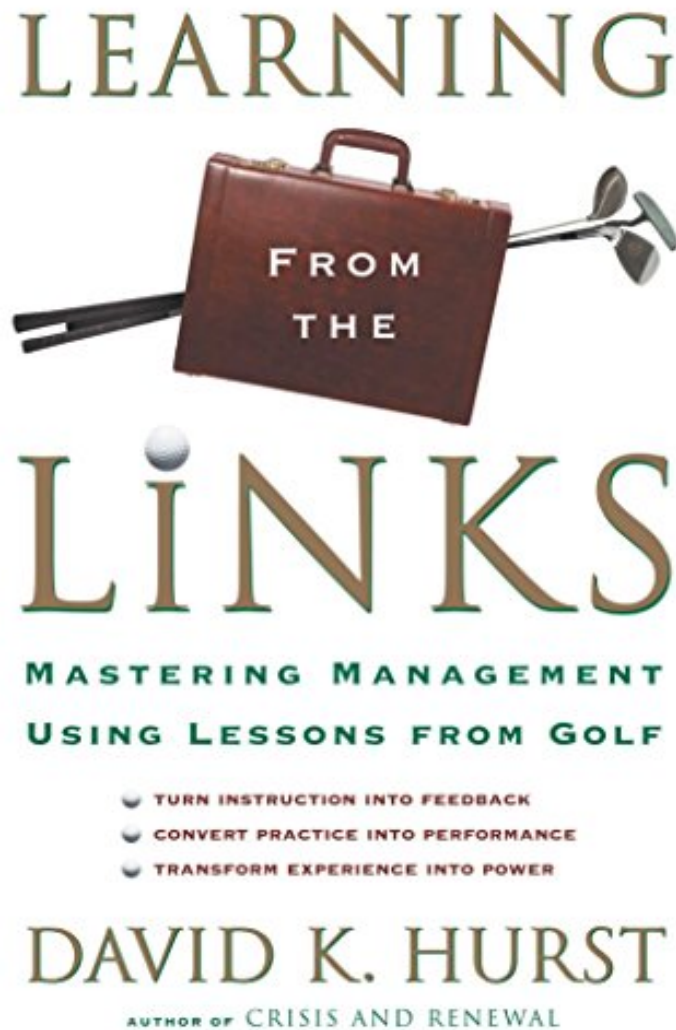


Learning From the Links: Mastering Management Using Lessons from Golf

David K. Hurst

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David K. Hurst : Learning From the Links: Mastering Management Using Lessons from Golf before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Learning From the Links: Mastering Management Using Lessons from Golf:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. 5 under parBy Roderick WhiteWhat do golf and management have in common? David Hurst in his latest book identifies the similarities between these 2 complex dynamic systems. Those who have read Hurst first book, Crisis Renewal, will detect a common theme. That book described the parallels between the life cycles of natural ecosystems and those of organizations. Both books make systems thinking accessible

to managers by employing analogues: ecology in the first book and golf in this latest effort. Since more managers are golfers than amateur ecologists *Learning from the Links* will no doubt have a broader appeal. Hurst's mission is to make complex systems theory (a close relative of chaos theory) accessible to managers; accessible in ways that affect their thinking and their actions. This is no small task. One can easily fall into the trap of being overly theoretical and academic, or going to the other extreme and dumbing-down the theory so much that its insights and relevance are lost. Hurst does neither. He uses the golf analogy to very effectively draw out actionable insights from complex systems theory for managers. Stories relating the experiences of golfers and managers are used to illustrate the points, but the book is not a series of anecdotes. The stories are artfully crafted to convey the messages in the underlying theory while at the same time making the book an enjoyable read. Should managers who are not golfers read this book? Being an unaccomplished golfer I think not. The golf analogy is a core element and allows the reader to relate, at a visceral level, to the messages in the book. The possible exception would be prospective readers who are not golfers but have an abiding interest in systems theory. Those looking for simplistic solutions to complex problems will not find them in this book. It is for the serious reader who wants a richer appreciation of the systemic relationships that result in exceptional performance, both on the golf course and in business.

For the first time, a seasoned business executive and avid golfer combines these two passions to explore what makes for top performance in each field. Management consultant David K. Hurst explores compelling links relating the two activities to explain clearly what every manager who plays golf may feel only intuitively: that there is a deep systemic connection between them. For on the tee, as in the boardroom, a player can't just hit and hope -- he or she must continually think ahead, contemplate multiple scenarios, and consider the downside of every decision. And then everything depends on execution. In *Learning from the Links*, Hurst clarifies muddled thinking in both management and golf: he deals squarely with the challenge of implementing a game plan and seeing it through. Hurst takes to task the current "head-down" instructional model used to teach golf and management. He addresses the huge gulf between knowing what to do in a given situation and knowing how to do it. This chasm is an ever-present hazard both on the course and in an organization: it keeps people from solving their problems and achieving their goals. By examining golfers' and managers' struggles for improvement, Hurst shows us why complex systems are so hard to change and how to set about changing them -- systematically. Using the latest thinking from fields as diverse as neuroscience, artificial intelligence, art, and anthropology, Hurst's primary purpose is to help his readers make sense of their own experience -- to help them learn more effectively. His practical advice is profusely illustrated with examples from both golf and management, allowing the reader to move back and forth between his or her experiences in both activities. Part business management book, part strategy guide, these are more than just lessons for one's game or one's office: these are lessons for life.

.com Golf is often viewed as a perfect metaphor for life, but management strategist and lifelong devotee David Hurst sees an even more profound connection to business. In *Learning from the Links*, he explores the relationship to explain how a real understanding of the game can ultimately prove beneficial in the workplace. With a true disciple's grasp of the physical and mental intricacies involved in playing any round, and an experienced consultant's eye toward the physical and mental intricacies involved in leading any corporation, Hurst offers a unique look at the "complex systems" in both activities and the consequences of adapting knowledge from one to improve performance in the other. "Golf," he writes, "is a replica of the systemic way in which we may exercise control over the trajectories of our own lives as well as those of our organizations." In 18 chapters designed to roughly mirror the play on a regulation course, he lays out a provocative theory for turning this notion into action with the help of graphic anecdotes from golf, germane examples from business, and compelling findings from experts in such disparate fields as homeostasis and artificial intelligence. Perhaps only a passionate golfer can really appreciate his evocative descriptions of holes like the spectacular par-4 18th at Harbor Town on Hilton Head, but anyone should find it worth the time to spend a round pondering Hurst's thoughtful concepts and their implications. --Howard Rothman
From Publishers Weekly
The Free Press is onto something. Earlier this month, it published *Management Lessons from the ER*, drawing a correlation between business and medical decisions. Now comes a book about the connection between management and golf. Speaker and consultant Hurst presents a dense yet informative guide to bridging the gap between ideas and action. Observing golf and management as complex systems, he demonstrates how performances in both activities can decline suddenly, and that, when seeking a solution, managers and golfers shouldn't settle for a "one swing fits all" approach. Rather, they should pay attention to detail, hone technique through disciplined practice and experiment with multiple ways of achieving acceptable outcomes. Heavy on theory, Hurst's book will appeal to a serious readership. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.
About the Author
David K. Hurst is a speaker, consultant, and writer on management, with extensive experience both as an effective manager and educator. He has worked with numerous educational institutions. He is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Western Ontario's National Centre for Management Research and Development. Hurst was born in England but grew up in South Africa.