

MICHAEL J. URICK

LEADERSHIP
- IN -
MIDDLE-EARTH



THEORIES AND
APPLICATIONS FOR
ORGANIZATIONS

EXPLORING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP
PRACTICES THROUGH POPULAR CULTURE

LEADERSHIP IN MIDDLE-EARTH

EXPLORING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THROUGH POPULAR CULTURE

Series Editor: Michael J. Urick

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Michael J. Urick

Leadership in Middle-earth: Theories and Applications for Organizations

Michael J. Urick

Exploring Effective Leadership Practices
through Popular Culture

LEADERSHIP IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Theories and Applications
for Organizations

By

Michael J. Urick

Saint Vincent College, USA



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To my parents, Michele and Richard. I still have your copies of “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings” that you gave to me when I was 11 years old. Thank you for that and, even more, thank you for your constant support. At an early age, you encouraged me to pursue a career as a writer and you helped me to grow my imagination. I am forever grateful. I love you both very much.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr Michael J. Urick is Graduate Director of the Master of Science in Management: Operational Excellence (MSMOE) program and Associate Professor of Management and Operational Excellence at the Alex G. McKenna School of Business, Economics, and Government at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, USA. He received his PhD in Management (Organizational Behavior focus) from the University of Cincinnati. His MBA (focused in Human Resource Management) and MS (in Leadership and Business Ethics) are both from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and his Bachelor's degree is from Saint Vincent College. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses related to organizational behavior, human resources, communication and conflict, organizational culture, operations, and research methods.

The MSMOE program, which he directs, focuses on providing aspiring leaders with cutting-edge management techniques to effectively problem solve, minimize waste, and continuously improve their organizations. The program has been consistently ranked as a "Top 50 Best Value Master's in Management" program by Value Colleges and as a "Top Online Non-MBA Business Graduate Degree" by US News and World Report.

He is Six Sigma Green Belt certified and is also certified through the Society for Human Resource Management as well as the True Lean program at the University of Kentucky. He is the recipient of an "Excellence in Teaching" award from the Lindner College of Business at the University of Cincinnati, the "Quentin Schaut Faculty" award from Saint Vincent College, and a "Teaching Excellence" award from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs among other pedagogical honors. Internationally, he was also recognized by the Institute for Supply Management as a "Person of the Year" in the learning and education category.

He is an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Leadership and Management* and the North American Associate Editor of the *Measuring Business Excellence* journal. He is also the Editor for the “Exploring Effective Leadership Practices through Popular Culture” book series from Emerald Publishing.

His research interests include leadership, conflict, and diversity in the workplace. Much of his work focuses on issues related to intergenerational phenomena within organizations. He also often examines how popular culture can be used to advance organizational behavior theory. In addition to authoring or co-authoring over 50 publications including multiple books and peer-reviewed articles, he regularly presents at academic and practitioner international meetings such as the Academy of Management, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and Institute for Supply Management conferences. He is a regular speaker on age-related issues in the workplace throughout the United States and internationally (having presented on four continents) and is an active consultant on issues related to workplace interactions, organizational culture, and ethics. He has served as a reviewer for a variety of academic publications including the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, *Journal of Social Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and *Journal of Family Issues* as well as the *Organizational Behavior* and *Human Resources* divisions of the Academy of Management Annual Meeting in addition to other conferences. In his monthly blog, he blends his research and teaching interests to suggest practical and actionable items for readers to use in their current or future work situations.

Professionally, he has served on the boards of ISM-Pittsburgh in various roles including President and the Westmoreland Arts and Heritage Festival. He has also served on the Westmoreland Human Resources Association board in various positions including Vice President. Prior to academia, he worked in a variety of roles related to auditing, utilities, environmental issues, and training and development. Through these experiences, he became fascinated with interactions in the workplace and how they might be improved which has influenced his academic career.

For fun, he enjoys music and, since 1998, has led and performed with Neon Swing X-perience, a jazz band that has toured through over a dozen US states and released their 10th album in 2020.

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Thank you to Peter Jackson. Your films helped boost Professor Tolkien's popularity and further cemented "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" in their appropriate place of high status in the realm of not just popular culture but also culture in a broader sense.

Lastly, I of course want to thank Professor J. R. R. Tolkien. You are an inspiration to many. Your writings have provided readers (including myself) with comfort in hard times. And, in part because of your influence based on what I learned about your career over time, I explored a career in academia and writing. In doing so, I found my calling as a professor and author.