

"A must-read for everyone in business and government." —Mort Topfer,
former vice-chairman of the board, Dell, Inc.

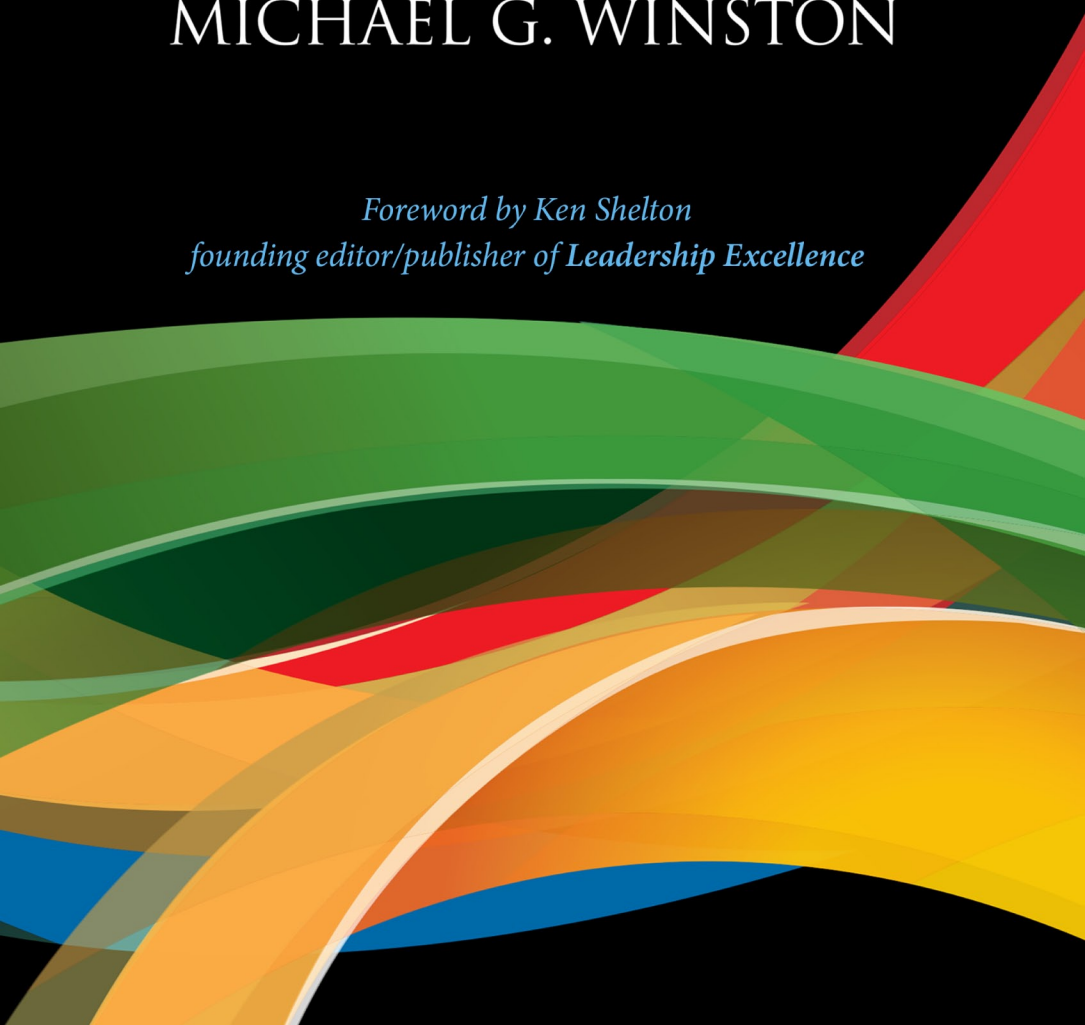
"A potentially life-changing experience." —John E. Major,
former chief executive officer, Qualcomm Inc.

