

Mercuri Mail

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The important thing to know about how one performs is to know how one learns. Many first-class writers Winston Churchill is but one example do poorly in school. They tend to remember their schooling as pure torture. Yet few of their classmates remember it the same way. They may not have

enjoyed the school very much, but the worst they suffered was boredom. The explanation is that writers do not, as a rule, learn by listening and reading.

They learn by writing. Because schools do not allow them to learn this way, they get poor grades. Schools everywhere are organized on the assumption that there is only one right way to learn and that it is the same way for everybody. But to be forced to learn the way a school teaches is sheer hell for students who learn differently. Indeed, there are probably half a dozen different ways to learn. There are people, like Churchill, who learn by writing. Some people learn by taking copious notes. Beethoven, for example, left behind an enormous number of sketch books, yet he said he never actually looked at them when he composed. Asked why he kept them, he is reported to have replied, "If I don't write it down immediately, I forget it right away. If I put it into a sketchbook, I never forget it and I never have to look it up again." Some people learn by doing. Others learn by hearing themselves talk.

A chief executive I know who converted a small and mediocre family business into the leading company in its industry was one of those people who learn by talking. He was in the habit of calling his entire senior staff into his office once a week and then talking at them for two or three hours. He would raise policy issues and argue three different positions on each one. He rarely asked his associates for comments or questions; he simply needed an audience to hear himself talk. That's how he learned. And although he is a fairly extreme case, learning through talking is by no means an unusual method. Successful trial lawyers learn the same way, as do many medical diagnosticians (and so do I). Of all the important pieces of self-knowledge, understanding how you learn is the easiest to acquire. When I ask people, "How do you learn?" most of them know the answer. But when I ask, "Do you act on this knowledge?" few answer yes. And yet, acting on this knowledge is the key to performance; or rather, *not* acting on this knowledge condemns one to nonperformance.



Managing Self - Peter Drucker

How do I learn?

Am I a reader or a listener? and How do I learn? are the first questions to ask. But they are by no means the only ones. To manage yourself effectively, you also have to ask, Do I work well with people, or am I a loner? And if you do work well with people, you then must ask, In what relationship? Some people work best as

subordinates. General George Patton, the great American military hero of World War II, is a prime example. Patton was America's top troop commander. Yet when he was proposed for an independent command, General George Marshall, the U.S. chief of staff and probably the most successful picker of men in U.S. history said, "Patton is the best subordinate the American army has ever produced, but he would be the worst commander.

Some people work best as team members. Others work best alone. Some are exceptionally talented as coaches and mentors; others are simply incompetent as mentors. Another crucial question is, Do I produce results as a decision maker or as an adviser? A great many people perform best as advisers but cannot take the burden and pressure of making the decision. A good many other people, by contrast, need an adviser to force themselves to think; then they can make decisions and act on them with speed, self-confidence, and courage.

This is a reason, by the way, that the number two person in an organization often fails when promoted to the number one position. The top spot requires a decision maker. Strong decision makers often put somebody they trust into the number two spot as their adviser and in that position the person is outstanding. But in the number one spot, the same person fails. He or she knows what the decision should be but cannot accept the responsibility of actually making it. Other important questions to ask include, Do I perform well under stress, or do I need a highly structured and predictable environment? Do I work best in a big organization or a small one? Few people work well in all kinds of environments. Again and again, I have seen people who were very successful in large organizations flounder miserably when they moved into smaller ones. And the reverse is equally true.

The conclusion bears repeating: Do not try to change yourself you are unlikely to succeed. But work hard to improve the way you perform. And try not to take on work you cannot perform or will only perform poorly."



Our Thoughts

Vintage describes Drucker's Mantra for learning

Focus describes a company's life-cycle

Want to be happy? See the last page!

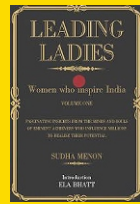
Must Read reviews "Leading Ladies"

Leading Ladies Volume 1 is a tremendous inspiration for any person wanting to succeed, against odds. It is concise, simple reading and the Leading Ladies who figure in it come across as refreshingly honest and appealing. If you want to know more about what makes these women tick - Amrita Patel, Mallika Sarabhai, Anu Aga, P.T. Usha, Shubha Mudgal and other stellar achievers, then this is the book for you.

