



THE NEXT MANAGEMENT - a noble calling to create a worthy society.

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Like many others, Peter Drucker wanted to improve society. He considered Management as a key lever to achieve its proper functioning. He insisted that management is more than a business role but rather a foundational value creating capability bringing performance to all our institutions, including the public sector, civil society and government. Management has been rightly called the most important social innovation of the 20th century. Hence management matters – a lot!

Today's Reality

Yet management is not on the map of our political, intellectual and cultural elites. It is erroneously considered a mere tool for business to serve its own advantage in optimizing (short term) financial results.

Bureaucracy and over-regulation are running rampant as Big Government made a come-back induced by overlapping crises such as Covid, Climate, geopolitical tensions and wars next-door. Instead of the “concert of institutions” that should harmoniously cater for society’s needs, we see bureaucrats, ideologically motivated activists, media and overstretched politicians increasingly thwart the value creation that they claim to have as their foremost priority. The “value creation orchestra” of institutions is playing in sad dissonance.

A Call to Action

Reforming the industrial-age management paradigm with its command-and-control model and its social engineering ambitions has thus become a critical project for society as a whole.

Welcome, then, to the **Next Management** – a call to arms to all institutions to mobilize their energy to develop a constructive framework for joint action. It is an ambitious five-year initiative by the Drucker Society Europe that we will strive to advance through the topics of the annual Forums in Vienna, kicking off this year with “The Next Knowledge Work” – an acknowledgement of Drucker’s perception in the 1960s that the new phenomenon of knowledge work required a high degree of autonomy for the knowledge worker as a first step of inverting the conventional top-down hierarchy.

How can we make progress towards the Next Management across institutions? Seven foundational ideas should help to create a new paradigm for management. They don’t pretend to be new, but we are a long way from seeing those consistently and coherently applied in key institutions of society.

- X INNOVATION, MORE THAN EFFICIENCY**
- X ECOSYSTEMS, MORE THAN SINGLE INSTITUTIONS**
- X LONG-TERM, MORE THAN SHORT-TERM FOCUS**
- X HUMAN AUGMENTATION, MORE THAN AUTOMATION**
- X MANAGEMENT AS AN ART, MORE THAN A SCIENCE**
- X REALITY GROUNDED, MORE THAN IDEOLOGY**
- X SELF-RENEWAL CAPACITY, MORE THAN REVOLUTION**

Renewing the practice and discipline of management for the 21st century is a daunting task. It starts with a large dose of humility – we must drop the phantasies of perfection of organizations and humans even via the most advanced AI. Any attempt to create a perfect society and flawless human beings leads invariably to the worst nightmares of totalitarianism. The last thing we need is a high-tech Taylorism or a perfected Orwellian surveillance state. It is about elevating the human, not about automating or replacing it.

Imagine what progress we could achieve by liberating the human potential and create synergies in the way how institutions operate in a new spirit of JOINT value creation and innovation for all. A treasure hidden in plain sight. Businesses have a new opportunity to justify their license to operate in society by taking a leadership role in society in this transition – they are positioned at the cutting edge and should take on this new type of social responsibility i.e. powering the joint value creation and innovation process in society. They need to be role models, enablers and mentors.

It is time to mobilize the best young minds for creating the future by giving them a sense of mission and purpose becoming part of ‘the most noble of professions,’ in the words of the late Clayton Christensen in his article, “How Will You Measure Your Life”. In other words, management must live up to its promise of making the world a better place for all.