



## Guest Book Review

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# Drucker: The Man Who Invented the Corporate Society

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By John Tarrant — Cahners Books, Inc.,  
221 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02116  
— 300 pp., \$13.50

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As a person who has often quoted (and probably misquoted) Peter Drucker, I was very interested in this new biography by John Tarrant, a professional writer. Tarrant studied Drucker's books and interviewed him . . . thus, a very well-written and organized summary of the various facets of Peter Drucker.

As most people know, Drucker has written hundreds of articles and more than a dozen books. In his books, he has expressed philosophy, predictions, principles and some very strong recommendations . . . subjects vary from the working individual to the world situation.

In describing Drucker, the author makes it clear that Drucker has been a writer, teacher, speaker and consultant . . . and he makes it equally clear that Drucker has never been a *manager*. (Drucker freely admits this.) But, Drucker is the most

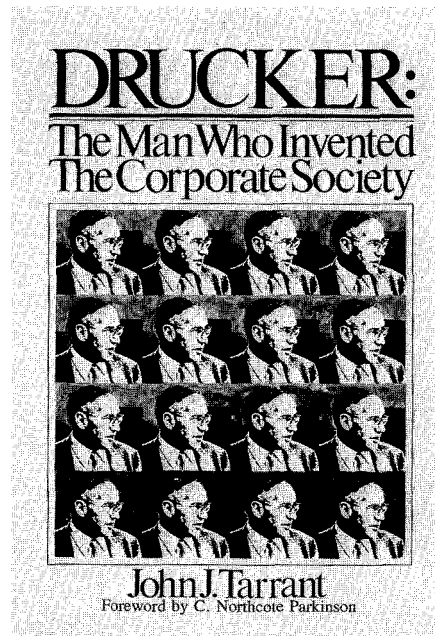
highly read, respected and sought after "expert" on the subject of "management."

Tarrant gives much detail and many examples about Drucker and still manages to keep the book from becoming boring or confusing. In less than 300 pages, he has captured the highlights from a description of Drucker's parents

and his early education to the present time. Some of the highlights of the book include the following Drucker philosophy and recommendations:

*The Individual:* A certain amount of monotony in a worker's job is not only inevitable, it is necessary for most people. The opposite is insecurity. Individuals should be rewarded for their contribution to the organization. We need a return to spiritual values. The new order that we, by ourselves, will create, will yet put us in harmony with God and eternity. Each individual should look at career planning in the sense of: What do I have to learn? What are my strengths? How can I build on them? Where do I belong? Each person should develop an outside interest — not just a hobby — but one that puts you into a different world where you can develop your strengths and protect you against the inevitable shocks. In other words, develop a second career.

*Management:* Management by Objectives should be practiced (1954). People should help to set their own objectives. Objective-setting should be pushed down as



far as possible in the organization. Both Herzberg's "Hygiene—Motivation" theory and McGregor's Theory "X" and "Y" were described by Drucker first. (NOTE: Herzberg does not cite Drucker as a source in either of his books.)

The position of the first-line supervisor must be defined and strengthened. A manager's job must be work-focused. If it doesn't produce results and accomplishments for all concerned, then all the warm feelings and pleasant words are meaningless. Managers need to obtain results and develop people for tomorrow. Subordinates are paid to perform and not please the boss. Look for strengths and build on them. When making decisions, start with opinions, not facts. Ask people for their opinions

before making decisions. Listen to them; it's not who is right, it's what's right. Change is inevitable. Managers must learn to live with it. The bigger the job, the greater the risks the managers should be taking. The idea is not to try to eliminate risk, but to take the right risks. A manager must motivate and communicate effectively with subordinates. A manager must use his time wisely. A "time log" is essential as a starting point.

*The Computer:* The computer is a moron. It is a tool and an important part of the future. The computer has not served the manager well. Those in charge have usually looked for ways to use their new "toy" rather than decide how it can be of greatest benefit to the manager.

The appendix includes more than 100 quotes from Peter Drucker. Here are some that are pertinent to human resource development.

- "Promotion should not be more important than accomplishment, or avoiding instability more important than taking the right risk."
- "Most sales training is totally unjustified. At best it makes an incompetent salesman out of a moron."
- "We know nothing about motivation. All we can do is write books about it."
- "So much of what we call management consists in making it difficult for people to work."
- "Job enrichment has been