WORLD-CLASS PERFORMANCE

THE COMMITMENT; THE PURSUIT; THE ACHIEVEMENT

MICHAEL G. WINSTON

Foreword by Ken Shelton
founding editor/publisher of Leadership Excellence



World-Class Performance

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PRAISE FOR WORLD-CLASS PERFORMANCE

"World-Class Performance is a Gold medal achievement, reminding us of the unique, sometimes amazing, and often untapped potential that resides in everyone."

—Joseph G. Cutcliffe, PhD

Founder, Cutcliffe Consulting Group

Key member of Technical Advisory Committee on Testing (TACT) for the State of California and the Advisory Council of the California School of Professional Psychology

"Michael Winston cares very much about leaders who care, and how that caring translates into transformational change in an organization. In World-Class Performance, he sheds new and needed light in this arena. This is a big, intelligent work in a small, digestible package. Bravo!"

—David Allen

Best-selling Author, *Getting Things Done: the Art of Stress-Free Productivity*

"BRAVO!! BRAVO!! APPLAUSE!!! APPLAUSE!!! A great work by a great man!! I am honored to endorse such a very fine piece of work. Michael Winston has given us an original take on the leadership prescription for the ages. A must-read for current and emerging leaders. I look forward to gifting my clients and friends with this book come the New Year."

—James Belasco

Founder of San Diego State University's Management Development Center

Co-Founder of the Financial Times Knowledge Dialogue

International bestselling author and a leading authority in change leadership

“The book *World-Class Performance* by Michael Winston is a must-read for everyone in business and government. Michael addresses all of the key elements in building world-class organizations. Leadership through vision and strategy. Setting reach-out goals. Hire the best and the brightest. These are part of many focused strategies necessary to build a world-class organization. Michael’s ability to focus on issues so important to all companies and bring his point home is amazing!”

—Mort Topfer

Chairman of the Board, Castletop Capital, LLC

Former Vice-Chairman of the Board, Dell, Inc.

Former Corporate Executive Vice President and Sector President of Motorola, Inc.

“From his deep roots in designing and delivering world-class corporate leadership development programs, Michael Winston has created a masterpiece book that covers both the principles and practices of high performance in the context of any competitive arena—an Olympic achievement worthy of a Gold medal!”

—Ken Shelton

Founding editor / publisher, *Leadership Excellence*, 1984–2014

Key Writer of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, an all-time bestseller
(over 20 million copies sold in 38 languages worldwide)

“Winston captures the spirit of the Olympics and demonstrates how that spirit can lead to lessons learned that may apply in modern organizations. He masterfully transfers insights from Olympic heroes into daily management actions. His examples elegantly reveal how world class performance can occur in both the Olympics and in organizations.”

—Dave Ulrich

Professor, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan

Partner, the RBL Group

Ranked #1 most influential person in HR by *HR Magazine*

“There are no bad businesses; just management teams through lack of vision and leadership that fail to exploit the opportunity that lies before them. Walmart thrived while Sears failed. The difference was leadership. Michael uses the background of the Olympics to tease out what differentiates the best from the rest. It’s not just a book; it’s a potentially life-changing experience.”

—John E. Major

President of MTSG and advisor of Northwater Capital and Brainlike, Inc.

Former Chief Executive Officer of Novatel Wireless Inc.

Former Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Executive Vice President of Qualcomm, Inc.

“Talented athletes become Olympians when their dedicated daily practice platforms a vision of successful performance. Michael Winston eloquently parallels such sports excellence with the essentials of Heroic Corporate Leadership that always win the race for enduring, transformational change across all businesses and institutions. He reveals the strategies of change that integrate courage, confidence, and commitment into practical tactics for operationalizing a leader’s highest personal Values. This is a fine book filled with focused inspiration. Read it. Learn from it. Use it in your race to the top.”

—Philip Zimbardo, PhD

Author of *The Lucifer Effect*, *The Time Paradox* and *The Time Cure*

Professor Emeritus, Stanford University

Recipient of American Psychological Association Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement

"Michael Winston's new book, *World-Class Performance*, arrives just in time for leaders looking for time-tested strategies that work. With the heart of a storyteller, the mind of a superb organizational strategist and the insight of a master practitioner, Michael has written a powerful and compelling book on leadership. With his passion and perspective, Michael proves to be the quintessential storyteller on leadership and corporate best-practices. This book is a *must-read*."

