

Dells graduate writes leadership book

Two years ago, business executive Ralph Howard, a Wisconsin Dells native, saw his third marriage dissolve, bringing to the forefront the challenges faced by modern business professionals trying to enjoy career success without knocking the "work/life balance" askew. The output of his deliberation is a captivating new book titled "Control Alt Delete Leadership."

The 1980 graduate of the Dells High School, Howard said, "Control + Alt + Delete are three simple keystrokes most of us use as we begin our work days: we 'soft boot' our computers and electrify their 'brains' to help us conduct our modern businesses and lives. But essentially, the computer is just a device built on a foundation of logic, given to it by man. So, could we take back a little bit of that simple logic from the computer and use it as an everyday reminder to give our careers and lives a 'soft

boot' too?"

To answer this question, Howard created the "Control Alt Delete Leadership" model presented in his book.

The model frames up how to "control" what you can, and how to effectively use "alt" and "delete" to manage change. "Alt" and "delete" are known as "modifier keys" on a computer, and they're also important tools to deploy in life and career development to keep you aligned with your goals.

Using examples, Howard cites the leadership of Dells High School Coach Fred Kuhl as a high-quality leader. He describes him as "exacting, yet fair in his assessments. "In other words, he was well balanced between his head, his heart and his hands. Consequently, he successfully maximized the talents of a band of average athletes — allowing a much smaller school to win out over much larger schools in our conference."



RALPH HOWARD

In the simply-crafted book, Howard unveils "The Four Controls of Business Leadership," to provide modern solutions for today's leadership challenges.

The final chapter is one on work and life balance. Howard said, "Work/life balance is less about cutting back on hours dedicated to your job and more about communicating well with your home base. Too often, we find ourselves totally spent at the end of the day, and we end up giving our significant others what little is left over, rather than what they truly deserve. During my

professional journey, I've learned a few lessons the hard way about the importance of effective communication with my home base, and I hope sharing some of my learning will help others facing those same challenges."

Howard is a business executive with W.W. Grainger Inc. Prior to joining Grainger, he was president of Canac Cabinets (Kohler Co.), and also held positions with Pella Windows and Doors and Master Lock Company. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the UW-Platteville, and he's a Harvard Business School general manager program alumnus. He is the son of Bob and Jo Howard of Wisconsin Dells.

The book is available at Barnes and Noble bookstores and on Amazon.com or visit www.ralph-howard.com.