What is interesting is the choice of women covered in this book- they cover different walks of life, from Business to Arts to Sports. The common thread is the determination and grit shown under the most adverse circumstances. This book is not about feminism-Thank God. Rather it is a spokesperson for the potential in women and the power this potential can unleash towards common good. Every Leading Lady shares her life's most valuable moments and the impact of these moments on themselves and others. It is amazing to see the diverse ways in which each of them has contributed and continues to contribute to the business and social landscape of India. Mallika Sarabhai has championed the use of Arts as an instigator for social change for many years. Meher Pudumjee, Chairperson of Thermax Ltd has been a determined voice for "Giving Back" to society through Education. P. T. Usha is devoting her life to her School for building future Indian Athletes... each of these stories are presented through the voice of the Leading Lady and key messages are summarized at the end.

Shaheen Mistri CEO and one of the founding board members of Teach for India, a nation wide movement, with a mission to build a community for leaders who will eliminate inequity in education, speaks of her grandmother, a great influence on her - "my grandmother was fiercely independent, a rebel who let nobody and nothing stop her from doing what she loved and that included creating giant, incredibly beautiful splashes of colour on the walls of her home."

Must Read



Leading Ladies
Sudha Menon

416 pages
42 Bookz Galaxy,
Rs.295/-

Other nuggets of wisdom:

The birth of Meher's first child when her company was going through a turbulent phase where every pound mattered and the small team including her husband had to do everything between them, brought fresh lessons- the most important being time management and with it an insight- the human mind can adapt to various situations,

including a gurgling baby at a client meeting!

Rohinton Aga suffered a stroke when Meher was preparing for her ICSE exam and it left his brain so damaged that he could not recognize his family. Meher watched in admiration as her mother Anu spend hours teaching her husband the alphabet, numbers and helping him to recognize colours. Rohinton recovered miraculously and went on to run the company for many more years and even write his memoirs.

Likewise the entire book engages the reader through intimate details that cheer the spirit and renew the confidence in the basic values of courage, goodness and perseverance.

Sudha Menon has showcased women making a breakthrough. Certainly there are many unsung heroines. Women's leadership needs to be nurtured as it is the only hope for an inclusive, just society and a sustainable environment. Sudha quotes Ela Bhatt (founder of SEWA) "The World needs more feminine leadership, because we face one of the most challenging tasks of transformation of our times. And the feminine is needed not just in the form of more women leaders, but also in the form of men honouring the feminine within them."

We await volume 2..

Happy Reading!

Ravi's Corner

The Right Thing

Prosperity-don't lull me to satisfaction
Don't make me a lotus eater
Don't desensitize me to the world around me
Don't make me a 'high-living' addict
Don't isolate me from the greater purpose
Don't blind me to my faults
Don't drown me in a sea of illusion
Instead
Immerse me in the warmth and beauty of shared values
The towering spirit of courage, grit to simply do the 'right thing'

Companies are a lot like PEOPLE!!

by Andy Marken

Companies are a lot like people, in that they go through a complete life cycle. First, there's the gestation period when the company is an idea that's talked about, and the parents-to-be plan big things for the child-to-be. Birth occurs when the founders leave their present company, rent some office/storage space, obtain funding and start nurturing their first product in earnest. These are the fun years in the life of a company. Energy, togetherness, creativity and dedication are everything.

People work long hours and have fun for little or no pay (especially when compared to their contributions). People worry less about titles and job descriptions and more about the task at hand.

Formative Years

During the formative years, the organization begins to take shape and a management structure is developed. Top executives must spend less time on products (they are still permitted this luxury though) and more time developing and managing others. During this period, the company grows from a core group, and a management style emerges.

Adolescence

As the company continues to grow, it enters adolescence. Just as parents encounter problems with their children during this phase, the founders of a company also begin to encounter problems. The management team is stretched thin and sales begin to flatten. They suddenly have to acquire new skills to help the firm move on to its next growth level.

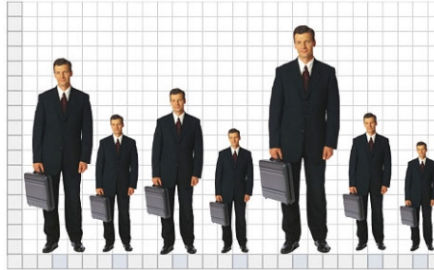
During the adolescent period, there are rapid growth spurts. A loose, fun organization must give way to one of greater structure.

This time in the organization's growth calls for a more professional management approach. It is here that founding management often stumble, step aside, or are moved aside. Their managerial, entrepreneurial and/or technical skills may no longer be an asset to their company.

Adulthood

While sales move to substantially higher levels, the employee population has also grown dramatically. Now there's a far greater diversity of expertise, capabilities, goals and desires.

To reach this stage of maturity, and to pass safely through it, management must acquire even more skills. The company is now highly organized and has a very structured environment. The CEO now needs professional management skills and must surround herself or himself with people who have superior management experience and capabilities.



