

THE CLASSIC TOUCH

Lessons
in Leadership
from Homer to
Hemingway

John K. Clemens
Douglas F. Mayer

THE CLASSIC TOUCH

Clemens & Mayer

The ability to get others to commit themselves to their highest possible levels of achievement is what separates the great business leaders from the not-so-great. Inspiring that commitment requires more than knowing the formulas and techniques of accounting, finance, and computers. It demands a new look at the human side of management—a classic touch.

The Classic Touch is the first book to tap the collective wisdom found in the classic works of Western philosophy, history, biography and drama and apply it to the problems of modern managers and leaders. This treasure trove of passages and stories is resonant with meaning for solving today's tough dilemmas. It addresses such issues as how to build a team and keep it together, how to manage an acquisition once it's in place, how to eliminate daily distractions and how to better trust your intuition.

The lessons to be learned from the authors of the Classical, Renaissance, and Industrial eras provide a new management perspective. *The Classic Touch* illustrates these lessons by drawing on such works as:

- Homer's *Iliad*—a rich commentary on motivation and communication
- Plato's *Republic*—the best text ever written on leadership style
- Machiavelli's *The Prince*—on the uses and abuses of power
- Shakespeare's *King Lear*—a drama of succession, delegation and decentralization
- Miller's *Death of a Salesman*—on the care and feeding of a sales force
- Thoreau's *Walden*—on the badness of bigness

The Classic Touch is a powerful collection of insights that address universal human problems and situations. Whether you are reading these works for the first time or revisiting old favorites, *The Classic Touch* will afford you a richer understanding of the art of leading.

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DOW JONES-IRWIN
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*To Madrid and Susan,
who epitomize the classic touch*

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John K. Clemens
Douglas F. Mayer

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Introduction

This is a practical book about leadership. It contains timeless and *time-tested* advice about how you can do a better job leading your organization, whether that organization is a fledgling entrepreneurial start-up or a Fortune 500 giant. Unlike most books on leadership, though, it bases its advice on a unique source of wisdom. That source is the classics, those great books of history, biography, philosophy, and drama that together constitute the collective wisdom of mankind. Through them, you'll discover insights on such critical leadership tasks as team building, using power and influence, applying intuition, managing the sales force, establishing corporate culture, delegating, and planning succession.

It's not surprising that books like Plutarch's *Lives*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* offer rich perspectives on the job of leading. After all, the problems that are central to effective leadership—motivation, inspiration, sensitivity, and communication—have changed little in the past 3,000 years. These problems were faced by the Egyptians when they built the pyramids, by Alexander when he created his empire, and by the Greeks when they battled the Trojans.

Leadership is a slippery and elusive concept. Even the social scientists are stumped. One researcher, after reviewing the more than 3,000 leadership books and articles that have been written over the last 40 years, concludes that not much more is known about the subject now than before all the fuss began. What's more,