

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Benedictine Rule of Leadership (Galbraith, C., and O. Galbraith)

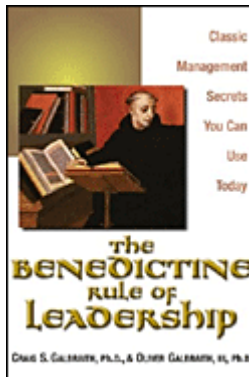
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Book Review

## Business The Benedictine Way

John Mount, 11.09.04, 11:17 AM ET



- From the schoolyard to the *Apprentice* boardroom, everyone wants the secret of picking and leading effective teams. New primers on leadership written by well-known executives crowd the shelves at Borders and Barnes & Noble, offering mostly similar prescriptions. Finding a truly useful volume among these pop-culture approximations of a mature management system is a daunting task. But why bother with these gurus-come-lately, when you can reap lessons from a tried-and-true system that has performed well for 1,500 years?

*The Benedictine Rule of Leadership: Classic Management Secrets You Can Use Today* (Adams Media, \$9.95) examines the fifth century management system of **Benedict of Nursia**, the founder of the modern monastic organization. This "Rule" is largely responsible for the astounding longevity of the institutions in which it remains a prominent, and relevant, guide. Co-authors **Craig Galbraith** and **Oliver Galbraith** analyze and review Benedict's system for the modern reader. They isolate the basic, universal elements of the system from its religious terminology, and demonstrate their

relevance to today's secular organizations. What remains is a remarkable, and quite modern, set of guiding principles.

Benedict was born into a wealthy, noble family in the corrupt final years of the fading Roman Empire. He was exposed to the empire's greatest achievements, as well as its failures. He studied leaders, systems of organization and the writings of early monastic leaders, and was groomed for a job in the Roman bureaucracy. However, he eventually chose to leave his world of privilege for an ascetic life of spiritual contemplation. Persuaded to become abbot of a neighboring monastery, Benedict then founded a series of semi-autonomous collectives. In time, as he managed these groups, he developed his own system of leadership and organization. He called it the Rule of Benedict.

The authors have done an excellent job of examining the development of Benedict's system in light of personal and historical circumstances. They provided numerous examples of successful, enduring organizations that clearly demonstrate the system's value and continuing relevance. The book's structure is clear, logical and brief, perhaps in homage to Benedict's devotion to simplicity and brevity. The Rule is presented in three main elements, with individual chapters devoted to each aspect of each element. At the end of each chapter is a bullet-point summary, very helpful for processing and remembering the general concepts. The book is a pleasure to read. It is fully comprehensive, yet at fewer than 200 pages it's also quite manageable.

- The elements of Benedict's rule would fit easily into the curricula of any modern management course. His organizational systems can claim credit for the initial formation of such modern institutions as hospitals and hotels. The Benedictine communities, because of their stability and competence (a result of the Rule) have made major, historically significant contributions to the world in the fields of agriculture, medicine, literature, education, hospitality, banking and document preservation. They prospered despite harsh environments and relentless persecution. They safeguarded the treasures of culture and learning through the dark ages. All this, and the fact that they have survived for over 1,500 years, is a testament to the brilliance of the Benedictine Rule. [http://www.forbes.com/2004/11/09/1109bookreview\\_print.html](http://www.forbes.com/2004/11/09/1109bookreview_print.html)

# SAINT MEINRAD ARCHABBEY

"As Saint Meinrad Archabbey celebrates its 150th year, it's relevant to reflect on The Rule of Benedict with its leadership principles and managerial insights. Outlining practices and strategies for organizational discipline, leadership style, and leading by example, this book offers fresh insights for any manager or organization today."

<http://www.abbeypress.com/shopframe.asp?SDXProductID=32923&SDXCatID=482&code=SEARCHDEX>

## FROGPOND.COM

Here is a MUST READ recommendation from Frank

**THE BENEDICTINE RULE OF LEADERSHIP:** Classic Management Secrets You Can Use Today, by Craig S. Galbraith and Oliver Galbraith

The premise of this book is that the Benedictine Order has been around for over 1500 years. What was Benedict's formula for leadership succession???

This book covers that and more!

For example: Benedict saw the difference between training and formation.

Training is technique and formation is strategic. So do you want your people trained in ethics or formed to be more ethical???

Training focuses on HOW things happen. Formation focuses on WHY things happen.

