

Mission: To lead social sector organizations toward excellence in performance

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## Thought Leaders Forum: Peter F. Drucker Biography



**Peter F. Drucker** is a writer, teacher, and consultant specializing in strategy and policy for businesses and social sector organizations. He has consulted with many of the world's largest corporations as well as with nonprofit organizations, small and entrepreneurial companies, and with agencies of the U.S. government. He has also worked with free-world governments such as those of Canada, Japan, and Mexico. He is the author of thirty-one books which have been translated into more than twenty languages. Thirteen books deal with society, economics, and politics; fifteen deal with management. Two of his books are novels, one is autobiographical, and he is a co-author of a book on Japanese painting. He has made four series of educational films based on his management books. He has been an editorial columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and a frequent contributor to the *Harvard Business Review* and other periodicals.

Drucker was born in 1909 in Vienna and was educated there and in England. He took his doctorate in public and international law while working as a newspaper reporter in Frankfurt, Germany. He then worked as an economist for an international bank in London. Drucker came to the United States in 1937. He began his teaching career as professor of politics and

### Thought Leaders on Peter F. Drucker

The Drucker Foundation invited its thought leaders to comment on Peter Drucker's contributions. Following are excerpts from their responses. See the [complete list](#), below.

"He consistently brings clarity and simplicity to an increasingly complex world." [\[full quote\]](#)

[William J. Flynn](#)

"when we chatted, he wanted to hear about my family. It is great to be such an influential intellect; it is even greater to combine it with human warmth." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Henry Mintzberg](#)

"Peter Drucker's eyeglasses must contain crystal balls, because he anticipated so many trends -- defining 'knowledge workers' decades before this trend was discernable, identifying the centrality of the third sector of nonprofits to getting the work of society done, putting mission first in the understanding of a business, recognizing the power of pension funds and other institutional investors in late 20th century capitalism, defining entrepreneurship as finding innovations to meet unmet needs." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Rosabeth Moss Kanter](#)

"Peter Drucker has forgotten more than most people ever knew about leadership and management." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Ken Blanchard](#)

philosophy at Bennington College; for more than twenty years he was professor of management at the Graduate Business School of New York University. The recipient of many awards and honorary degrees, Peter Drucker has, since 1971, been Clarke Professor of Social Sciences at Claremont Graduate University. Its Graduate Management School was named after him in 1984.

Peter Drucker has been hailed in the United States and abroad as the seminal thinker, writer, and lecturer on the contemporary organization. In 1997, he was featured on the cover of *Forbes* magazine under the headline, "Still the Youngest Mind," and *BusinessWeek* has called him "the most enduring management thinker of our time."

Mr. Drucker has received honorary doctorates from universities around the world. He is Honorary Chairman of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management. He is married and has four children and six grandchildren.

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### **Thought Leaders on Peter F. Drucker: Complete List**

[Ken Blanchard](#)

[William Bridges](#)

[Maria Livanos Cattau](#)

[Clayton M. Christensen](#)

[Paul M. Cohen](#)

[Stephen R. Covey](#)

[Max De Pree](#)

[William J. Flynn](#)

[Thomas Gilliam](#)

[Thomas Gilmore](#)

[Marshall Goldsmith](#)

"Peter Drucker is the Father of Management. For many of us, he is our role model, continually generating new ideas and refining old ones. I regard it as a compliment when some people call me the Father of Marketing. I tell them that if this the case, then Peter Drucker is the Grandfather of marketing." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Philip Kotler](#)

"There is a magic about the Father of Modern Management -- Peter Drucker who writes and speaks to us in elegant, spare language that connects, inspires, moves us into the future. The vision he holds before us embraces us; we make it our own. And we think with leaders all over the world, 'He did it just for us.'" [\[full quote\]](#)

[Frances Hesselbein](#)

"Over the years, Peter has proven to me that his humanity matches his intellect. Peter's concern for me as a person, his leadership, and his guidance have been among my life's greatest blessings." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Max De Pree](#)

"His persistent focus on the value and worth of the person in a business environment has been an encouragement to me as I have sought to lead and serve in the marketplace." [\[full quote\]](#)

[C. William Pollard](#)

"In leadership, Peter's enormous contribution has been his insistence that leaders come in all shapes, sizes, races and genders, and that leadership is not some mysterious blend of charisma and luck. Rather, Peter has argued persuasively that leadership most commonly arises from a commitment to serve others rather than self. As early as *The Effective Executive*, Peter noted that effectiveness grows out of the question: how can I best serve?

