



Out of the Crisis

W. Edwards Deming

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Deming offers a theory of management based on his famous 14 Points for Management.

"Long-term commitment to new learning and new philosophy is required of any management that seeks transformation. The timid and the fainthearted, and the people that expect quick results, are doomed to disappointment."

According to W. Edwards Deming, American companies require nothing less than a transformation of management style and of governmental relations with industry. In *Out of the Crisis*, originally published in 1982, Deming offers a theory of management based on his famous 14 Points for Management.

Management's failure to plan for the future, he claims, brings about loss of market, which brings about loss of jobs. Management must be judged not only by the quarterly dividend, but by innovative plans to stay in business, protect investment, ensure future dividends, and provide more jobs through improved product and service. In simple, direct language, he explains the principles of management transformation and how to apply them.

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Out of the Crisis Details

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From Reader Review Out of the Crisis for online ebook

Henrik Berglund Berglund says

Of course a classic with groundbreaking ideas! So I guess I could have given it five stars also. I decided to not rate the book in a historical perspective though, but just estimate the value I got from it today

The ideas herein have been picked up by others, and become part of what lean/agile people know already. So, I did not really change my mind on anything after reading this.

Also all the examples are from production and focused on getting processes under statistical control. The work I'm doing is with knowledge creating companies. Quite a different problem. All the same 13 principles can be applied to that also, but other books offer more up to date thinking of businesses operating in more and more complex environments.

Also, I perceive it mostly as a collection of notes, not really a coherent book.

TarasProkopyuk says

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John says

It has taken me many years to be at a point that I could understand this book.

This is a superior management text.

Bob Wallner says

First let me start by saying that Dr Deming is an amazing man. I really took my time reading this book to ensure that I understood it everything he talked about.

The big take away I have from this book is not a 14 principles, not the deadly diseases and not the obstacles. The biggest takeaway, for me at least, is how weak I am at applying statistical methods to controlling quality. So much of what he talked about in the second half of the book was over my head.

I know now that I need to incorporate some accelerated statistical learning into my future.

I did enjoy this book and my guess is after furthering my understanding of statistics, this will be come a 5 star book.

David K. Lemons says

I read W. Edwards Deming when I had a hiatus from Saudi Aramco and worked for Bechtel in Washington, DC, for 4 years, returning to Aramco in Dhahran in 1991. Reading Deming showed me how to be a better manager without conforming to the American de rigueur process of obtaining the MBA, which I've always detested as a poor learning platform for real leadership. (Leadership can't be taught; rather, it must be learned.) Deming brought crippled Japanese manufacturing back into the modern age. Typical of prophets, he was not heeded much in his home country-- America, When the Japanese heard him lecture as one of General Douglas MacArthur's staff they immediately took to his methods of management which led to processes such as TQM--Total Quality Management, and Japan developed into one of the world's leaders of modern manufacturing.

If one is studying leadership, they must in my opinion, include a good dose of Deming.

Chris Cox says

An American classic. This book is packed with information about using statistics to solve quality problems in manufacturing, medicine, and almost all fields of endeavor. I highly recommend this book to engineers, doctors, scientists, and manufacturing workers.

Jenny Truong says

One of the most helpful perspectives/books I've read on using data to improve execution and business performance. While it may be a bit long and seem repetitive, the book can be digested in chapters as one does a textbook. Highly recommend to those who work in operations roles or anyone seeking a perspective on the barriers that get in the way of excellence in execution.

Peter says

As with many others... great lifetime of achievement and ideas, and a true hero of mine... brought down by terrible writing. Wikipedia is a better source for learning Deming philosophy. Of all the content of the book, I'd like to highlight that Deming gives much credit to Walter Shewhart for being the true father of statistical analysis of process.

As for the style and writing, the book is such a mess that you could spend 3 years researching a doctoral thesis on its flaws, but in 30 minutes this is what I've got...

Most of the content in the book is repetitive and non-specific, despite the use of language that attempts to make it sound specific.. The chapters are not well organized, and information related to certain topics comes and goes. If you could call it information at all. The ratio of rhetorical questions to statements is extremely high. There is a dizzying amount of section outlining however the method is haphazard and jumps around from numbered lists to bold section headers and inline emphasis and it is easy to lose track of what is being enumerated or delineated. For some reason this really bothered me.

One perfect example, opening to a random page deep in the book is this short paragraph in Ch 11:

"What characteristic or characteristics are important? What figures are important? What figures should one study by use of a control chart or by any other method? The answer lies in the subject matter (engineering, chemistry, psychology, knowledge of the process, knowledge of the materials, etc.), assisted by statistical theory."

So... a bunch of redundant questions, followed by an answer which was already given in the first few pages of the book, and repeated here for no particular reason at all. Oh, well you think, probably the next paragraph gets into the meat of it? Nope. The previous and next paragraphs are on a different topic. And what is this answer really? Deming has mentioned that when gathering statistics, figuring out which numbers that have been gathered are important is important, and then tautologically tells us that knowledge and statistics will help us analyze numbers. And finally, you could argue that the entire book is about this topic, so why does he put this random paragraph summarizing his book in the middle of some random chapter?
ARGGGGGHHHH.

Omar Halabieh says

Dr. Deming best summarizes the purpose of the book: "This book teaches the transformation that is required for survival, a transformation that can only be accomplished by man. A company can not buy its way into quality - it must be led into quality by top management. A theory of management now exists. Never again may anyone say that there is nothing new in management to teach."