—Beverly Kaye

Founder and Chairwoman of Career Systems International, Inc.

International bestselling author and leading authority on workplace performance

"I have had the distinct opportunity of working with Michael Winston for many years and have found his integrity and observational skill to be equal to his high intellect and wisdom. Michael's book warrants an Olympic Gold Medal."

—Richard Wintermantel, JD

Consultant, Speaker, and Leadership Team Facilitator.

Retired Executive Officer, Motorola, Inc.

"The best leaders of today exemplify the qualities of our present day Olympians. They each represent our hopes and dreams. They inspire us to new heights, to execute faster and be strong in our resolve. Michael Winston connects the traits necessary for Olympic calibre leaders to climb their own Gold medal podium."

—Vince Poscente

Olympic skier, went an incredible 135 mph

Two-time national champion; five-time national speed champion

New York Times bestselling author of *The Age of Speed*

“Over the years, I have personally experienced Michael’s own unbridled enthusiasm for leadership excellence and his ability to inspire leaders to embrace the essence of change. As a leader, I have moved from the corporate to community service environment, which requires the same relentless pursuit of leadership excellence described herein...with the added challenge of engaging an entire community in building support for a worthy cause. I thank Michael for his wisdom and continual encouragement to always have compassion and commitment for what I do. I thank Michael for compiling this roadmap for leadership success and sharing it with us—like an award-winning fine wine, chock full of a hugely successful combination of grapes and techniques, for all of us to imbibe.”

—Suzanne Browning

Executive Director, Kemple Memorial Children’s Dental Clinic

Retired after thirty-five-year career as senior executive with The Boeing Company / McDonnell Douglas (1965–2000)

“In many cases, an Olympic Athlete’s entire performance and the results of their work are calculated in just a few short minutes. *World-Class Performance* outlines the strong correlation between Olympians and the business world, including the skills and traits needed to succeed. Even more compelling, Michael Winston astutely enlightens us that the most crucial distinctions of an Olympian are often the very same things that are overlooked in business. He reminds us that skills alone are not enough to win, and how crucial it is to focus on the key principles and preparation for the short race and planning for the many ones that will follow.”

—Michael Morelli,

Former executive, Eastman Kodak Company

“Michael Winston has seen the destruction caused by dishonest and selfish leaders. His own courage and honesty are legendary. He has written a great book about what it really takes to build a great company and a great career. With numerous examples, *World-Class Performance* shows us that leadership excellence is not about posturing and promotion, it’s about honesty and willingness to balance commitment to vision with willingness to hear dissent. It’s about serving others while demanding more of yourself. I am a better leader for having read it.”

—Gifford Pinchot

President, Bainbridge Graduate Institute

American entrepreneur, noted bestselling author

Co-founder of the Bainbridge Graduate Institute

“I worked with Michael Winston many times during his years at Motorola. He is a champion at developing leaders and a winning culture. In *World-Class Performance*, you will find the parallels among the examples of Gold medal-winning athletes and great business success stories.”

—Peter Vidmar

Olympic Champion

Chairman of the Board of USA Gymnastics

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*To my daughter and son, Chelsie
and David, the loves of my life*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE IDEAS FOR THIS BOOK STARTED FORMING AFTER I WATCHED THE CLOSING CEREMONIES of the 2012 London Olympic Games and continued until months after the close of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. I was moved by the spectacle of seeing the best in the world give everything they have to win. I noticed a striking contrast between the quest for excellence in each athlete and the lackluster business practices I had observed lately in many organizations. In contrast to the athletes giving every ounce of their skill and effort, it seemed many businesses were trying just to survive, not to thrive. Their efforts seemed focused more on how much cost they could reduce than on how much value they could create.