Masked Problems

In some instances, dramatic product acceptance whisks a young organization through the formative years to maturity without permitting the infrastructure to properly develop.

These blips of meteoric growth often mask many problems.

Since the structure and team are not properly in place, the system breaks down because growth cannot maintain itself. The company needs the support of management and others to carry the firm safely through these phases.

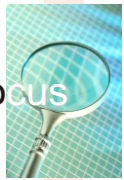
The heads of these organizations have basked in the spotlight of success. They have become gurus. Their pronouncements have been held in awe. When the system breaks down, it's often too late to save the company except with the use of extreme measures. Our hero's words suddenly take on the flavor of the ravings of a madman.

Just as with life, there's a natural process of development in a company. Its leadership must experience a similar increase in skills. Those who develop these skills are able to bring the company through the critical periods and get it back on the road to solid success. Those who can't are destined to help bury the company or are "retired" to let others get the growth and profits moving.

*Balancing in a growing organization....
Read on in the AMJ issue.*



Focus





Notes from all over

* "When you are finished changing, you are finished."
- **Benjamin Franklin**

* "If you are going through hell, keep going."
- **Winston Churchill**

* "In business, you don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate."
- **Karris**

* "The More you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle."
- **Motto of U.S. Navy Seals**

* "Formal education will earn you a living. Self-education will earn you a fortune."
- **Jim Ron**

* "You don't need to have a 100 person company to develop that idea."
- **Larry Page**

* "When you know something, say what you know. When you don't know something, say that you don't know. That is knowledge."
- **Confucius**

* "I am still learning."
- **Michelangelo**

* "The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."
- **Mark Van Doren**

* "Wisdom lies neither in fixity nor in change, but in the dialectic between the two."
- **Octavio Paz**

Happiness, optimism and sales results

Dr Martin Seligman, author of Authentic Happiness, is a well known personality in the field of Positive Psychology. This discipline includes the study of positive emotion, positive character traits, and positive institutions. As the science behind these becomes more firmly grounded, Dr. Seligman is now turning his attention to training Positive Psychologists, individuals whose practice will make the world a happier place, in a way that parallels clinical psychologists having made the world a less unhappy place.

He has discovered three kinds of happiness:

1. Pleasure, the attention and savoring of something, enjoyable and exciting, but the drawback is it tends not to last.
2. Engagement, being seriously involved in what you are doing: be it parenting, working studying and so on. Real engagement puts people into flow, they go into the zone, mindless of time, doing and astonished at their own doing, like someone else is there with and in them. "So engaged, his body identity disappears from his consciousness." (Seligman speaking of Mozart).
3. Meaning, to be in service to something larger than yourself. The strongest combination being of course, engagement plus meaning. He goes on to say health and productivity follow the same path. Wonderful insights.

"I've always been an optimist. Frankly, I never saw much use in being anything else." Winston Churchill

Psychologist Martin Sigelman discovered a strong link between optimism and results in a detailed study with sales professionals at Met Life Insurance. The study concluded that those who ranked in the top 10% of the organization when it came to optimism outsold by 88% those in the bottom 10% of the company. That statistic may not surprise you, but think through the underlying aspects of the study. These were salespeople, and they were hired because they were optimistic people in the first place. Those in the bottom 10% still would have considered themselves to be optimists, and compared to a lot of other professions they probably were.

What does this mean for the top 10% of the salespeople in the organization? It means they were more than optimists they were super-optimists. These were people who did more than pretend. They were optimists in their core, and they carried that optimistic purpose into every sales encounter. Are you a "super-optimist" in the sales presentation? Show me, don't tell me. I'll see it your approach, in your energy, and in your facial posture. I'll see it in a clear sense of purpose in your conversation. I'll see you drive the sales process along, and I'll see that you do not give in to negative energy.



Mercuri Goldmann (India) Pvt. Ltd.

1217, 4th Cross, 1st Block, HAL 3rd Stage, Bangalore - 560 075, India.

Bangalore: Ph: 080-2526 0192, 2529 6568, 2526 2053. Fax: 080-2527 8492.

E-mail: mercuriindia@vsnl.com **Pune:** Ph: 020-2567 4395, 2567 1235, 2567 4505.

Fax: 020-2567 5054. E-mail: mercuripune@vsnl.com **Chennai:** Telefax: 044-2489 9852.

E-mail: malathys@mercuri-india.com **Mumbai:** 022-2613 9744 / 2613 9309,

Fax No.022-2613 9755. E-mail: mercurimumbai@vsnl.net, Website: www.mercuriindia.com

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