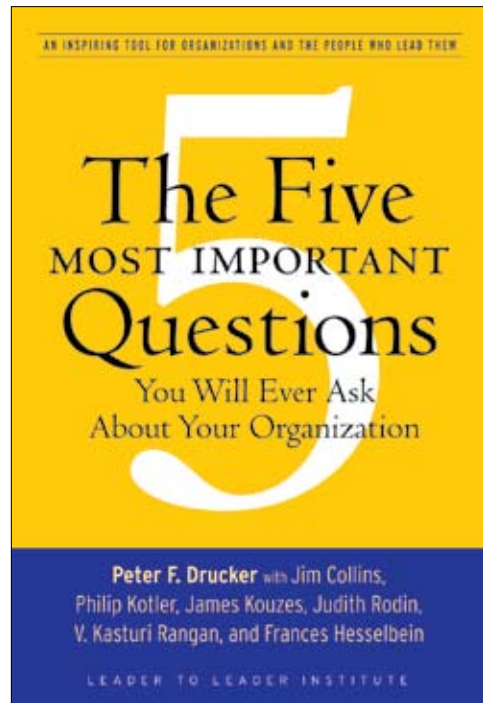


QUESTION AUTHORITY

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 The Five Most Important Questions You
 Will Ever Ask About Your Organization

By Peter Drucker
 (Jossey-Bass, 119 pp., \$14.95)

Reviewed by Michael Laff



It is a testament to his continuing influence that successive generations still cite Peter Drucker's work with admiration. As basic as his five questions are, no organization can succeed without addressing them, especially those that measure success independent of profit margins.

The five questions address an organization's mission, as well as how it identifies customers and customer expectations, establishes a plan, and measures results. Such questions today seem entirely ordinary, yet they remain the starting point for building an organization's identity.

Divided into brief sections, much of the text is drawn from Drucker's previous writings, with analyses from contemporary writers. The book is meant to be a fast read.

Drucker initially introduced his ideas as a kind of roadmap for not-for-profit organizations, whose measuring stick for success is more elusive than the for-profit sector. Businesses that fail to turn a profit drop out of the race. Not-for-profits are racing on a different track.

A generation ago, not-for-profits were unlikely to speak of their membership base as "customers," believing it to be a crude term reserved for salespeople. What Drucker is getting at is the idea of not-for-profits offering a service much like a business, though every contact is not necessarily a transaction. In a world where multiple not-for-profits compete in the same arena, "doing good work" is no longer sufficient. A disciplined approach is essential.

Homeless shelters now routinely refer to individuals who stay at their facilities as "clients"—clearly a business term. One such shelter referenced in the book believed that it was providing the necessary service to its clients until its leadership decided to ask about their performance.

What they discovered was that while the meals and beds were appreciated, the shelter did not address the greatest need: a desire not to be homeless. As a result, the shelter created a network to help individuals rebuild their lives, while the clients were expected to make a commitment to change as well.

Mission statements sound like relics of the typewriter and white-out era. To deviate from them in pursuit of the next “strategic partnership” often means changing the organization entirely. Frances Hesselbein, the former executive director of the Girl Scouts and a contributor to the book, outlined a clear mission for the organization—to help girls reach their highest potential.

When a charity organization pitched the idea of a partnership whereby the girls would serve in a volunteer effort, Hesselbein turned it down. A clear mission is too often discarded, or worse, perverted, to achieve the goals of an individual or other self-interested entity.

Analyzing performance is a buzzword today, but a generation ago, it would have seemed a waste of time to measure performance against a list of prewritten goals. The questions are meant to be guidelines for ongoing analysis, not just something to be done when an organization is founded or when a new CEO arrives.

One of the more salient concepts emphasized in the book is the need for “planned abandonment,” whereby an organization ditches an initiative because it is out of date with current priorities. This is a courageous step not often taken by leaders who stubbornly cling to legacy operations.

The book provides a soft landing for readers who are wholly unfamiliar with Drucker’s work, or for those who want a brief summary. The publishers did not intend the book to be a reissue of his masterworks or a comprehensive update.

As is the case with many books published for an audience with

little time to read, the book lacks a consistent narrative since it is composed of vignettes. A brief excerpt from Drucker is paired with a commentary by a current writer.