I wanted to write a book that would inspire world-class performance and challenge readers to examine and improve upon key areas in their work and personal lives. My hope was to inform, inspire, and leave a lasting impression that serves as a catalyst for action...a resurgence. Leaders seemed more focused on keeping their jobs than on doing their jobs. Businesses seemed more intent on holding than building. People were trying not to lose...their homes, their money, and their jobs. That's very different than trying to win! I decided to use the Olympics as a metaphorical springboard to remind readers that world-class performance, individually and collectively, is the only acceptable standard.

World-Class Performance tells a great comparative story of the presence or absence of leadership and its effect on the success or failure of an

organization. This book reaffirms that all great institutions are built by leaders who demonstrate the bedrock values of integrity and trust.

In this book are stories of an imploding dynasty, a paragon of superior innovation, a model of exemplary execution and a strategy that sums up an era of dramatic change. I endeavored to tell big stories with verve and vigor.

The first person with whom I shared this idea was Ken Shelton, whom I have known for three decades. In the mid-1980s, we worked closely together for several years, crafting an award-winning approach to organization integration, executive and leadership development, and change management. He would go on to become a key writer for one of the best-selling books of all time (and one of my favorite books), the ***7 Habits of Highly Effective People*** authored by Stephen R. Covey. I had been an avid reader of Ken's magazines and newsletters for three decades. A prodigious achiever, his talents are impressive.

Ken Shelton was excited to join in and help. Ken and I believe these qualities will be the catalyst for the "blueprint for recovery" in these challenging and disorienting times. In the book, I use an Olympic theme to dispense advice to organizations and leaders at all levels about how to get back on the winning track. He has been a true advocate and coach in helping me navigate through the many challenges inherent in writing a book.

I want to thank those who have reviewed and provided numerous valuable suggestions to earlier drafts of this book; I note particularly the ideas flowing from David Allen, Ken Blanchard, Mike Stafford, Jim Belasco, Beverly Kaye, Dave Ulrich, Gifford Pinchot, Dan Burrus, Neil Novich and John Kotter. I am indebted to all for their support and insights.

The backing and support of my team, including Dave Sullivan, Sharon Doyle, Joe DiDonato, Cynder and Mark Niemela, and Eileen and John Foster, kept the lights on during dim periods. I am thankful for the re-entry of Suzanne Browning, my co-director from my McDonnell Douglas days in the mid-1980s, back into my life. Also lending vital support were Mort Topfer, former vice chairman of Dell and friend extraordinaire, and friends Mike and Mary Anne Morelli, Tony Coppola, Joe Cutcliffe, and Barry Leavitt. Special thanks go to Debbie McGrath for her generosity of spirit and to Adnan Saleem and Savitha Malar for their assistance.

To all the readers and kindred spirits who read and develop from these pages, my heartfelt thanks and best wishes to each one of you.

And finally, thanks and love to my children, Chelsie and David, for inspiring me to stretch to new heights during challenging times and their incredible patience with me as I tried to write a meaningful book. This book could not have been written without their love and amazing support. They are the greatest gifts in my life.

FOREWORD

By Ken Shelton, founding editor/publisher of *Leadership Excellence*

FOR MOST OF MY THIRTY-YEAR TENURE AS EDITOR OF *LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE* MAGAZINE, I have known Michael G. Winston, global head and chief organization and leadership strategy officer at Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas, Motorola, Merrill Lynch, and then Countrywide Financial.

And so I was pleased when Michael informed me that he was writing this book. Both of us have seen and experienced the good, the great, the bad, and the ugly in organizational performance. When you witness the rise and fall of leaders and organizations, as Michael and I have done over the decades, you learn lessons both in your head and heart. Perhaps nothing professionally is as gut-wrenching as seeing your company close its doors, lay off thousands of people, sell off assets, and leave many people with debt.

Leaders of failed enterprises own much of the blame for poor performance—even if they do their best to dodge it, as has Italian Captain Francesco Schettino of the wrecked cruise ship *Costa Concordia*, which grounded off the coast of Italy after sailing too close to shore, taking the lives of thirty-two passengers and crew. Captain Schettino was accused of several crimes (abandoning his ship, manslaughter, and causing the shipwreck). But now the master of the ill-fated ship says he's innocent and that the truth will be told—in his new book, of course. He says that he did all he could do to help—and he is sticking to his story that he tripped and fell into a lifeboat. Salvage operations continue at the site.

