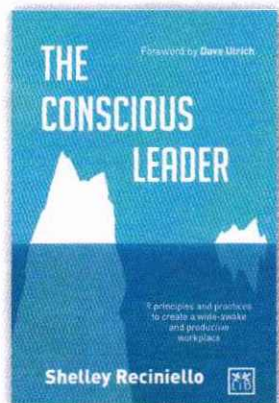


# Avoiding the leadership traps

Although not exactly groundbreaking, this new leadership title still provides plenty of food for thought, writes KAREN BROOKES, group HR director at engineering consultancy WYG

**The Conscious Leader**  
**Author** Shelley Reciniello  
**Publisher** LID Publishing  
**Cost** £18.99  
**Stars** ★★★★★



This book has an interesting take on leadership within organisations. Reciniello's simple and practical approach, and the real-life examples she uses, make it an easy read.

While there is nothing really new here, the insights gained from merging the psychoanalytic and organisational aspects ensure it resonates. It certainly made me reflect on whether my leadership is always conscious, and whether there are any hidden past experiences that cause me and/or others to behave in a way that isn't congruent

with what we are trying to achieve. It also makes visible the reality of the impact you and/or others are having on the individuals, the organisation and indeed yourself. Food for thought!

Reciniello has a very relaxed style and approach and uses humour very effectively to bring her messages home. The examples and anecdotes make you smile – I am sure

we can all think of individuals who fit the examples given – but a serious message is never far away. How much better as a leader could we be if we were present all of the time, mindful of the impact of our behaviour and actions, and aware of our Achilles' heels and hidden agendas?

The nine key principles (the book's subtitle is 'Nine Principles and Practices to Create a Wide-awake and Productive Workplace') are easy to grasp and recall. By keeping these at the forefront of our mind as leaders we can avoid falling into the unconscious trap.

This book provides an invaluable tool to individuals who are seeking to create an organisation that is a great place to work – which is surely a must in this increasingly competitive world – be it via retaining our current people, attracting new ones or achieving the status of a true 'employer of choice'.

In summary, this is a book that causes you to stop, think and reflect. It challenges you to 'turn up' and 'be present' to enable you to be the best leader you can. It contains good advice for all leaders in every sphere of their lives. It is definitely advice that I will be taking.

## And why not try these?

**The Alliance**  
**Authors** Reid Hoffman, Ben Casnocha, Chris Yeh  
**Publisher** Harvard Business Review Press  
**Cost** £16.99  
**Stars** ★★★

That the relationship between employer and employee is undergoing a radical shift will be of no surprise to readers of this magazine. *The Alliance*, co-written by co-founder and chairman of LinkedIn Reid Hoffman, claims to introduce a "new, realistic loyalty pact" for workers and organisations.

The big idea? Replacing the 'job for life' with "Tours of Duty". These finite assignments should benefit both employer and employee. Employees can

move on to better roles easily and employers are free to match people to projects at the right time. 'Alumni' links are kept strong.

While "Tours of Duty" are already commonplace among the technology companies of Silicon Valley, as a way of vying for top talent, *The Alliance* suggests they go mainstream.

For those totally new to the concept of the changing employer/employee dynamic, *The Alliance* provides a very useful starting point. It's an easy and engaging read. Case studies and Hoffman's status give it credibility. However those already aware of the way in which the world of work is evolving may not find that much new insight here.

**In the Shower with Picasso**  
**Authors** Christian Stadil and Lene Tanggaard  
**Publisher** LID Publishing  
**Cost** £14.99  
**Stars** ★★★★★

When a book about creativity in business contains an interview with a member of plastic pop band Aqua, you know it's going to be a little different.

Faded Danish pop heroes aside, this book is all about ways creativity can be bred within a business framework. Large sections focus on creating an environment in which employees feel

comfortable and confident about expressing themselves.

Extended chapters get into the heart of Noma, regularly named the world's best restaurant, and Lego's working practices give valuable insights into some of the most creative minds in the world today.

Not all of the chapters are focused on motivating employees, but there's certainly enough here to keep any HR leader interested in the subject matter. Diversity, both individual and of thought, is explored as a driver for creativity and innovation.

