

Lessons from Peter Drucker

If you want to lead people, there's only one book you need to read.

Seriously.

Sure, there are a lot of other books out there about management and leadership that are entertaining, but they're all built on top of this one book.

It's a book written by the master, the OG of management, Peter Drucker. It's called [The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done](#), and it was first published back in 1966.

This book has stood the test of time and has everything you need as a manager to be able to grow and be an effective leader. It's a book I give to all of our managers here at Drift (and I make them keep it on their desks).

1) Effective executives know where their times goes.

This lesson is all about being proactive about the time that you have.

I had a realization the other day, it's a discovery: What do you (yes, you) and Elon Musk have in common? Elon Musk, the creator of three companies — The Boring Company, Tesla, and SpaceX — he and you both have 24 hours in a day.

The point is, when it comes to managing your time, some people can change the world in 24 hours, like Elon Musk, while some people can't change their shirt in 24 hours.

According to Drucker, the question you have to ask yourself is, "What would happen if this was not done at all?" And if the answer is nothing would happen, then obviously you have to stop doing that thing.

As Drucker wrote:

A workforce may indeed be too small for the task, and then the work suffers if it gets done at all. But this is not the rule. Much more common is the workforce that's too big for effectiveness. The workforce that spends, therefore, an increasing amount of time interacting rather than working.

2) Effective executives focus on outward contribution.

Translation: It's all about the results.

I love when people put in the effort. But it's not about effort. It's about results. And those results can be achieved by brute-forcing your way, or by actually having a smarter approach to things.

The key is to do both things: to work hard and to work smart.

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ronald. E. Osborn

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

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But in the end, the way that you measure success is not in the effort, but in the results.

As a manager, you're always asking, "What can I contribute?" But that's not personal to you, it's about the organization. That's the servant-leadership approach, which is your job as a manager — it's to serve your team and the organization. And that's the question you should be asking: Not "What can you provide?", but "What can you provide others in order for them to be effective?"

3) Effective executives make strength productive.

Take any team sport as an example, whether it's basketball, football, whatever sport, and imagine if everyone on the team had exactly the same skill. So if everyone was the quarterback, if everyone wanted to be Tom Brady — that's not a team. They probably couldn't score very well if everyone wanted to throw the ball.

Same thing if everyone wanted to be able to be great at every position. It wouldn't work so well. You have specialties. And people are specialized in that thing, and together, they form a cohesive team.

To quote Drucker:

To make strength productive is the unique purpose of organization. It can't, of course, overcome the weaknesses with which each of us is abundantly endowed. But it can make them irrelevant.

4) Effective executives concentrate on the few major areas where superior performance will produce outstanding results.

Translation: Focus, focus, focus.

For the to-do lists people, the list-makers out there, you might have five things you need to get done in a day. But there's usually always one thing that if you get that one thing done in the day, that's going to 10x your day. That's where your focus should be.

5) Effective executives, finally, make effective decisions.

The big takeaway from this chapter can be summed up in two words:

No consensus.

Consensus regresses us back to "just good enough" — it's something that everyone can agree upon. The least offensive option.

The solution: Pick a directly responsible individual and let her or him make the decision and take the responsibility. Let them have the accountability and autonomy to make that decision. And then move forward.

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