

Let the Renaissance flourish anew

Peter Drucker's timeless advice is remarkably prescient. The world we live in badly demands managers that embody the spirit of the Renaissance. It is indeed surprising, the types of insights one might get when combining both the arts and sciences together. The Renaissance manager of today will have access to powerful tools that provide even greater insight when performing the art of management. This essay will provide a demonstration of what I think a Renaissance manager might do when encountering the very same writing prompts given by the selection committee. Thereafter, I shall explain why Drucker's insights are necessary for Renaissance managers who now have access to these tools in order to use them responsibly and effectively.

It is somehow a popular trend for articles to distill management into simply applying the right tool for the job. Or even worse, to be able to 'maximize human resources', as if people are capital to be exploited. The Renaissance of old uplifted the masses through the newfound courage to discover truth. Guided by the moral compass afforded by an arts education and newly created tools of science, Man pushed the boundaries of his own reality.

Today, we live in a world where new tools sprout almost daily. Tools to manage our time better, tools to communicate better, tools to extract insights from user behavior. It takes a Renaissance Manager to know how to synthesis truly effective action from this deluge.

In the following paragraphs, I shall attempt to push the boundaries of writing. This article is co-created with a newly created artificial intelligence (AI) tool. It has been trained on a healthy diet of Drucker's quotes and will seek to answer these very same writing prompts.

Let us begin with some introductions. Meet GPT-2, a language model trained by OpenAI, a pioneering AI research company. You might have heard of her. GPT-2 was not even fully released to the public due to her potential to 'generate deceptive, biased, or abusive language at scale' and thus only a smaller version has been provided for public use. What you're about to read next is the combination of my personal experience weaved with GPT-2's insights. This is what 40 gigabytes of internet text, 1.5 billion parameters, and 8 million web pages combined with Drucker's quotes can do. I was immensely surprised, and I believe you will too.

Technique

GPT-2 allows us to input text as a prompt, following which we may ask it a question and it will provide an answer based on the prompt. To generate this prompt, 340+ of Drucker's quotes across all his writings was taken from [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/12008.Peter_F_Drucker)¹. Thereafter, for each writing prompt, 30 answers of 50 words are generated. It is from these generated texts that I begin to write my response. From here on, anything in *italics*

¹https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/12008.Peter_F_Drucker

are not my own words but the creation of GPT-2 emulating what Drucker might have said.

The Renaissance Manager

The hallmark of a great manager is the ability to create. The practice of management *is the adventure of its time. The future is beyond us. It is our responsibility to set it; to manage it. Our job is not merely to give advice; it is not just to describe things; it is to create.* Therefore, it is the Renaissance Manager's imperative to ensure that we bring forth the generative, creative energies of the organization to tackle the right problems. *A good manager is a genuine engineer, an entrepreneur not one who works after tradition has dictated to him. Seek out opportunities that will make you better informed, able to understand, and willing to take risks. Don't make your staff wait for you to do them harm. Find out what you need and best synthesize.* In true spirit of the Renaissance, *it is important that we are equipped with ideas that combine the scientific, practical, technical, and moral. And it is crucial that we have an approach to the problem that allows us to delegate, to change positions, to use power, and to induce people to perform. That doesn't mean that we can do nothing; it means that we must own the idea we have chosen and create.*

The role of a Renaissance Manager

The way to build new ideas is to develop a community of workers, who can work together in cooperation. The concept of community building is never confined to any sphere of study. To understand people, we turn to the social sciences. But now, we may simply derive insights from user behavior and interactions. It takes one that has *a deep unity of character, a deep understanding of oneself and of others* to be able to not only tease out these insights from reams of data but also to turn them into action.

It means that the first course of action is to guide, teach, mobilize, and organize, to get people to adapt themselves to the process of change. The second course of action is to prepare people for the result of the process. The third is to create knowledge and an environment in which people will thrive. Afterall, "Management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant."

A great businessman and an effective executive will accomplish more as a result of constant change than of any one specific change. The great change-makers of our time are the ideologues who have assembled and mobilized their forces, but they use them in a way that shifts the balance as "working on the right things is what makes knowledge work effective."

