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## Work With Me: How To Get People To Buy Into Your Ideas

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# BOOK REVIEWS

## WORK WITH ME: HOW TO GET PEOPLE TO BUY INTO YOUR IDEAS

By Simon Dowling  
Milton Qld, Australia: John Wiley &  
Sons Australia (2016)  
Kindle Version, 200 pages

Reviewed by DEEANN BRAGAW

Simon Dowling offers indispensable advice on how to invite the people you lead to accomplish great things through collaboration. *Work With Me: How to Get People to Buy Into Your Ideas* offers vital skills and the mindset needed to create a culture where people want to ‘buy in’ to your ideas, no matter what your platform. By giving practical approaches to engage others through the avenue of inviting, rather than telling, Dowling helps us understand that in order to ‘get someone on board’ we must think about what matters most to them. To be a true catalyst of change, a leader must build relationships which bring an understanding that creating the correct mood and fostering the correct mindset are essential components of both movement toward change, and

maintaining meaningful long-term change. The author also helps us navigate through the common mistakes leaders make that cause resistance from those we lead. This book is predominantly based on the relationship- transformational theory of leadership, with a limited amount of managerial leadership theory.

Pivotal to real leadership and change is the reality that we must be able to move people from idea to implementation. In the context of all types of organizations today, hundreds of ideas compete for attention, and good leaders must not only know how to choose the best ideas, but also how to create buy-in which allows those ideas to become realities.

The strengths of this book include the concept that true buy-in means people have a genuinely voluntary choice and say “yes” because they want to, not because they have to (loc 385). Real buy-in is not manipulation or coercion. Real buy-in wins devotion and energy as advocates. Rather than yield to traditional hierarchy as the source of authority, where the higher up the ladder you climb in the organization the greater ability you have to “influence by decree,” real buy-in suggests “win me,” rather than “set a decree.” To do this, the author suggests, “You need to know when to yield control in order to maintain it” (loc 493). This will take time, patience, empathy, and the right blend of skills because the end result of the two mindsets will yield different results in the long run. “Decree” may get a job done in the short term, but “win me” results in a team more likely to take ownership of an idea and work harder to overcome obstacles while moving forward with motivation and new ideas over the long term.

Another strength of the book is the concept that good leadership main-

tains an inclusive mindset, appreciating the differences in people rather than being ambushed by them (loc 651). This includes asking yourself questions as a leader with the intention of learning from those with different viewpoints, rather than setting your own as the only way the project can be done, as well as believing good results can be achieved without having control over the final outcome. Maintaining this mindset speaks to the heart of those on your team and appeals to the same best intent in them. At the same time, good leaders maintain conviction and have clear purpose: they buy-in to their own ideas, becoming a catalyst instrumental in the outcome (loc 859). Creating a social map of their organization and considering the role each team member plays, allows good leaders to maximize the strengths of each individual, and creates an understanding of the best timing in seeking buy-in from each one (loc 1112).

Also of note is the “Over to You” section at the end of each chapter where the reader has the opportunity to both reflect on each new concept and to implement what has been presented in the context of real-life situations. Throughout the book, the point is stressed that “buy-in” means people really buy-in to the leader (loc 1404), so character is the heart of the leadership model, as well as the respect the leader shows in appealing to the mind of the individual and creating movement.

This book has tremendous value for Christian leaders. Every Christian leader is ultimately a champion of buy-in, inviting the world to a relationship with Jesus and a life of service to Him. The concept of the “gentle art of buy-in,” allowing people the freedom to make a decision without coercion, is at the heart of the power

of choice given to every individual. The book posits that true champions of buy-in understand that agreement and commitment are just the beginning of where the real work begins, and so it is in every decision for Christ and every organization dedicated to service. In addition, the author maintains that action and accountability go hand in hand, and all Christian leaders must embrace both. Leaders must not only lead people to a decision, but must give them opportunity to participate in the outcome by breaking down large projects into doable smaller parts, providing the support needed, and celebrating along the way.

I highly recommend this book. The practical ideas, case studies, and sections given at the end of each chapter putting your own situations into the concepts presented, provide a bridge from the corporate world to the church. As Christian leaders, we are called to be listeners, observers, collaborators, and champions of bringing the body of Christ into unity in the common cause of bringing people to Jesus. Creating buy-in within the structure of leadership in the church involves not so much convincing our people to buy-in to our way of thinking, but realizing that God has given each person a measure of His Holy Spirit, and that as we listen to Him and develop characters in His likeness, our teams will move forward in His direction.

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