



What Would Peter Say

Heeding the wisdom of Peter Drucker might have helped us avoid—and will help us solve—numerous challenges plaguing communities around the world: restoring trust in business in the wake of accounting scandals and the global financial crisis; attracting and motivating the best talent without creating crippling financial commitments; addressing societal problems such as climate change, health care, and public education; dealing with trouble spots in central Asia and the Middle East.

If Peter Drucker were here today, what would he have to say about such pressing matters? His first comment might be “I told you so”—and he would have every right to say that. In remarkably prescient writings, he pointed to important trends and looming disasters. He took a broad look at the context surrounding organizations, noting jarring events he called discontinuities. Next, since the signs of difficulties ahead were there all along, he might follow up by telling us, “Look at the underlying systems.” Drucker rarely named or blamed individuals; he saw root causes in the design of organizations—in their structures, processes, norms, and routines. He would remind us that it is the responsibility of executives to challenge that design while being mindful of their companies’ ultimate purpose. Then he might finish by asking leaders a few provocative questions: “What is your mission? What should you stop doing? Where has the drive for short-term efficiencies undermined long-term effectiveness? What should be your objectives and guiding principles?”

My credentials for channeling Peter Drucker stem from early in my career—the first time I spoke on a panel with him, more than 25 years ago in Brussels. They extend beyond his death to the Drucker fingerprints I found in my multinational research for my latest book, SuperCorp. Managers everywhere, especially in Asia, described Drucker encounters as pivotal in making their enterprises well run and helping their countries develop.

– Portion reprinted from Harvard Business Review –



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What Would Peter Say?

by Rosabeth Moss Kanter

<http://www.leadersway.com/dnna/Portals/0/newsletters/WhatWouldPeterSayKantor.pdf>

Note from Kevin

Greetings!

November is the month when Peter Drucker would have turned one hundred years old. I have read a constant flow of articles and leadership blogs whose authors are celebrating the incredible genius that Peter Drucker brought to the world of leadership and business development. The most striking awareness for me is how clearly, concisely, and in his most defined style, very logically predicted the events of this past year. In her opening paragraph, Rosabeth Moss Kantor (a leading Harvard Business School professional) reflects this very awareness in asking the question; “What Would Peter Say?” She suggests that once again in his logical manner would say, “I Told You So.”



“ You cannot save your way to prosperity, you have to grow. ”

There is general consensus from business owners and experts alike that we are clearly in the most challenging economic period most of us have experienced in our lifetimes. In addition the message is clear and that is we better prepare for the long haul as most agree this challenging economic period will not be over any time soon. Peter’s prediction of this economic collapse and the specifics to which he referred to certain companies and industries makes him look like more of a psychic than a leading authority on business. What I am most energized about is the fact that he not only identified the issues but

offered clear solutions and actually suggests there is great opportunity within these challenging times.

This brings our conversation to my greatest area of concern. I feel confident if I would have had the privilege of sharing a Starbucks with Peter he would agree that we have been doing it wrong for decades but have survived and sometimes thrived on the back of a strong economy. The underlying delusion this created is that we could continue diligently on practicing dysfunctional leadership and business practices and remain successful. At risk of being too direct or suggesting that my way of thinking is the right way of thinking, I will say to you in all confidence, those days are over and for those who choose not to embrace a new paradigm for the future, the outlook is grim. Drucker and every credible business expert today are on the same sheet of music when they say; “You cannot save your way to prosperity, you have to grow.” Like a train on its tracks, many decision makers continue with old mental patterns knowing that the “bridge is out” and the train is going to crash. The demand is for new and transformative ways of thinking that can lead our organizations on a new track toward separation and value expansion.

Fact is there has never been a greater opportunity to separate from your competitors. Achieving this will require more inner strength from leadership than has ever been required before. It will demand a completely different paradigm for the future that focuses on leading not trailing factors and garners the engagement, involvement and innovation of every partner in the company. As is evident by the almost eerie echo’s being heard in the executive suites at General Motors, organizations can no longer survive on the decisions of a handful of people at the “top” who think they know better than the people who are doing the work and touching the customers. Transformation is in fact the correct concept for what is needed in most organizations. And in closing it begins with the transformation of leadership summed up so eloquently by Drucker:

“The primary purpose of leadership is no longer to only achieve (often at any cost) shareholder value. The primary purpose of leadership is to orchestrate a sustainable, a profitable and an ethically and morally correct organization.”

Let’s leave it at that... enjoy the article

KW