As eyewitnesses to such business wrecks and salvage operations—and derelict captains of various leader-ships—Michael and I care even more about competitiveness, performance, results, relationships, outcomes, and sustainability.

For inspiration in writing his book, Michael looked to the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, where performance is everything (yes, even politics takes a back seat). After thirty years of editing *Leadership Excellence* magazine (some sixty-six hundred articles), I came to realize that organizations tend to have either a political or a performance culture.

I define politics broadly as any activity that diverts, distracts, delays, deters, or destroys value-added performance. One insight that I gained from working with Stephen R. Covey as his writer on *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *Principle-Centered Leadership* was this: most people have far more talent (performance potential) than their companies (political cultures) even allow them to use.

Few managers or leaders are pure politicians or pure performers. We are all composites, but the best of the breed have a bias for high performance and do all they can to ensure that their culture is all about excellent performance in the best interests of all stakeholders (a stock phrase in many corporate mission statements).

Why, then, are politics so prevalent? Why are so many firms more oriented to pervasive politics than peak performance?

In political cultures, the means to getting ahead include game-playing, positioning, politicking, parading, palavering, jockeying, backbiting, kissing up, flattering, stealing credit, and engaging in deceit, treachery, and even trench warfare.

Who tends to get ahead in political cultures? The tallest, toughest, biggest, loudest, brightest, most articulate, best dressed, most popular, physically endowed, financially flush, most talented, sociable, savvy, and smooth.

Once found out, corporate politicians can be very hard to ferret and flush out because their support structure and systems are sunk like roots into the soil of the culture. Indeed, they may well have the backing of the boss. And even if they lack support from the top, they may get applause from other folks, with whom they share the spoils. They also seek protection in legislation—in laws and regulations governing hiring, firing, promoting, electing, selecting, and admitting. They are experts at manipulating the internal recognition and reward system—often seeking and receiving various (but mostly meaningless) awards, honors, medals, badges, and certificates.

And so, once in charge, the politicians play a shell game whereby they keep all players guessing—and few winning. Meanwhile, they make out like bandits, having their hands in several cookie jars and their feet in the soothing spas of passive income streams. The result of all this political posturing can best be depicted as a gulf between what we really want and what we settle for. We deserve our fate if we blindly follow political

leaders, especially if we are guilty of passive resistance, ignorance, activism, apathy, ambition, silence, aggression, sabotage, or sloth.

So, how do we turn political quagmires into performance cultures?

- Declare your area to be a performance environment—and then see that this declaration is translated into vision, mission, roles, and goals. Fight against rules and regulations that compromise your ability to create and maintain a performance environment.
- Set performance standards with people and hold them accountable to measurable or discernible performance objectives and standards.
- Eliminate double standards, sacred cows, political seed-beds, exclusive access, preferential treatment, and exceptions to the rules.
- Make an example of someone—fire a prominent executive who prizes politics over performance. The message will travel fast.
- Reward, promote, and recognize the real performers. Sing their praises. Prize their work.
- Make resources available to them.

Good luck. Replacing politics with performance, like ridding your lawn of weeds, is no small task. But the payoffs are immense. As Michael says, the stakes are high, and yet the rewards for world-class, Gold-medal performance excellence can be exponential.

INTRODUCTION

THE BUSINESS MEDIA IS OVERWHELMED WITH BOOKS ABOUT COMPANIES THAT ALREADY get it and want to go from “good to great” or from “great to greater.” These are the companies “in search of excellence,” to quote authors and consultants Tom Peters and Bob Waterman. They are in relentless pursuit of perfection.

But what of the companies that haven’t seen the light? And what of the employees feeling trapped in these companies, unable to leave? This book profiles a change strategy that works with leaders and organizations at both ends of the spectrum and offers a time-tested strategy for continuous improvement. When implemented properly, the workforce commits to becoming and remaining a force for change and exemplary performance.

