

Book Review for 11/30/03 by Jeanne Dorle

Title: "Re-imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age"

Author: Tom Peters

Copyright: 2003

Publisher: Dorling Kindersley Limited

ISBN: 0-7894-9647-X

Length: 352 pages

Price: \$30.00

Reading time: 7-8 hours

Reading rating: 7 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average, 4 = outstanding)

Tom Peters, management guru and author of 10 innovative business books, reinvents the business book with "Re-imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age." Working with a new publisher (Dorling Kindersley Limited), Peters presents a passionate argument for how and why businesses of all sizes must change. Two short quotations included on the title page reflect the uncompromising theme of the pages that follow:

"Uncertainty is the only thing to be sure of." Anthony Muh, Citigroup, head of investment in Asia

"If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less." General Eric Shinseki, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

Re-imagine has 25 chapters organized into eight sections: New Context, New Technology, New Value, New Brand, New Markets, New Work, New People, and New Mandate. This unconventional business book is replete with multi-colored text and graphics and Peters' trademark exclamation point appears on almost every page. Each chapter starts with Peters' rant on why business practices must change now, followed by his vision for the new world of business and a passionate, well- documented defense of that vision. The "! Contrasts" section of each chapter highlights a list of "Was" and "Is" descriptors (old business - new business context) for the chapter's topic.

The book is divided into main text and sidebars. The sidebars provide examples and observations that expand on the main text. Peters reports that since he's a non-linear guy, he likes the sidebars better than the text. I agree. An entire section of Peters' website (www.tompeters.com) is devoted to this book. You will find a detailed description of the table of contents there and you can download the second chapter, "Control, Alt, Delete: The Destructive Imperative." This will give you a peak at the book's creative, vibrant design. This bold new format seems appropriate for Peters' disruptive, change-to-survive message. Check out the publisher's web site (www.dk.com) for a look at more of the chapters.

After reading the book, I was fascinated by Peters' detailed source notes on the book's stories and data, along with the complete interviews of many of the people quoted in the book. Both of these are available on the author's website. Not all the material in the book is new. Some of the content is repackaged from his earlier books, but Peters' passion and candor is still refreshing. I enjoyed being challenged once again by Tom Peters, and I particularly enjoyed the richness of the expanded material on his website.

Jeanne Dorle, Assistant Professor of Management and International Business at Western Carolina University, teaches full-time in the Internet-based Master of Project Management Degree Program. For more information on this degree program, visit the website at mpm.wcu.edu.