

The Fully Integrated Engineer

Combining Technical Ability and Leadership Prowess

By Steven T. Cerri

Forward

I've been privileged enough to have been asked to write forewords to a number of books, but I've never been as excited to write a foreword before as I am in writing this one.

First of all, Steven is both a personal friend and professional colleague of mine, so while I may be biased, in my personal and professional opinion, Steven is a gem. He has unbending integrity and outstanding skills, making him one of the most effective, efficient, and empathetic change agents I've ever seen or worked with in a room of professionals.

My work is centered around the art of change with individuals and organizations. For more than two decades one of my main areas of focus has been what I call "the personal side of change" in large multinational organizations, as well as in numerous technical fast growth start-ups and more than a few entrepreneurial and family-held businesses around the world. This part of the change process, the personal side, is all about how you get people in the organization to buy into the change process, model and outcome, and furthermore how to get everyone pulling together in the same direction to take the action necessary to create the intended results.

Regardless of how powerful the strategy and plan of action are for making changes happen in organizations, without the team who needs to implement them working together and taking the appropriate action nothing happens, or worst the organization devolves instead of evolving as planned. This same effect can be seen when trying to develop and launch a new product, or when trying to merge two organizations together, or even in just managing an existing product for maximum return on investment or growth. The team who's responsible for the outcome must do what's necessary to succeed.

The process we use to insure that the kind of successes I refer to above are realized is called management. This is where I have a problem with Steven's book, despite my great sense of pleasure in reading it and honor in being asked to write this foreword.

Steven has aimed his book at engineers and technical professionals who are transitioning from being in technical roles to becoming professional managers. In this regard his book is outstanding on every level; that's not what my challenge with his book is about in any way, shape, or form.

My challenge is that Steven's book may get lost on every other manager and leader in the organization it can and will help if they read it, because they may think what he writes about here is only for engineers and technical managers!

In fact, this may be the best book I've ever read about how to address the personal side of business, which is the skill set every manager and leader in any organization needs to succeed. It isn't possible to move an organization forward at the current pace of the world without being able to connect with, communicate with, and move people ... and that's exactly what makes this book such a powerful resource.

Steven's book is a fundamental work on how people operate at the level of the beliefs and values that drive their action...or lead to inaction. He has created a framework he calls, "personal behavioral subroutines" that defines how people get from data in the environment to the actions they take, or not. Then he translates this into a complete program on how to access one's own personal behavioral subroutines, as well as those of others, and step into the space of reorganizing them for success.

He's laid out this material in a series of short chapters with diagrams, explanations, exercises, and examples such that his book reads like a technical training manual for running the behaviors that lead to success in management, but at a level that makes the material remarkably accessible and easy to read, while also making it enjoyable to read at the same time. The diagrams alone are worth ten times the cost of this book, and along with the text will make getting and absorbing what Steven's written, even the most technical concepts he's covered, an absolute walk in the park.

As an author of multiple books I know that this is no mean feat that Steven's accomplished, and hence my pleasure at writing this foreword. Simply put, this book should be in the hands of every organizational leader, manager or would be manager ... and not on their shelf as some like to say. Instead I recommend you keep it handy to pick up and review whenever you are unsure of what to do in a situation where you need to lead or guide others to creating outstanding outcomes. Leave it on the corner of your desk or the corner of your nightstand so you can access it at a moment's notice, I think it's both that relevant and that good, that once you've read it yourself you'll be forced to agree with my opinion.

As I said, I'm biased about Steven and his work. I personally know that this book represents the thinking of decades from one of the best minds I've ever encountered on the process of how to develop people in becoming world-class managers. While his record speaks for itself, this book gathers years of observation and insight on the art of management from Steven in a way that surpassed even my high expectation for what it would be before I read it.

I know as a reader, whether you truly are an engineer or a technical professional in a technical role, someone in any role in an organization moving up to a management position for the first time or a seasoned organizational leader or manager with many years of experience behind you already, what you glean from Steven's book from the first reading will be worth hundreds of times the amount of investment in time, energy, and money you put into it. In the next dozen or so readings, what you'll find yourself coming back to will likely make this one of the most valuable business books you'll ever come across or own.

In closing, I have just one final comment: plan on getting more than one copy if you're even thinking about loaning out to anyone, because once you do you're going to have a very hard time getting it back.

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