Implementing a new strategy requires current and emerging leaders who can drive an organization, energize its operations, and inspire its people. This book was written for you...current and emerging leaders. It is for the select few who always step up, build a competitive edge, and differentiate themselves in clear and compelling ways. You know who you are. You are relentlessly pursuing greater accomplishment and impact.

This kind of leader personifies the organization’s purpose through values, thinking, and character—all of which are necessary to inspire and energize

High-performance leaders and organizations believe that words and deeds should match. They have the guts and intestinal fortitude to keep their promises through thick and thin, in good times and bad.

commitment to the strategy and goals of the organization and secure the allegiances required to make any bold purpose succeed. Clearly, an essential element of leadership is trust.

High-performance leaders and organizations believe that words and deeds should match. They have the guts and intestinal fortitude to keep their promises through thick and thin, in good times and bad. It is in translating the commitment to consistent, purposeful action, often under fire (business downturn, budget crisis, etc.) that leadership is truly tested.

Without the requisite character and integrity, the organization is built to fail and will not last. According to the noted Edward R. Murrow:

To be persuasive, we must be believable;

To be believable, we must be credible;

To be credible, we must be truthful.

So many leaders of the recent past have failed themselves, their families, their shareholders, and their neighbors on the most important of leadership behaviors: honesty, integrity, and ethical decision-making. It is time to recognize and celebrate the leaders who exemplify these qualities. They are the true “game-changers.”

High-performing organizations recruit talented individuals with these qualities and place them in focused, driven teams. They let their skills, drive, intelligence, and creativity rise to the surface. They train them, challenge them, and focus them on rewarding challenges and opportunities. They give them the place, space, knowledge, and opportunity to excel. By doing so, their talents can shine through, and the company develops another generation of leaders.

When I arrived at Motorola in the 1980s, I was amazed that a company like this actually existed—one that cared about its people; was full of great opportunity; was organized for speed, achievement, and agility; celebrated the achievements and milestones of its employees; and earned great loyalty from its people. Management was passionate about finding the right people.

Over my career, I have been uplifted by caring, kind, and compassionate leaders—qualities that are rare in competitive cultures. As I have now worked for the opposite type of leaders, I am even more committed to building cultures designed to nurture and empower people to treat each other well, work together, and BEAT their competitors! They do well by doing right.

The best leaders have a knack for seeing talent. They have a sense for who is the right fit for the company and who will succeed. They have a proven track record for bringing in the right talent and helping them develop. If they feel you have potential, they let you know of their strong belief in you, which enables people to believe in themselves. They have a way of leveling the playing field and helping everyone feel like they have a seat at the table. While they expect a lot from people, they also expect a lot of themselves.

NEW RULES, NEW NORMAL

This book covers the “new rules” used by great leaders and organizations during turbulent times to tap and leverage the talents and skills of those around them: stimulating high performance, sparking creativity and imagination, developing leaders, encouraging collaboration, and inspiring loyalty. This understanding is based upon nearly thirty years of experience serving as global head, worldwide organization and leadership strategy for several Fortune 100 companies.

Working across several business sectors (high technology, financial services, and aerospace) I partnered with C-suite officers, developing the business model, crafting strategy, creating culture, and selecting and developing leaders. I also provided strategic guidance to the CEO and executive team on business planning, execution, and human capital issues across the globe.

The most successful leaders develop and nurture champions, dramatize goals and direction, build skills and teams, and spread irresistible enthusiasm.

Through this experience, I have come to learn that the most successful leaders develop and nurture champions, dramatize goals and direction, build skills and teams, and spread irresistible enthusiasm. They encourage, teach, listen, facilitate, and even excite. Their actions are consistent. The focus of development is on continuous improvement and self-renewal.

It's time to advance and celebrate leadership at the highest level—leadership that is vision-driven and values-based. Let's encourage leadership that inspires, empowers, and pursues noble ends. I hope the ideas in this book ignite people. Perhaps we can prevent a reoccurrence of the leadership deficit we've recently experienced. High-performing leaders lift up shareholders, customers, employees, and society. A groundswell of support for these ideas might spur a transformation in business practices.