A Renaissance Manager, freed from the silos of traditional education systems, is best positioned to understand the multiple facets that make up the human condition. *Methods of managing a business do not come from a creed, or a dogma; they emerge from a tradition of human life. But the theory that underlies enterprise and entrepreneurship is a natural, essential part of the human condition.* To truly understand this, one must be even more human. *It's about taking time, as well as patience, to learn, adapt, and learn again. It's about discovery and deep learning. It's*

about finding what makes people different; finding their strengths; getting to know them. It's about iteration and moving from idea to prototype. It's about variety and novelty, which are skills that we develop for ourselves. It's about responding to whatever someone has to say in the right way.

Qualities of a Renaissance Manager

The first thing to realize in any subject is the nature of change. Drucker charted the sources of innovation, noting that it always begins with the analysis of opportunities. *The implication is that innovation is an essential part of the solution to the problems of business.* Therefore, this is the most essential skill a Renaissance Manager must have. Innovation must be of second nature.

The focus to developing Renaissance Managers is a *question of how to help people to better themselves, to achieve the proper balance between effort and development, to set an example for others. One thing you can do to improve your abilities to be effective and to control your own energy, to save time, and to get things done is to identify your power sources.* Power in this case, not only to fuel your own volition and creativity but also power to influence others and attract support to your cause.

To do so, one must hone the *ability to see the hidden connections between occurrences, between the right moments and the wrong ones. The same ability to see the hidden connections between moments of crisis and moments of recovery is the power and knowledge to plan for the future.* The ability to chart a plot into the uncertain beyond. *Management is the natural consequence. It is designed to make the problem of changing persons predictable and the solution predictable. It carries out this task by creation of new capabilities, by creating new opportunities, and by expressing the knowledge of all people. It leads to the best possible result, which is to create an industry or organization.*

Finally, one must have the will to step up to take charge of the situation. *It is the final effect of a series of steps taken by self-motivated individuals, generated by their self-discipline, integrity, and ruthlessness.*

A Renaissance Manager is forever an entrepreneur

Entrepreneurship, like all 'unusual' activities, is a field of constant interdisciplinary experimentation. This requires transcendence beyond any subject. However, to be interdisciplinary is not simply to mash together concepts and hope to create something new. *Entrepreneurship has three stages. The first stage is the act of thinking about changing the world - otherwise known as finding a way to understand or daydream. The second stage is the invention of a method of solving various problems that are at the heart of current knowledge; it is the process of producing knowledge that is central to the business process. The third stage is the act of applying knowledge.*

Through this process, entrepreneurs become *the architects of the insights that enable them to achieve their goals. To be an entrepreneur is to be a good friend to others, a friend to problems, a friend to life.* A friendship built on mutual respect and understanding. A friendship built on patience and curiosity. *Entrepreneurship is not*

about the capacity to solve problems - it is about creating an opportunity for the individual to meet them.

The entrepreneurs of today must carry the qualities of a Renaissance Manager and be able to systematically groom them for their organization. *Entrepreneurship rests on building a culture that allows people to go into the unknown and get the job done.*

Reflecting on the process

GPT-2 not only seemed to answer the questions satisfactorily, but when weaving my responses with hers, I uncovered further personal insights into what a Renaissance Manager might be. At times, I felt like I was guided by her prompts. The surprisingly insightful quotes generated might have been Drucker's own words had he been posed the same questions. Elements of Drucker's famous aphorisms on effective management are revealed. They are memorable, impactful, and always puts the human at the heart of the message.

Conclusion

When posed with the prompt for this year's Peter Drucker Challenge, I was immediately reminded of the impact his words have had on my life. Several habits I have developed come directly from reading his books and insights. The need to track my own time, my work in community building, the relentless drive to create. At that moment I was seized by a moment of poignance. I would only ever be able to interact with Drucker's thoughts from a third person perspective. I resolved that rather than simply tackling the essay alone, I might be able to utilize his most famous insights to my aid. Whomever simply assumed that an essay must be written solely by a human is sorely mistaken. It is time for a second Renaissance as we apply these new tools to further push the boundaries of art and science driven by vigor of an entrepreneurial spirit.

References

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