

Swanson's 'unwritten rules' for leaders

Coming to light after decades in the making, Bill Swanson's flashes of executive wisdom—compiled first on scraps of paper, then in PowerPoint and finally in a booklet last year— have become an underground hit.

Swanson's Unwritten Rules of Management, by Raytheon's CEO, offers these gems, with elaborations here by Swanson himself:

- **You can't polish a sneaker.** "When I was growing up," says Swanson, "we used white Kiwi polish to make our sneakers look new. But no matter how hard we tried, an ugly sneaker remained an ugly sneaker."
- **Learn to say "I don't know."** "If used when appropriate," says Swanson, "it will be used often. Confident people ... don't try to BS you."
- **You remember a third of what you read,** half of what people tell you, but 100 percent of what you feel.

A leader needs to communicate in a way that makes people *feel* what they need to do.

- **Look for what's missing.** Many know how to improve what's there; few can see what isn't there.
- **Treat your organization's name** as if it were your own.
- **View decisions** as if you were one level up in the organization. Your perspective will change quickly.
- **If you're never criticized,** you may not be doing much.
- **A person who is nice to you** but rude to the waiter—or to others—is not a nice person.

— Adapted from "The CEO's Secret Handbook," Paul Kaihla, *Business 2.0*.