**Tom Peters**

“In no small part, what American corporations have become is what Peters has encouraged them to be.”—*The New Yorker*

“Peters is ... the father of the post-modern corporation.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“We live in a Tom Peters world.”—*Fortune*

“In Tom’s world it’s always better to try a swan dive and deliver a colossal belly flop than to step timidly off the board while holding your nose.”—*Fast Company*

“Tom Peters is the most provocative and engaging (as well as annoying and threatening) management guru running loose in America today.”—CBS MarketWatch

“If they’re onto a good thing, management gurus generally milk the same business mantra for all it’s worth. Maybe they throw in a few new catch phrases or rework the key speeches, but the principal message remains unchanged. However, one guru par excellence is going against the grain. The one-man brand that is Tom Peters is still reinventing himself. While others of his age think of retirement, the man who co-wrote *In Search of Excellence* back in 1982 is still cranking up the volume on new ideas he thinks the workplace ought to hear.”—CNN.com

“I’ve learned only three things in forty years. One, he or she who has the best relationships takes home the prize. Two, all effective leaders are full-time salespeople. And, three, he-she who tries the most stuff wins; action beats talk ten times out of ten.”—Tom Peters

“Execution *is* strategy.”—Tom Peters

*Fortune* called Tom Peters the “Ur-guru” of management (he doesn’t know what that means either, but admits “it sounds pretty good”), and compares him to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and H.L. Mencken. The *Economist* tagged him the “Uber-guru”—and *BusinessWeek*’s take on his “unconventional views” led them to label him “business’s best friend and worst nightmare.” The Bloomsbury Press book, *Movers and Shakers: The 100 Most Influential Figures in Modern Business*, reviewed the historical contributions of path-breaking management thinkers and practitioners, from Machiavelli and J.P. Morgan to Tom and Jack Welch. The summary entry on Tom’s impact:

*Tom Peters has probably done more than anyone else to shift the debate on management from the confines of boardrooms, academia, and consultancies to a broader, worldwide audience, where it has become the staple diet of the media and managers alike. Peter Drucker has written more and his ideas have withstood a longer test of time, but it is Peters—as consultant, writer, columnist, seminar lecturer, and stage performer—whose energy, style, influence, and ideas have shaped new management thinking.*
When Tom and Bob Waterman produced *In Search of Excellence* over 25 years ago, they effectively introduced the world of business to the notion of Excellence *per se*, a state of mind and daily practice not normally associated with enterprise, and an inspiring and profitable aspiration at a time when America’s competitiveness was under full-blown assault. In short, then and now, the unwavering pursuit of Excellence, from the finance department to after-sales service, in the car dealership and police department as well as the bank branch and aircraft factory, provides the basis for an unmatchable competitive advantage—and acts on one and all as an ongoing spur to pathbreaking achievement. And in our global village, getting flatter by the day as it is, Excellence is a universal idea-ideal (think Olympics) that translates and transports across all borders.

In 1999, *Search* was honored by NPR as one of the “Top Three Business Books of the Century”—and ranked as the “greatest business book of all time” in a poll by Britain’s Bloomsbury Publishing. Tom followed *Search* with well over a dozen additional international bestsellers. Among them: *A Passion for Excellence* (with Nancy Austin); *Thriving on Chaos; Liberation Management* (acclaimed as the “Management Book of the Decade” for the ’90s); and the provocative, colorful *Re-imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age*. Along the way, several Tom Peters biographies have been published, including: *Corporate Man to Corporate Skunk: The Tom Peters Phenomenon* and *Tom Peters: The Bestselling Prophet of the Management Revolution* (part of a four-book series of business biographies on Peters, Bill Gates, Peter Drucker, and Warren Buffet).

Tom, who is widely credited with almost single-handedly “inventing” the “management guru industry,” now billions of dollars in size, writes, reflects, and then presents about 50 seminars each year, well over half outside the U.S. (In a recent four-week period, he spoke in Korea, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina, and Croatia.) Tom estimates that since 1978, when the work on *Search* began, he’s given well over 2,500 speeches, flown 5,000,000+ miles, spoken before 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 people and presented in 48 states and 63 countries. Also, since 2004, Tom has devoted much of his “at home” energy to the award-winning (a “Top 500” designation) blog—www.tompeters.com.

Leadership guru Warren Bennis, the only person close to both Tom and the late Peter Drucker, told a journalist, “If Peter Drucker invented modern management, Tom Peters repainted it in Technicolor.” In fact, as even Tom’s book titles indicate (“Excellence” ... “Passion” ... “Liberation”), his passion is passion: Destruction & Re-imagining ... finding and liberating Talent for a hypercompetitive world ... the Herculean task of sustaining Entrepreneurial Excellence ... an enterprise-wide obsession with Design that produces products and services of the sort that Steve Jobs calls “insanely great.” Among Tom’s newer campaigns are: Women-as-Leaders especially suited for these times; gaining advantage in the enormous, underserved market represented by Women (controllers of three-fourths of the world’s wealth) and the burgeoning, absurdly financially potent and absurdly underserved Boomer-Geezer population in the likes of North America, Europe, and Japan. In the last 24 months, Tom has become fixated on Operational Excellence in our biggest “industry,” healthcare—in particular the life-extending opportunities associated with an unswerving focus on Prevention and Wellness and a relentless emphasis on Quality and Safety.

In 2008, Tom has once again shifted gears, and is renewing his dedication to the “eternal basics” of implementation-execution, among other things a topic of research he pioneered at Stanford in the 1970s. “We create and then get caught up in, me included, an endless parade of fads,” he says, “but while the world is indeed changing, the basics of ‘getting things done through people’ remain the same as they were a hundred, or hundreds, of years ago—and it is
failures in implementation that trip us up in 9 cases out of 10, from a primary school in Nashville or Nigeria to ‘nation-building’ in Basra and Baghdad. In business, for example, developing a brilliant ‘blue ocean strategy,’ today’s hot buzzphrase, is all well and good, but make no mistake, enthusiastic people executing like maniacs in that ocean is the only thing that will keep it blue and keep you sailing with spinnaker full! ‘Excellence in Execution’—particularly cross-functional execution—was, is, wherever, and forever will be Sustainable Competitive Advantage #1.”

Born in Baltimore in 1942 with a lacrosse stick in his hands, and residing in California (mainly Silicon Valley) from 1965–2000, Tom and his wife Susan Sargent now live on a 1,600-acre working farm, “always under construction,” in Vermont. He is a civil engineering graduate of Cornell (B.C.E., M.C.E.) and earned an MBA and Ph.D. at Stanford; he holds honorary doctorates from institutions that range from the University of San Francisco to the State University of Management in Moscow. In the U.S. Navy from 1966–1970, he made two deployments to Vietnam (as a combat engineer in the Navy Seabees) and “survived a tour in the Pentagon.” He was a White House drug-abuse advisor in 1973–74, and then worked at McKinsey & Co. from 1974–1981, becoming a Partner and co-founder of the now gargantuan Organization Effectiveness practice in 1979.