

## ChinaValue>Industry figure > Daniel F. Pinnow

### CHINAVALUE



### Author Introduction

Associate Professor Daniel F. Pinnow, born in 1962, is a most famous expert in leadership and management science in the German speaking regions. Since 1997 he is the managing director of the Academy of Leadership in Überlingen and Bad Harzburg and from 2004 until 2007 he was a Member of the Board of Directors of Cognos Group. With 2.800 employees and 60 branches the Cognos Group is one of the largest private and independent training institutes in Germany.

Daniel F. Pinnow gathered a lot of experience as top manager and human resources manager within multinational companies such as EADS and E.ON. His major in university was economy and psychology and he engaged in systemic training as consultant and coach after graduating from university.

He is lecturer in leadership and human resources management for Munich University of Technology and since 2007 he is Associate Professor of Leadership and Human Resources Management at the Capital University for Economics and Business in Peking.

As the initiator of Systemic Leadership in Germany, Professor Daniel F. Pinnow combined his rich leading and managing experiences with traditional management theory, organization psychology and family system therapy. Moreover, he is an experienced top management trainer and coach.

He has also published a series of theses and books about human resources management and systemic leadership.

## **Leadership - What really Matters**

Interview with Daniel F. Pinnow, Managing Director of the Academy of Leadership  
in Überlingen and Bad Harzburg, Germany

**[Content Abstract]** I have a passionate and dynamic personality and I have no fear in my heart, this is very much a result of childhood and the environment in which I grew up. In my view strong power in the heart cannot be learned. Excellent leadership is the creation of a world where others are willing to follow you, the first step is self confidence.

**ChinaValue: Professor Pinnow, why did you write “Leadership – What really matters”?  
What new things does your book emphasize compared to other books about leadership?**

**Daniel F. Pinnow:** The first reason that motivated me to write this book was my management experience. I had a lot of passion and dreams when I finished university. I was full of energy and wanted to move the world. After I had worked for about five years I realized that my boss carried a lot of fear within himself every day, he was very careful about what he said and did. On reflection I realized that most of the past theories about leadership were usually covering the general area of management such as organization, control delegation and so on. I think the really important challenge is however “how do we inspire others and maintain good relationships with others.

The master of management Peter Drucker presents us with many management theories but did not tell us “how” we should do it. I did not want to follow that single approach to study management, instead I researched within the field of psychology focusing mainly on organizational psychology . I would like to apply this new approach to studying the world.

In my book I talk about what is really important in a leader’s daily work and what is the goal of excellent leadership. The first aim of leadership is giving direction. The second one is making decisions. The third one is to inspire people. The fourth one is ensuring good organizational communication. The fifth one is dealing with complexity. Last but not least, to develop yourself and your staff.

I have been in charge of the Academy for Leadership in Germany for 12 years. I have developed a new management approach called Systemic Leadership, the main part of my book is comprised of this topic. It is not just the theoretical qualification of the theory that is important to me but also that I can apply these principles in my work as a leader, a trainer and a coach successfully. Systemic leadership is already an important topic for leadership education in Germany, it provides new answers to new problems in new situations. It is no longer possible to lead “know how” workers who are very creative in the more traditional authoritarian way. Excellent managers need to have vision to develop potential in their employees. In my opinion a successful manager should have power in his heart and know how to inspire people. The managers who attend my seminars know who they are, can better lead themselves, make self cognition and are very strong in self reflection.

It is a process where I furthered existing theories by drawing out new approaches and methods.

**ChinaValue: How do you think of your style as a leader? And how did you form your leadership style?**

**Daniel F. Pinnow:** I am very enthusiastic and energetic by nature, I have no fear in my heart. These attributes are rooted in my childhood . I am the eldest of five children and our father died when we were young, so I had to be the leader of my brother and sisters. My mother loved me very much and what is more important is that she trusted me. I feel that I can get on well with powerful managers but they also feel my power. From my experience I think that parents should not force or suppress their children but also help them to develop themselves so that they can build a powerful heart. A powerful heart cannot be learnt in this sense.

**ChiaValue: The first thing for a manager is that how to manage himself. So how do you think of self-management for a leader?**

**Daniel F. Pinnow:** I hold around six seminars each year besides managing the Academy and writing books. We have about 8500 young professionals participating in our seminars each year. Some of them have only two or three years of work experience. I believe it is better to visit leadership courses when you are still young. Then there is plenty of time to apply the principles, learn and reflect and continually improve them.

We teach our delegates a useful method to lead themselves better, which is reacting with the correct instinct at the right time and controlling how things are going. This method is suitable for all managers including all levels, top, middle and junior. The difference is that top managers can use this method more quickly and more directly.

The more successful managers have the same traits, which means that they all have a high EQ, this means self reflection, self control, a devoted working attitude, thinking for others and an excellent social ability.

A high EQ does not mean being friendly to everyone or ignoring emotions. It means evaluating themselves and others more realistically, accepting human nature and handling interpersonal relations properly. In a word, a high EQ ensures that leaders make good decisions.

Emotional management is the core task of leadership. Promoting emotional quality is a key qualification for every leader. Our emotion - whether positive or pessimistic - gives us a perspective for self reflection. Leaders need to find a balance, not too much or not too little. Leadership means creating an environment where others are willing to follow you, this environment cannot be measured by financial reports, it is hard to control. The question is whether people want to stay and in a committed way follow. Leadership means self-cognition. Leadership comes from leaders themselves, not from their employees or enterprises. The first question for a leader to answer is “how do I understand leadership?”, then to consider whether his actions are helpful to others, whether he can influence others, whether he is accepted.

**ChinaValue: How do you think of fear in leaders' heart now?**

**Daniel F. Pinnow:** I think the first step to handle inner fears is to find out the reason for them. In general the fear is not from the job itself but from life, usually the roots of fear lie in our childhood. It is just the same for people from every country. In western countries, the individual life is regarded as the first value and is most important. The government just provides the basic game rules for society. This is the reason that America has been leading the field of technology for so many years.

The situation is different in China however it seems to be changing now. The big earthquake is a real tragedy. But I learnt a lot of inspiring things recently. Especially that the Chinese Government showed great respect for the life of individuals.

Generally speaking I think we should make it clear where our fears come from and learn to live with them. In this way the fear can be overcome and changed. On the other the government and society can provide help and support.

In the business world these days we pay a lot of attention to the hard and soft factors of leadership. We can see and measure the factors such as money, time and ability however some values within leadership such as feelings and relationships cannot be measured. These soft factors however are the most important and influence around 85% of the total picture. As quoted in my book, leadership is like an iceberg – the rational 15% can be seen and recognized. The other 85%, the emotional factors are deeply hidden.

Reporter Lingli Shen  
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