

Laudation at the occasion of the honorary doctorate conferred to Prof. Joseph Maciariello

by *Richard Straub* at HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management on December 7, 2016



Dr. Andreas Pinkwart, Dean HHL Graduate School of Management

Prof. Joseph A. Maciariello, Peter Drucker & Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management

Judith Maciariello

Richard Straub, President Peter Drucker Society Europe

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Joseph Maciariello,

It is a daunting and humbling task to pay tribute to someone who not only worked side by side for decades with Peter Drucker – the towering figure of management thinking in the 20th century – but who has also fundamentally contributed to the development of that same discipline of management, and is still doing so today.

My wife Ilse and I had the pleasure of first meeting Joe with his wife Judy (who is present with him today) jointly with Doris Drucker at the first Global Peter Drucker Forum in Vienna in 2009, when we celebrated Peter's centennial. At that time, they did not know that it was indirectly due to Joe that this centennial actually took place in Vienna at all.

You all know that Professor Joseph Maciariello co-authored with Peter Drucker important and bestselling books and other publications such as the *Daily Drucker* and *The Effective Executive in Action*. What you may not know is that in 2004 he also co-authored a 13-module e-learning suite for Corpedia education. And this unique e-learning resource is the reason why I have the immense privilege to be standing here in front of you, giving this laudation. I was pointed to these courses by a participant at a conference, who heard me quoting Drucker, as I usually did, and offered me access to listen to those modules, 30 minutes each. And when I did so, each time I heard the same sentence as an opening message: 'Peter Drucker was born in Vienna November 19, 1909'. This was in 2006, and after the third module I got it – I told my wife Ilse that there was an important centennial coming up and it would be more than a shame if nothing was done to celebrate it in Vienna, the city of Peter's birth and upbringing. This was the starting point for the relationship with the Drucker family, via whom we have met Joe and Judith. At last year's Drucker Forum in Vienna we had the honour and pleasure to award Joe the honorary membership of the Drucker Society Europe – a rare distinction that he shares with the social philosopher Charles Handy.

Yet today something is happening that goes far beyond the honour we could confer in Vienna last year – a honorary doctorate from one of the leading German management schools. This distinction comes at a time where critical questions are being asked about the contribution of management to society. At a recent meeting with the Drucker Society Europe board three weeks ago, in Vienna some leading management thinkers cautioned us against using the term "management" in the title of the next year's Peter Drucker Forum.

Management, they argued, has become a bad word, linked to greed, self-interest, inequality and short-termism. Many consider it a technique for squeezing out the maximum of economic results without regard for deeper human values. In short, management these

days has a bad image and bad press. Yet, Peter Drucker reminded us from the outset that management is a vital role in society; not just in business but in all organizations and institutions such as hospitals, police departments, social security administration and the military, to name a few. As a role that is essential for survival of society, it is by definition a noble calling – a moral force keeping society intact.

A Peter Drucker quote makes this crystal clear: “Performing, responsible management is the alternative to tyranny and our only protection against it.” Peter Drucker struggled to get this point understood. He observed with increasing apprehension the development of oppressive corporate practices and stock market excesses where share prices jumped when the CEO announced the slashing of thousands of jobs to boost short-term profitability. Like Clayton Christensen, a great supporter of the Drucker Society today, Peter Drucker was deeply concerned when large corporations turned away from their entrepreneurial mission and their managements reshaped them into money-producing machines with the primary objective of boosting the share price.

For sure, management would be easier if it was just about the tools and techniques of achieving economic and financial performance in organizations. Management education would be like learning mechanics or engineering - and I am afraid many business schools look at it this way today. Yet, this reductionist view removes the essence of management as a human endeavour. Drucker and today Joe Maciariello stand for this human, value-oriented perspective. And from what we have seen today in the Leipzig Leadership Model, it is clear that HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management represents a beacon for Europe in this respect.

This is why the Honorary Doctorate that HHL Leipzig has conferred on Joseph Maciariello is so timely and so appropriate. Nobody else in the world is better positioned for the mandate of advancing Drucker’s monumental legacy by building on the foundations he left and refashioning them to fit the future.

Since Peter Drucker’s passing, Joe has not only been updating seminal books such as Peter’s magnum opus, ***Management – Tasks, Responsibilities and Practices***. He is also addressing unfinished business on which Drucker had fired the starting gun but lacked the time to bring it to conclusion.

With his book, ***Drucker’s Lost Art of Management***, Joe has issued a warning to the academic community of the dangers of continuing down the path of treating management as a pure scientific discipline. By integrating management practice with liberal arts, humanity reasserts its central role. Liberal arts education is focused on instilling standards of conduct and character, a mastery of a body of knowledge, a respect for societal values and standards, and an appreciation of knowledge and truth. Artes liberals strive to define what is good, right and just in a society. As we enter a period where algorithmic rationality and analytics become the default approach to problems in business and increasingly in society, it is high time to reassess the broader aspects of our being. Only liberal arts and humanities will ensure that we have human beings in key positions who are able to imagine a future that brings genuine progress to humanity. Only they can inspire the creativity and intuition that is so necessary for innovation and value creation in business and society. It must be managers who have open minds and think critically for themselves – not just relying on Big Data and analytics, or following conventional wisdom and the alleys of political correctness, as too many do today).

This will be a key factor in repositioning management where it should be, as a noble calling and as a force for morality and human dignity in society.

Let me close with a few personal remarks that I received from one of Peter Drucker’s daughters, Joan Winstein. She sent them on behalf of the family. They read as follows.

Quote

‘My father did not have many “friends” in a traditional sense. But Joe came closest to being a very good personal friend – and a trusted one – as much as anyone that we can recall.

Joe was able to keep up with my father’s intellectual forays – and to discuss matters meaningfully with him. As well read as my father was, Joe was an equal match. Of course, Joe’s own management research was impressive, as he thought through many challenging ideas and investigations over a long and illustrious career, and was able to present them in his straightforward writing style.

Working with my father in his later years, co-authoring several books and working on articles and papers, clearly served to deepen my father’s respect and admiration for Joe’s talents and intellect.

We all know how much my father deeply valued Joe’s advice, wisdom, ability to challenge him (and my father was not easy to challenge!) and, most of all, his personal and intellectual integrity overall. We are so thrilled for Joe to receive this recognition! Please pass along the best wishes (and to Judy also) of all the Druckers.’

Unquote

Which I do with immense pleasure, and add mine and my wife Ilse’s appreciation to you, Joe, and to you, Judy, as well as to the representatives of the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management – in particular to Timo Meynhardt who was instrumental in having this highly deserved distinction conferred to a leading management thinker of our time: Joseph Maciariello.

Thank you