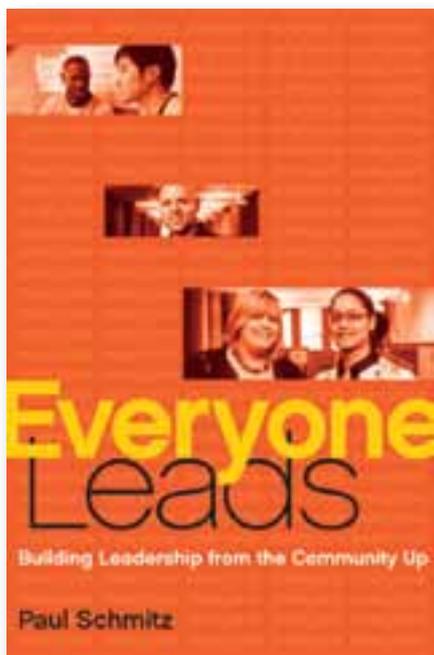


Looking for Leadership

This book can open up new leadership possibilities for you and your community.

Everyone Leads, by Paul Schmitz. Hardcover, 204 pages. Jossey-Bass Publishers (jossybass.com)

By Terrence Fernsler



The author of *Everyone Leads*, Paul Schmitz, is the CEO of Public Allies, a national network of community leadership development organizations. This book is largely the story of his organization, so is it relevant to your organization? The answer is a resounding yes!

Most nonprofit organizations grapple with creating meaningful change, and Schmitz offers a recipe to accomplish it. His organization pulls together community organizing works from Saul Alinsky to John McKnight, putting theory into practice by tapping the power within communities. Schmitz explains how Public Allies finds potential leaders in some of the most disenfranchised neighborhoods and develops them to become agents of change. He argues that becoming more community-oriented makes an organization stronger and more effective.

Drawing from Midwestern community and democracy theorists, Schmitz explains how professionalization within the nonprofit sector has its down side. Professional nonprofit managers have isolated social problems to their

“The skills to build community are already available.”

own organizations' stakeholders, thus preventing collective action, keeping our most challenging social problems from getting resolved, and often worsening them. Organizations frequently damage communities by looking for a quick, isolated fix. Schmitz explains how working in community will instead create true transformation.

By working collaboratively to solve problems, you can accomplish much more than you can by focusing only on your organization's needs. Learning community-building will lead to work on structural issues, in turn leading to substantive change. Such an emphasis on learning and partnering leads to a flexible organization — a necessity for survival in today's world.

Schmitz emphasizes that leaders must be willing to work on issues for the long haul — a willingness that requires integrity and authenticity. These values, which acknowledge that each person has both potential and shortcomings, are integral to the process of including everyone.

Eliciting this potential often requires patience. Still, the skills to build community are already available. There are people willing to step up, eager to learn what it takes, and able to lead with integrity. *Everyone Leads* is a valuable tool for using your community to identify the socio-economic structural issues that need changing — and finding people to lead the way. 

Terrence Fernsler has been a nonprofit professional for over 30 years and is currently a candidate for a Master's in Nonprofit Leadership degree at Seattle University.

Questions for Leaders who Want to Build Community:

- **Where in the community do you publicize your activities?** Are you meeting people where they are — on Web sites, through radio programs, at clubs that diverse community residents use?
- **When community members come in the door, how do you orient and support them** so they feel empowered and connected?
- **How might you change your relationship** with the people you normally see as clients? How could you view them as partners?
- **Who else serves the people you serve?** How can you collaborate with them?
- **How will you measure the success** of your engagement with the community?

“You can find potential leaders in some of the most disenfranchised neighborhoods.”