The whole book has wonderful applications, analogies and practical ways to implement these insights.  
[http://newsletter.frogpond.com/DispNewsletter.cfm?NEWSLETTER\\_ID=503](http://newsletter.frogpond.com/DispNewsletter.cfm?NEWSLETTER_ID=503)

## DIOCESE OF MADRID

**Benedictinos: la Regla ofrece inspiración y elementos de novedad también para la gestión en la era consumista**

**Roma (Italia), VID, 15/11/2004.-** La confianza en las personas, la valorización de sus cualidades, la persuasión y el recurso a la punición sólo como medida extrema, la estabilidad en el gobierno, son los elementos de la Regla de San Benito que pueden servir para una reflexión sobre el liderazgo en el ámbito empresarial. Lo señala un volumen que acaba de publicarse en los Estados Unidos y que, entre otras cosas, ha sido objeto de una recensión favorable de parte de la conocida revista económica "Forbes", muy difundida en el ámbito empresarial y en el mundo financiero. El volumen se titula "The Benedictine Rule of Leadership: Classic Management Secrets You Can Use Today", los autores son los dos asesores empresariales Craig Galbraith y Oliver Galbraith, ha sido publicado por Adams Media, tiene 200 páginas y cuesta 9,95 dólares EE.UU..

El punto de partida es un interrogante: ¿en la actual cultura del "consumo", cuál es el "secreto" que consiente a la Regla benedictina mantener su validez después de 1.500 años? La respuesta parte del examen del "sistema de gestión" creado por San Benito, del cual se propone también una breve biografía. Según los autores, el mérito de la Regla consiste en crear un "modelo de organización" en el que los superiores constituyen un grupo homogéneo con objetivos comunes.

Hay claridad respecto de las tareas y los cometidos asignados a cada uno y las evaluaciones toman en consideración los méritos, que son también el criterio para evaluar la autoridad. Se prescinde de la edad, no existen favoritismos y las reglas se aplican con nitidez, sin excepciones, y la disciplina es una "regla de vida" más que una obligación que se debe acatar para no incurrir en puniciones. Según la lectura de la Regla, San Benito ponía en el centro la importancia de los objetivos, se oponía a la multiplicación burocrática de los niveles de responsabilidad, subrayaba el peligro de la excesiva centralización; pensaba, además, que toda innovación debía insertarse en el modelo, sin "escisiones" traumáticas.

Como se lee en la solapa del volumen, "los principios del mundo benedictino se presentan de manera entusiasta y original, aplicable a todo directivo y a todo tipo de organización de hoy. A diferencia de otros enfoques ya obsoletos, aquí se presenta un modelo de gestión que ha aprobado ampliamente la prueba del tiempo".

<http://www.archimadrid.es/princi/menu/notdirec/notdirec/2004/11noviembre/15112004.htm>

# ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"[The Benedictine Rule of Leadership](#) by Craig S. Galbraith and Oliver Galbraith, III. Benedict of Nursia was born in 480 and died in 547. What he left as a legacy is a continuous stream of influence not only on monastic life, but also on the church at large. The Rule of St. Benedict is a classic that is still practiced throughout the world. Taking the Rule as a starting point, the book highlights leadership principles and skills that are applicable today in many settings. . . . there are some keen insights for all of us who are called to lead the church in the 21st century. Definitely worth reading"  
<http://www.awfumc.org/default.asp>

## GOTOMANAGER (THAILAND'S LARGEST E- BUSINESS MAGAZINE)

หนังสือชื่อ The Rule ของนักบุญ Benedict ผู้ก่อตั้งนิกาย Benedictine นิกายหนึ่งในศาสนาคริสต์เมื่อ 1,500 ปีก่อน ซึ่งยังคงรุ่งเรืองมาจนถึงทุกวันนี้ อาจเป็นตำราว่าด้วยระบบการบริหารที่สมบูรณ์แบบแรกของโลกตะวันตก โดยในหนังสือเล่มนี้ นักบุญ Benedict ได้ให้บทเรียนมากมายเกี่ยวกับภาวะผู้นำ การสร้างสรรค์นวัตกรรมองค์กร และจริยธรรม ซึ่ง Craig และ Oliver Galbraith ได้นำหลักการเป็นผู้นำของนักบุญ Benedict มานำเสนอในรูปแบบใหม่ ที่เหมาะสมกับยุคศตวรรษที่ 21  
<http://www.gotomanager.com/books/details.aspx?menu=books&id=448>

## BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

"The rule of Benedict, written by Benedict of Nursia became a powerful guide to Catholic and some protestants. It provided a significant organization for life. . . . Any complete training experience for leading any organization."  
<http://www.baptisteducators.org/templates/cusbase/details.asp?id=28387&PID=175447>

## OTHER REVIEWS

The Order of Saint Benedict, "What's New" October, November and December 2004 (<http://www.osb.org/new/current.html>)