



Deadly Decisions: How False Knowledge Sank the Titanic, Blew Up the Shuttle, and Led America into War

Christopher Burns

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How did we get into today's financial mess that not only threatens America but the entire world? Remember Enron? Why did that debacle happen? How do groups privy to special knowledge and "truths" make decisions that lead to disasters like the Iraq War, the sinking of the Titanic, and the blow up of the Challenger Shuttle? How could such informed experts end up being so wrong? In *Deadly Decisions*, Christopher Burns—one of the country's leading experts on modern information management—searches the biology of the brain, "group think," and the structure of organizations for practical answers to the problem of virtual truth—internally consistent evidence and assumptions that purport to describe reality, but often are dead wrong!

- How can we avoid wishful thinking, information overload, uncertainty absorption, and an unintentional twisting of the facts?
- Why are startup groups agile and innovative while large organizations lumber along, bogged down in false knowledge?
- How can societies rediscover the power of truthful communication?

Burns suggests that, as individuals, we must learn to be skeptical of our own sly and beguiling minds. As members of a group, we need to be more wary of the omissions, inventions, and distortions that come all too naturally to all of us. And as consumers of information we have to hold professionals, politicians, and the media more accountable. As *Deadly Decisions* makes clear, only through a deeper understanding of how individuals, groups, and society process information can we succeed in those extraordinary endeavors that are the promise of the Information Age.

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