



"I don't predict. I just look out the window and see what's visible but not yet seen."
— Peter F. Drucker

the window



Letter from Claremont

May-June 2011



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The Fab Five: "What are the qualities that the best leaders exhibit?"

The most popular Dx post in the past 30 days

[As we've noted](#) in another context, Peter Drucker was not exactly a technical whiz, banging out the last of his books on a Brother typewriter, even though the world had already entered the Internet age.

And yet Drucker would surely be smiling at the buzz he and his ideas are generating on our blog, which just celebrated its first birthday in its current format.

In the last year, [the Drucker Exchange](#) has seen more than 123,000 visits, with readers hailing from nearly 200 countries on six continents. (Our following outside the U.S. is bound to rise even further, as we're now translating selected *Dx* posts in Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish, with Korean soon to be added.)

The best part is that these aren't drive-by readings. Those coming to *the Dx* are highly engaged, with more than 6% of visits to the site resulting in a comment, tweet or share (through a Facebook "Like," for instance). That's quite a robust number by

web standards, producing more than 1,200 interactions so far in 2011.

The reason for all this active participation: By tying Drucker's timeless wisdom to issues that are particularly timely—subsidies for Big Oil, management practices at Google, the threat of rising inflation, McDonald's hiring 50,000 new workers—we seem to be giving our readers (whether they're already familiar with Drucker or not) something of real value.

"For us, a business blog makes the cut if it meets one simple yet difficult-to-achieve criteria: After you read it, the writer makes you consider or contemplate better ways to operate your business," *The Daily Herald* of Everett, Wash., asserted recently, as it named *the Dx* one of "five blogs business owners must read."

Boy, do we Like that.

Rick Wartzman and Zach First
Executive Director and Managing Director

Local Links

How people around the world are bettering their communities by applying Peter Drucker's ideas



As the economy continues to rebound in fits and starts, many political leaders, analysts and executives have declared that unlocking innovation is the key to a robust recovery.

But how do you actually go about achieving that?

For answers, a group of Hawaiian leaders from all sectors—public, private and nonprofit—recently turned out for a Drucker Society Innovation Workshop in Honolulu.

"Hawaii's economy is just beginning to recover," noted Craig Chong of the Drucker Society of the United States, who delivered the program to about 20 attendees. "The Drucker workshop stimulates the leaders in the room to recognize opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship in their organizations and gives them tools to seize the moment."

One of those leaders, Alan Oshima, a board member of the nonprofit Hawaii

Institute for Public Affairs (HIPA), grabbed hold of Drucker's insight that an unexpected failure actually represents an opportunity for innovation.

"Faced with unexpected failure, executives, especially in large organizations, tend to call for more study and more analysis," Drucker wrote in his 1985 classic, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. "The unexpected failure demands that you go out, look around and listen. Failure should always be considered a symptom of innovative opportunity, and taken seriously as such."

With lessons gleaned from the workshop, Oshima helped HIPA "research the use of lands underlying our public schools to generate needed revenues" in response to a severe drop in state funding. This innovative approach represents, according to Oshima, a "systemic change in how we use school lands and develop schools for the 21st century."

Join us at the next [Drucker Global Forum](#) in Vienna, Austria.

November 3-4, 2011

"A Quest for Legitimacy—How Managers Can Shape the Future"

The Drucker Institute's Rick Wartzman writes a column for *Bloomberg Businessweek* online that ties Peter Drucker's work to today's headlines. [Read the latest.](#)

Bloomberg Businessweek

From the Archives



As summer approaches across America, millions of students are now working on final projects for their classes. If they're lucky, they'll find the experience as meaningful as the one enjoyed by Peter Drucker's students more than three decades ago.

In [this syllabus](#) from Drucker's 1974-75 Claremont Graduate University class on the management process, he requested two papers be handed in during the term. One of them was a review of the students' "own

choice out of the management literature... dealing with the governance of institutions and the discharge of the leadership responsibility."

Drucker was specific in his direction, as he guided his students to "tell the instructor why he chose this book as significant; what he thinks the author tried to do; and what he learned from the book."

He also insisted that they move away from merely praising, criticizing or condemning a book, as he sought to "wean

his students "from having 'opinions'" and examining "who is right."

Rather, Drucker wanted to teach his students to ask two key questions: "What does the author try to do?" and "What did I learn and how can I use it?"

This orientation, of pushing people to turn ideas into action, was a hallmark of Drucker's work with corporate clients. But clearly, Drucker wanted everyone to learn to think this way, whether they were sitting in the executive suite or the lecture hall.

III - THE STUDENT'S OWN READING AND WRITING WORK

Each student will be expected to hand in TWO papers during the term -- the first one due on November 11, the second on December 16.

* One of these papers should be a discussion of THE INVINCIBLE LIFE ASSURANCE CASE.

For the other paper the student will be expected to pick his own choice out of the *management literature--the term is used broadly and comprises any book (or major article) dealing with the governance of institutions and the discharge of the leadership responsibility--tell the instructor why he chose this book as significant; what he thinks the author tried to do; and what he learned from the book. There is no need to praise, criticize or condemn the book; indeed one of the purposes of the exercise is to wean the student from having "opinions" and of asking "who is right" and teach him to ask instead the two key questions: "What does the author try to do?" and "What did I learn and how can I use it?"