



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SERIES

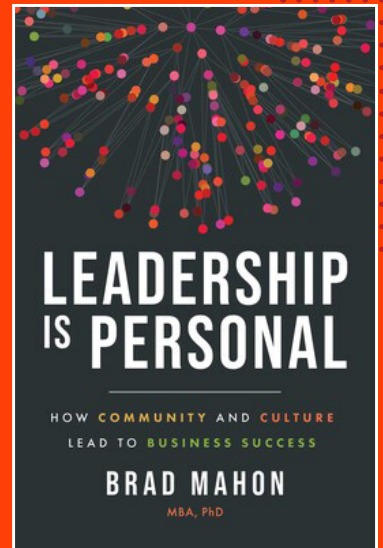
THE NUTSHELL OF LEADERSHIP IS PERSONAL

By Brad Mahon
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Leadership is personal. Community engagement and corporate culture drive business success. Make engagement your competitive advantage: happier customers, enhanced reputation, greater brand awareness, heightened partnerships, improved employee satisfaction, healthier financial positions.

Leadership starts on the inside. Know what you value and let that steer your decisions. Keep your EQ radar on: notice, pause, breathe, be curious. Schedule daily reflection; write your values in plain language; test decisions against them; sift institutional agendas for alignment; and if the non-negotiables don't align, act. Values define your why; voice delivers the how; vision paints where we're heading together.

Visibility is the essential first step toward engagement; showing up creates opportunities to connect. Quantity leads to quality:



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brad Mahon, MBA, PhD, is a college president with over 25 years of leadership in higher education, including roles as university dean. His experience spans from the classroom to the boardroom, always with an emphasis on engaging the community. He is also a professional guitarist.

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start with volume. Then move from visibility to participation to sponsorship. Be consistent and genuine. Ask, What can we do for you?

Partnerships are essential to progress. One plus one equals three when complementary strengths align. Know what you want, how you'll measure success, and whether missions, definitions of success, and values align. Communicate early and often; take your partners' success at least as seriously as your own, if not more.

Put out the welcome mat. Being visible in the community is necessary, but seeing the community in our spaces is equally important. Start with a soft launch; prioritize activities that align with your values and complement your programs; move from occasional use to predictable cadence. Measure alternate capital: brand recognition, reputation enhancement, goodwill, and a growing network of community stewards. Explain the "why" so visitors aren't met with a cold shoulder. Customers have choices; openness and access keep you in the running.

Employees come first. Build psychologically safe spaces; open the door and actually be in it. Listen, reflect back, and act. Formalize connection; invest in

professional development and wellness; give the gift of time. Social harmony supports effective teamwork; effective teamwork drives results. People watch how you show up. Model the behavior you expect. Don't hide the why; admit mistakes, apologize, and lay out concrete steps. Your actions call others to action.

Think like a scouting department: always be looking. Hire for heart and skill—values fit and cultural add—not just a résumé. Diversify hiring committees; add an unhurried meal where values surface. Onboarding is the final, critical step: people and place, modeled expectations, and one message—The greatest investment you can make is in yourself. Train people well enough so they can leave; treat them well enough so they don't want to.

Communication and celebration are not add-ons; they are the work. Don't let silence write the story. Recognize progress in real time—names named, gratitude expressed. Keep the drumbeat steady and the spotlight warm, and people stop guarding turf and start owning outcomes. Quiet the inner noise, let values lead, and model the behavior you want your culture to reflect. Show up, engage, connect.

