

**Sample**

"Nathan Magnuson is a breath of fresh air in the smoke-filled back rooms of leadership theory." — Mark Miller, VP, High Performance Leadership, Chick-fil-A, Inc. & International Bestselling Author

# **IGNITE YOUR LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE**

**BECOME THE TRUSTED  
ADVISOR OTHERS SEEK**



**NATHAN  
MAGNUSON**

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# INTRODUCTION

What does it really mean to be an expert — and a leadership expert at that?

Over the years as a leadership consultant for several Fortune 500 companies, I've witnessed countless colleagues, clients and friends suddenly catch the “leadership bug.” Young professionals search for a positive example to follow. Veteran leaders want to discover the next secret to greater effectiveness. Maybe the most surprising shift I've noticed is established leaders who have focused mostly on their own technical proficiency for some time — often with significant success. All at once, something sparks a desire to take their leadership influence to the next level. They aren't satisfied making a functional contribution. They want to make a leadership contribution as well.

Here's what I can tell you: you don't need to be a member of the C-suite to be a leadership expert. You certainly don't need to be part of HR. I believe you can be an expert on leadership from right where you are, beginning right now. In fact, I know you can — if you'll use the tips in this book. Inside, you'll learn how to:

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## Ignite Your Leadership Expertise

- Become a trusted leadership advisor that others in your organization and community begin to seek out and confide in.
- Confidently identify and share the leadership expertise you already possess for immediate impact with others.
- Grow your expertise further in both the short-term and long-term.
- Engage in active listening and ask powerful questions that drive deep connection with all types of leaders.
- Coach others to achieve clear outcomes without having a personal agenda.
- And much more...

Let's talk for a minute about how to use this book. My favorite part is that it's concise — only about 10,000 words, so you can implement the material quickly. It's dividing into ten short topics. You'll get the most out of it by only reading one or two at a time. Each topic has a few questions to reflect on. The best approach is to enlist a buddy, small group or work team to read along with you. [Here's a link to share with them.](#) (If you work through this book with a group, drop me a note at [nathan@nathanmagnuson.com](mailto:nathan@nathanmagnuson.com) and let me know how it goes.)

The world is crying out for positive leadership examples to follow. On a very individual level, people everywhere are looking for a leader who can spark their confidence, competence and *meaningful* performance

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outcomes. But they may never get there without your help. Will you give it to them?

Are you ready to be ignited? If so, let's get started!

PS — As a thank you for taking this journey with me, I'd like to share my white paper [\*Nine Ways to Be the Boss Everyone Wants to Work For.\*](#) You'll receive more information about this powerful resource at the end of the book.

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# BECOMING A TRUSTED LEADERSHIP ADVISOR

Has anyone ever asked you how to become a better leader? I remember the first time I was asked. It wasn't by a buddy, it was my dentist who had just bought out her practice and was trying to make it as a business owner as well. We'd been talking through some of her challenges together. I think I was 21 or 22 at the time. All of a sudden she put me on the spot and everything I thought I knew about leadership started to jumble together.

What does it *really* mean to be a leader, I wondered.

Since then, I've come to realize that most people don't start asking for help with leadership until they face a leadership challenge. Think about it — you don't call your auto mechanic to tell him your car has been running well lately. You probably don't call your counselor to share how well your relationships are going (although I'm sure he or she would love to hear it!). You seek them

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out when you're stuck — literally or figuratively! It's usually the same with leadership.

So what can you do when people ask for your leadership input? Here are three approaches I take:

## 1. Make leadership seem easier

Leadership isn't easy, mostly because life isn't easy. But poor leadership makes everything significantly more difficult. Poor leadership produces inferior outcomes and bruised followers. As [Truett Cathy](#) pointed out, "It really is easier to succeed than to fail, because when you fail you have to start all over again from a lesser position."<sup>1</sup>

There is no easy button for leadership. But when you can show people how making a difficult leadership decision now will create a better and less stressful future, you'll have their attention.

## 2. Make leadership seem less complicated

One of the realities of success is that it breeds complication. The more money you earn, the more complicated your taxes become. As your family grows, the more complicated your schedule becomes. Leadership is the same in that complication can be a side effect of success. What is different is that it's all-encompassing. As John Maxwell noted, "*Everything* rises and falls on leadership."

That said, you can make leadership seem less complicated for others by helping them identify the source of their leadership challenges.

## Ignite Your Leadership Expertise

When I take my car to the mechanic, I tell him what I'm experiencing and then he helps me diagnose the root issue. He doesn't keep me there until I understand everything about how my car works. (Thank God, because I'd be there forever!) Usually most of my car is working the way it should. You don't need a PhD in leadership to enjoy success or competently advise others. Simply help them distinguish between what is working well and the source of their problem. That will make leadership challenges much less complicated and easier to address.

### 3. Make leadership seem more fun

If you've caught the "leadership bug," one of the first things you may notice is that not everyone gets as excited about it as you are. But everyone wants to enjoy success in their work and life. Leadership undoubtedly plays a role.

You can help leadership seem more fun by helping people win on their terms. [Zig Ziglar](#) was famous for declaring, "You can have anything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."<sup>2</sup> When you can help others understand how effective leadership will help them succeed at the things that matter most to them, leadership becomes exciting! In fact, I would argue that if you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong! Do this, and you may be surprised when your not-so-enthusiastic-about-leadership friends start seeking your input.

*“You can have anything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.”*

*– Zig Ziglar*

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## Questions for Reflection

- If someone asks you what it means to be a leader, how will you respond?
- What are some of the biggest leadership challenges the leaders around you face?
- What do the leaders around you want (e.g. make more money, save time, reduce stress, build a stronger team, etc.)? How can you discuss leadership specifically in terms of their desired outcomes?

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nathan Magnuson is a corporate leadership development consultant, coach and trainer. He's worked in a staff or consulting role with several Fortune 500 companies and large public service organizations, including Accenture, MASCO, FBI, and Defense Intelligence Agency. Nathan is also a military veteran, having served a tour with the Army Special Operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



In addition to corporate work, Nathan is also an author and active author, with articles posted on his site [NathanMagnuson.com](http://NathanMagnuson.com) and in various leadership publications.

Nathan grew up in Kansas City and resides in Dallas, TX. At any given time, you might find him enjoying downtown Dallas, watching football or collaborating with other leaders to bring the next big idea to life.

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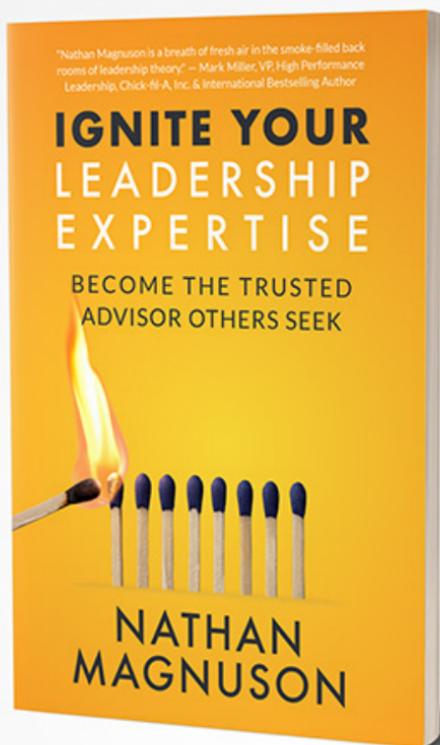


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