He then proceeds with outlining and subsequently detailing his "14 points for management". These fourteen

points, he argues, form the basis of the required transformation of the American industry:

"

1. Create constancy of purpose toward improvement of product and service, with the aim to become competitive and to stay in business, and to provide jobs.
2. Adopt the new philosophy. We are in a new economic age. Western management must awaken to the challenge, must learn their responsibilities, and take on leadership for change.
3. Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality. Eliminate the need for inspection on a mass basis by building quality into the product in the first place.
4. End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag. Instead, minimize total cost. Move toward a single supplier for any one item, on a long-term relationship of loyalty and trust.
5. Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service, to improve quality and productivity, and thus constantly decrease costs.
6. Institute training on the job.
7. Institute leadership. The aim of supervision should be to help people and machines and gadgets to do a better job. Supervision of management is in need of overhaul, as well as supervision of production workers.
8. Drive out fear, so that everyone may work effectively for the company.
9. Break down barriers between departments. People in research, design, sales, and production must work as a team, to foresee problems of production and in use that may be encountered with the product or service.
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and targets for the work force asking for zero defects and new levels of productivity. Such exhortations only create adversarial relationships, as the bulk of the causes of low quality and low productivity belong to the system and thus lie beyond the power of the work force.
- 11a. Eliminate work standards (quotas) on the factory floor. Substitute leadership.
- 11b. Eliminate management by objective. Eliminate management by numbers, numerical goals. Substitute leadership.
- 12a. Remove barriers that rob the hourly worker of his right to pride of workmanship. The responsibility of supervisors must be changed from sheer numbers to quality.
- 12b. Remove barriers that rob people in management and in engineering of their right to pride of workmanship. This means, inter alia, abolishment of the annual or merit rating of management by objective.
13. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement.
14. Put everybody in the company to work to accomplish the transformation. The transformation is everybody's job.

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While the book may seem dry at points, particularly if being read from cover to cover, it encompasses numerous gems in management. Particularly as it relates to the overall management of and leadership in quality and its importance to re-gain competitive edge.

Below are key excerpts from the book, that I found particularly insightful:

1- "This increase in production led to a new goal. The new goal will create questions and resentment among production workers. Their first thought is that the management is never satisfied. Whatever we do, they ask for more. Here are the fruits of exhortations: 1) Failure to accomplish the goal 2) Increase in variability 3) Increase in proportion defective 4) Increase in costs 5) Demoralization of the work force 6) Disrespect for the management"

2- "The job of management is to replace work standards by knowledgeable and intelligent leadership...Wherever work standards have been thrown out and replaced by leadership, quality and productivity have gone up substantially, and people are happier on the job."

3- "Incidentally, computation of savings from use of a gadget (automation or robotic machinery) ought to take account of total cost, as an economist would define it. In my experience, people are seldom able to come through with figures on total cost."

4- "Quality must be measured by the interaction between three participants: (1) the product itself; (2) the user and how he uses the product, how he installs it, how he takes care of it, what he was led to expect; 3) instructions for use, training of customer and training of repairman, service provided for repairs, availability of parts. The top vertex of the triangle does not by itself determine quality."

5- "There are two types of quality in any system, whether it be banking or manufacturing. The first is quality of design. These are the specific programs and procedures that promise to produce a saleable service or product: in other words, what the customer requires. The second type is quality of production, achievement of results with the quality promised. Quality control works both with the product and with the design of the product. And it is at this point that quality control begins to differ from the traditional system. To find the mistake is not enough. It is necessary to find the cause behind the mistake, and to build a system that minimizes future mistakes."

6- "...Good agreement between independent results of two men would only mean they have a system. It would not mean they are both right. There is no right answer except by methods agreed upon by experts."

7- "Figures on accidents do nothing to reduce the frequency of accidents. The first step in reduction of the frequency of accidents is to determine whether the cause of an accident belongs to the system or to some specific person or set of conditions. Statistical methods provide the only of analysis to serve as a guide to the understanding of accidents and to their reduction."

Chet Brandon says

This is obviously a classic. I picked up a used copy for pennies and have been re-reading his work. I am particularly interested in the origins of his Plan, Do, Check, Act theory. Just a great work that never ages.

Aimee says

Deming's claim to fame was teaching the Japanese about quality improvement principles in manufacturing, which Japanese companies then applied and consequently became world leaders in excellence. Most of what Deming puts forth is intuitive: management must have an understanding of what each job entails (best if they actually have done the work), the ability to focus on the "long run" for their organizations (not just making quarterly profits), and instill a commitment to excellence. Unfortunately, common sense is not a common commodity regardless of one's rank, which is why Deming is seen as a quality revolutionary. Deming can be dry at times, and some things are more challenging to translate to the service industry, but it's a worthy read.

Todd says

This book was included in my book: The 100 Best Business Books of All Time. www.100bestbiz.com

Lamec Mariita says

This book is a must read if you want to be a great manager. It's easy to read and the author's style is interesting. Deming's insights into business process is timeless. Deming best summarizes the purpose of the book: "This book teaches the transformation that is required for survival, a transformation that can only be accomplished by man. A company can not buy its way into quality - it must be led into quality by top management. A theory of management now exists. Never again may anyone say that there is nothing new in management to teach.". It was written in 1982 but it's definitely still useful.

JB says

This book is to management what The Republic is to philosophy.

Neil Barnes says

A classic, as relevant now as it was when it was published. We keep looking for silver bullets in the area of quality, partly because quality problems can be hard to solve. This book, and its successor (The New Economics), guided me through a lot of obfuscation around quality, ultimately leading me to Lean, which I think Deming would have supported (although, like TQM, he would not have used the term).

Whatever you call it - Deming's System of Profound Knowledge, Lean, agile, Operational Excellence - Deming shows that respect for the worker is at the heart of improvement.
