

TOM PETERS

Tom Peters grew up in Annapolis, Maryland. He played a lot of lacrosse. After acquiring two engineering degrees from Cornell, he spent two years as a U.S. Navy combat engineer in Vietnam—and two years as a Pentagon bureaucrat. Next, Tom earned an MBA and Ph.D. in organizational effectiveness from Stanford. In the middle of that time, he served for two years as a White House drug abuse policy advisor. He then joined McKinsey in San Francisco. He was given an “oddball” (by McKinsey standards) assignment to study organization effectiveness and to figure out why big companies are consistently crappy at implementation. Out of that analysis came *In Search of Excellence*, published in 1982, which became a huge bestseller. It is commonly agreed to have reshaped global business thinking and has been anointed time and again as “the best business book ever.”

Along the way, Tom founded the Tom Peters Company, based in Palo Alto. Labeled the premier “business guru,” he has written 18 more books, including one released in March 2021, *Excellence Now: Extreme Humanism*. He has also delivered 2,500-plus speeches in 63 countries. All of this work and all of those frequent-flyer miles boiled down to a tireless focus on putting people first, developing leaders who stay in intimate touch with the front-liners who do the real work, selecting more women for top leadership roles, being a stellar community citizen, and making no less than inspiring products—all of which aim to make the world a little bit better and are also the best path to growth and profitability, and, for the individual, a life of honorable service. Tom repeatedly says that he does not understand why this straightforward, “not rocket science” message, which he has been ranting and raving about for 43 years, seems to be so hard to grasp—but he will continue to “sell” these timeless ideas until his last breath.

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