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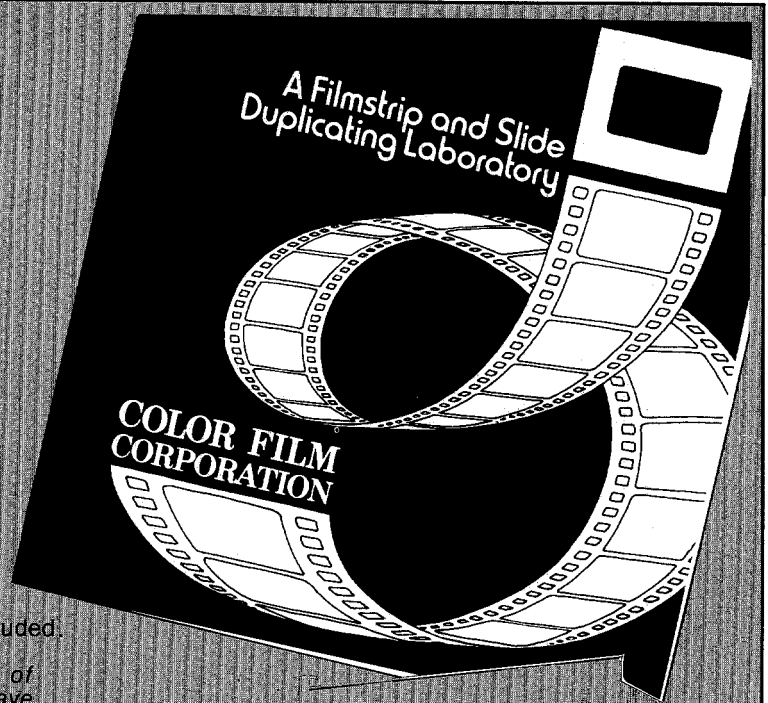
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around for sixty years. It's been successful every time it has been tried, but industry is not interested."

• "Management says the first job of the supervisor is human relations. But when promotion time comes they promote the fellow who puts in his paperwork."

• "Ignorance of the function of management is one of the most serious weaknesses of an industrial society — and it is almost universal."

• "Fast personnel decisions are likely to be wrong."

• "The most common cause of executive failure is unwillingness or inability to change with the demands of a new position."

• "The question is not 'how will he get along?' but 'what will he

contribute?'"

• "To improve communications, work not on the utterer but the recipient."

• "What's going to happen to the executive's job in the next 10 years? Nothing. It is amazing how many jobs are exactly the same as they were in 1900."

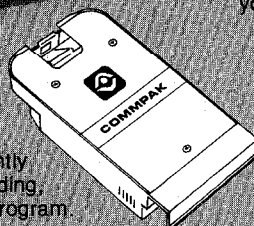
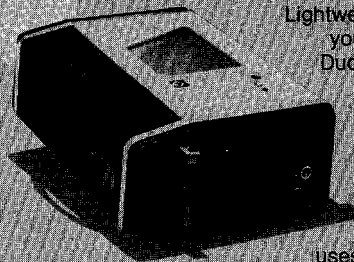
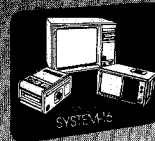
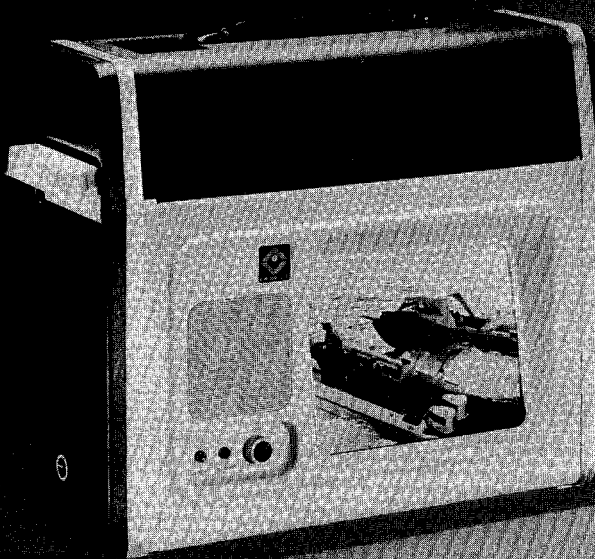
• "There is an enormous number of managers who have retired on the job."

• "(On sensitivity training) 'I'm one of those very simple people who believe that one is not entitled to inflict damage on the living body. For the weak, the lame, the defenseless, the shy, the vulnerable, this is a very dangerous thing. The real sadists, the wolves, tear the little lambs to pieces. The casualty rate is unacceptable.'"

• "What people want most is a little mobility, a little freedom from the constraints of a traditional society — and a little information that links them to the world."

At the 1975 National ASTD Conference in Las Vegas, Peter Drucker was the final speaker. He was well-prepared to talk to the training professionals and spouses in attendance . . . and he was the "hit" of the conference. I had an opportunity to meet him personally. In addition to all the things described about Drucker in Tarrant's book, I'd like to add that he impressed me with his humility and warm graciousness. If you are a Drucker fan (or even mildly interested), get the book. In several hours you will be able to glean the many facets of the great Peter Drucker . . . Don Kirkpatrick

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