



Applebee's America: How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community

Ron Fournier, Douglas B. Sosnik, Matthew J. Dowd

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In this era of technology, terror, and massive social change, it takes a deft touch to connect with Americans. *Applebee's America* cracks the twenty-first-century code for political, business, and religious leaders struggling to keep pace with the times.

A unique team of authors -- Douglas B. Sosnik, a strategist in the Clinton White House; Matthew J. Dowd, a strategist for President Bush's two campaigns; and award-winning political journalist Ron Fournier -- took their exclusive insiders' knowledge far outside Washington's beltway in search of keys to winning leadership.

They discovered that successful leaders, even those from disparate fields, have more in common than not.

Their book takes you inside the reelection campaigns of Bush and Clinton, behind the scenes of hyper-successful megachurches, and into the boardrooms of corporations such as Applebee's International, the world's largest casual dining restaurant chain. You'll also see America through the anxious eyes of ordinary people, buffeted by change and struggling to maintain control of their lives.

Whether you're promoting a candidate, a product, or the Word of God, the rules are the same in Applebee's America.

- People make choices about politics, consumer goods, and religion with their hearts, not their heads.
- Successful leaders touch people at a gut level by projecting basic American values that seem lacking in modern institutions and missing from day-to-day life experiences.
- The most important Gut Values today are community and authenticity. People are desperate to connect with one another and be part of a cause greater than themselves. They're tired of spin and sloganeering from political, business, and religious institutions that constantly fail them.
- A person's lifestyle choices can be used to predict how he or she will vote, shop, and practice religion. The authors reveal exclusive new details about the best "LifeTargeting" strategies.
- In this age of skepticism and media diversification, people are abandoning traditional opinion leaders for "Navigators." These otherwise average Americans help their family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers negotiate the swift currents of change in twenty-first-century America.
- Winning leaders ignore conventional wisdom and its many myths, including these false assumptions: Voters only act in their self-interests; Republicans rule exurbia; and technology drives people apart. *Wrong, wrong, and wrong.*
- Once you squander a Gut Values Connection, you may never get it back. Bush learned that hard lesson

within a year of winning reelection.

Applebee's America offers numerous practical examples of how leaders -- whether from the worlds of politics, business, or religion -- earn the loyalty and support of people by understanding and sharing their values and goals.

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