Technical wizardry and jargon often overwhelm the founding principles of many not-for-profits. And Drucker’s questions are an ongoing reminder not to abandon the basics.

I give this two cups.

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BOOKS //

Summer Fundamentals

T+D EDITORS EXPLORE THREE NEW GUIDES FOR COACHES, MANAGERS, AND TRAINERS.

Human Resource Transformation: Demonstrating Strategic Leadership in the Face of Future Trends

By William Rothwell, Robert K. Prescott, and
Maria W. Taylor
(SHRM/Davies-Black Publishing, 208 pp., \$34.95)

This is a fast-moving read that represents a good resource for any professional with a stake in the human resources field today. The authors propose looking ahead, without getting ahead of themselves—offering practical overviews of current and future trends and practical leadership methods for the profession.

Human Resource Transformation is a joint-publication product of the Society for Human Resource Management and



Davies-Black Publishing. The book channels larger texts on similar subjects, with numerous tables and figures, as well as a healthy amount of succinct case studies and essays. There are even two worksheets that, though small size-wise, are readily applicable.

The book's three parts discuss, respectively, transforming HR, future trends, and the new role of HR leadership. The authors' path is cleared of the platitudes and feel-good language that dominates the literature, focusing fully on real-world concerns of HR professionals tasked with initiating the leadership charge. The book opts not to get lost in the idea that HR itself is changing, and instead offers readers their own tools for transforming HR for the better.

Juana Llorens

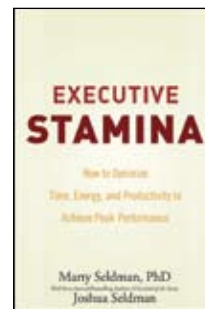
Executive Stamina

By Marty Seldman and Joshua Seldman
(John Wiley & Sons, 306 pp., \$24.95)

Burnt-out executives and weary corporate workers, take heart! The inspiration and vital worklife perspective offered by *Executive Stamina* are designed to re-energize anyone searching for that "career sweet spot."

Executive coach Marty Seldman, PhD, and fitness coach Joshua Seldman combine their expertise to teach executives how to work smarter, not harder. The authors call on readers to define, reach, and maintain their sweet spot—that place where competence, enjoyment, interests, and values intersect.

Part I encourages the examination of one's values and whether schedules and priorities are aligned with them. The authors provide evaluation questions and activities to guide readers in reflection.



Part II explains building career stamina through proper stress management, fitness, and nutrition, including basic plans to set readers in motion toward better personal and professional health.

Executive Stamina concludes with a look at sustaining stamina by optimizing job performance and results, reaching full potential, avoiding career management mistakes, and maintaining positive relationships.

The book is a good tool for those in the C-suite, and anyone else, to revisit yearly for personal and professional evaluation.

Ann Pace

Leader to Leader 2: Enduring Insights on Leadership from the Leader to Leader Institute's Award-Winning Journal

Edited by Frances Hesselbein and Alan Shrader

(Jossey-Bass, 384 pp., \$29.95)

From the quarterly leadership, management, and strategy journal *Leader to Leader*, comes a second compendium of the most popular and provocative articles written by notable authors and thought leaders. Names include Ram Charan, Stephen R. Covey, Marshall Goldsmith, Beverly Kaye, Patrick M. Lencioni, Constantinos Markides, Susan Mitchell, and Margaret J. Wheatley. Compiled by Frances Hesselbein and Alan Shrader, perspectives include those of individuals with experience in the public, private, and social sectors.



The book is divided into six general sections, and includes 35 article chapters, with none repeated from the first volume. The sections cover understanding leadership, improving personal effectiveness, developing people and teams, leading high-performance organizations, leading strategically in an innovation-demanding world, and a forward-looking conclusion. As a helpful resource to readers, each section begins with ideas on how to enact and practice the concepts and tools in each article.

Some of the unique leadership arenas analyzed include ethical leadership and defining values, new models of leadership, dealing with crisis and turbulence, developing leaders through mentorship, and leading resonant teams. Straightforward, helpful diagrams are also included.

Aparna Nancherla

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