Thank you, Peter, for a lifetime of inspiration and support." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Frederick Harmon](#)

"He is an uncommonly gracious and generous man. He also is remarkable for his clarity, economy, and elegance of thought. Along with modern management, Peter fathered management writing. Few who have followed are in his league, but all of us are in his debt." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Paul M. Cohen](#)

[Michael Hammer](#)

[Frederick Harmon](#)

[Sally Helgesen](#)

[Frances Hesselbein](#)

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"The breadth of his knowledge of the arts and history are so rare in business writing that he stands alone as an example of how a deep and broadly educate mind would deal with the business of organizational life." [\[full quote\]](#)

[William Bridges](#)

"I consider him a friend, a teacher, and an awesome role model. He seems to have no limits on growing and learning and contributing to society. *What a powerful soul!*" [\[full quote\]](#)

[Michele Hunt](#)

"It is with some trepidation that I open his early books, because I am afraid that I will discover that he has anticipated my latest ideas by a matter of several decades." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Michael Hammer](#)

"Peter Drucker's insights about leadership, the character of a knowledge economy, and the importance of the social sector as a balancing institution have influenced my books and also shaped my active involvement in the social sector." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Sally Helgesen](#)

"He's truly the Renaissance Man of the field of management." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Stephen R. Covey](#)

". . .through his great example as an educator, author, consultant, and humanitarian, we are all encouraged to be thought leaders." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Thomas Gilliam](#)

"one of those rare minds that can express profound thoughts in simple words -- leavened by dry humor and even gentle mockery." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Maria Livanos Cattai](#)

"In a sea of fads, Drucker's work is always informed by history. His conceptualizations are clear and powerful. He often helps one 'see' phenomena in a new frame, such as his work on the power of capital in pensions, his observations about the role of 'generally accepted accounting principals' as a major innovation." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Thomas N. Gilmore](#)

"Without a doubt the book *Management* has represented the single most compelling treatment of the topic I have ever encountered."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[Len Schlesinger](#)**

"His contributions to thinking are legion. What I find most poignant is how, in very real terms he has helped people to grow, organizations to prosper and made work more rewarding."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[Paul Hersey](#)**

"Peter Drucker has been my management hero for a very long time. . . he is the one who recognized the importance of the not for profit manager and the contributions being made by that sector. His sense of history coupled with his vision for the future makes him a force without peer in providing leadership and direction to the development of managers for generations to come."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[John E. Jacob](#)**

"He has helped me (and many others) set personal standards for thoughtfulness, creativity, and productivity."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[John Kotter](#)**

"Peter Drucker is without peer in observing the significance of what has been and is taking place in this world and also potential changes and their impact on the world."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[John McNeice](#)**

"Democracy thrives from the participation and active involvement of the social sector: of individuals, of community and of civil society. Peter Drucker has gone beyond merely recognizing the high value of the social sector; he has worked to improve the effectiveness of this sector, strengthening society as a whole."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[Rita Sussmuth](#)**

"Drucker's greatest contribution to thinking about management stems from his insistence that, as managers, we must continually look at a wider context and explore the larger problem."

[\[full quote\]](#)

**[Laurence S. Lyons](#)**

"Focusing on Strengths! [Drucker's quote: ]  
'...making the strengths of our people effective  
and their weaknesses irrelevant.' This sage  
advice is finally making its way into leadership  
learning and practice." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Richard J. Leider](#)

"The timelessness of what he has written as well  
allows me to go back to his old work and still find  
it so relevant. He has managed well the interplay  
among the commercial side of business, the  
human side of business and the societal role of  
business." [\[full quote\]](#)

[Anne Miller](#)

"Peter Drucker is an amazing genius in many  
respects. He started out strong, wise, and clear  
and he has stayed that way all his life." [\[full  
quote\]](#)

[Michael J. O'Connor](#)



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for Nonprofit Management**

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320 Park Ave 3rd Fl  
New York, NY 10022 USA  
Tel: +1 212-224-1174  
Fax: +1 212-224-2508  
Email: [info@pfd.org](mailto:info@pfd.org)  
Web: [drucker.org](http://drucker.org)