This is a book of many ideas. Some are new; some are not. The way they are put together is new.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

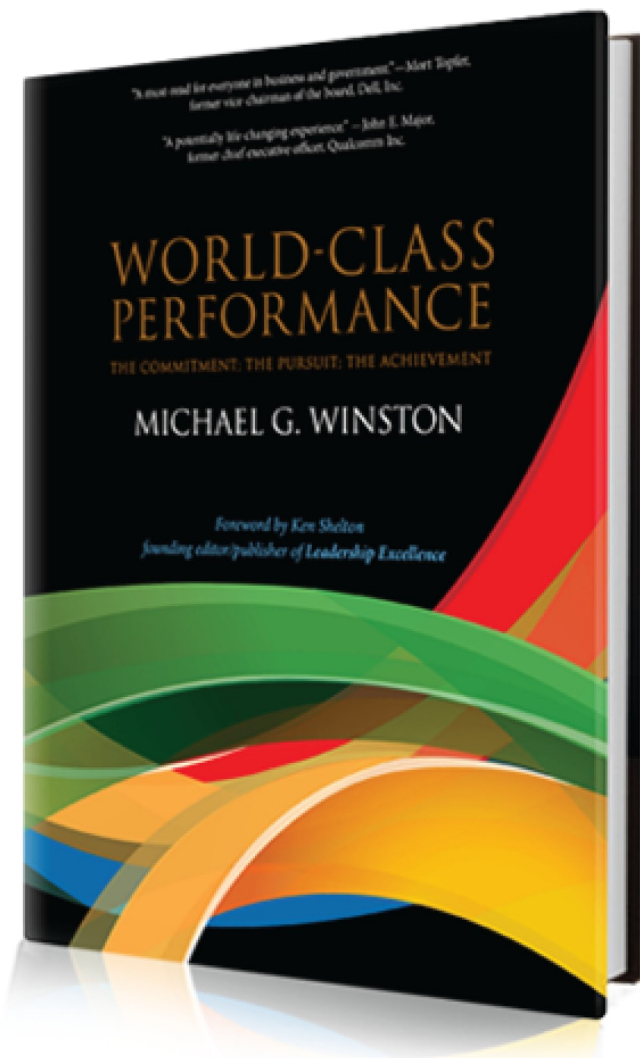
With over thirty years of experience as a business leader, change agent, and organization strategist, Michael G. Winston has been in the “eye of the storm” of businesses going through massive transformation. He served in executive positions for five Fortune 100 companies (Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas, Motorola, Merrill Lynch and Countrywide Financial) across three industries (high technology, aerospace, and financial services), working on organization strategy and performance, succession planning, leadership development, and leading change. Michael was hailed by *Leadership Excellence* as one of the “100 Most Influential Thinkers on Leadership in the World” for eight consecutive years. Michael’s work has been recognized by his inclusion in many “Top Business Thought-Leaders” lists and over twenty “Who’s Who” Editions. He has won numerous corporate awards for exemplary performance.



Michael has delivered keynote presentations to over four hundred companies and associations and addressed executives at prestigious university executive programs too numerous to single out. He has shared the podium with Heads of State. He has also keynoted for Management Centre Europe (Belgium) several times and served as Distinguished Adjunct Professor for sixteen consecutive years at Stichting deBaak in Noordwijk, The Netherlands. Michael was named “Best Instructor” at the University of Illinois and served as adjunct professor in the graduate schools of business and management for the University of California, University of San Francisco, Golden Gate University, and Pepperdine University.

Michael’s articles have appeared in *Business Week*, *Leader to Leader*, *Leadership Excellence*, *Business Forum*, *Huffington Post*, *Executive Excellence*, and other publications. His leadership development strategies have been utilized by such institutions as the University of Illinois Business School and executive programs. He speaks with authority because he speaks from experience.

Michael Winston holds a PhD from the University of Illinois, a Master’s Degree from the University of Notre Dame, and is a graduate of executive programs from Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School.



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