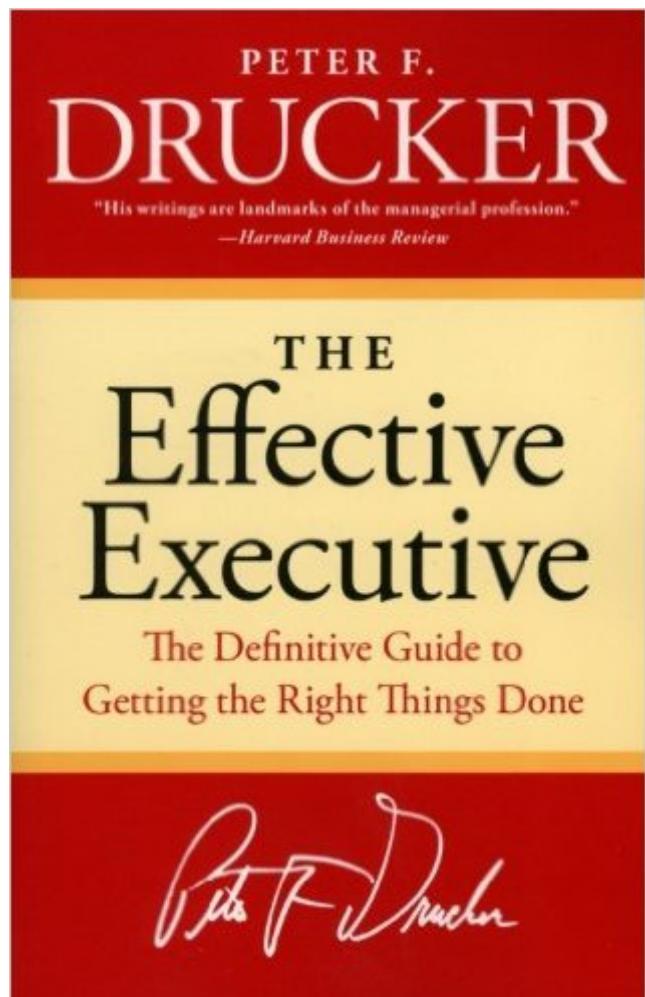


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# The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide To Getting The Right Things Done (Harperbusiness Essentials)



## **Synopsis**

What makes an effective executive? The measure of the executive, Peter F. Drucker reminds us, is the ability to "get the right things done." This usually involves doing what other people have overlooked as well as avoiding what is unproductive. Intelligence, imagination, and knowledge may all be wasted in an executive job without the acquired habits of mind that mold them into results. Drucker identifies five practices essential to business effectiveness that can, and must, be learned: Managing time Choosing what to contribute to the organization Knowing where and how to mobilize strength for best effect Setting the right priorities Knitting all of them together with effective decision-making Ranging widely through the annals of business and government, Peter F. Drucker demonstrates the distinctive skill of the executive and offers fresh insights into old and seemingly obvious business situations.

## **Book Information**

Series: Harperbusiness Essentials

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: HarperBusiness; Revised edition (January 3, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060833459

ISBN-13: 978-0060833459

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (285 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,609 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 in Â Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Management

## **Customer Reviews**

Peter Drucker begins this book by pointing out that there is no science of how to improve executive effectiveness, nor any naturally-occurring effective executives. The redeeming point of this problem is that he argues that executive effectiveness can be learned. The principles begin with a focus on time management. We can get greater quantities of every other resource we need, except time.

Drucker reports that executives spend their time much differently than they think they do and much differently than they would like to. His solution is to begin by measuring how you spend your time, and compare it with an ideal allocation. Then begin to systematically get rid of the unimportant in favor of the important. His suggestions include stopping some things, delegation, creating policy

decisions to replace ad hoc decisions, staying out of things that others should do, and so forth. Any student of time management will recognize the list he suggests. One of the best points is to give yourself large blocks of uninterrupted time to do more significant tasks. He also cautions us not to cut down on time spent with other people. If an hour is required, don't try to do it in 15 minutes. Next, Drucker argues that we should focus on what will make a difference rather than unimportant questions. Otherwise, we will fill our time with motion rather than proceeding towards results. Beyond that, he points out that we have to build on our own strengths and those of the people in our organization. That is how we can outperform the competition and accomplish much more. We also need to be systems thinkers, getting to the core of the issue first. If we are weak on new products, we need to work on the new product development process before fine-tuning our marketing.

"The Effective Executive" (1966) was the first book to define who an executive is and to explain the practices of effective executives. Today there are several in this genre. But this book was the first, as is the case with many of Drucker's masterpieces. Drucker starts the book by stating that this book is about managing oneself and that executives who do not manage themselves cannot possibly expect to manage other people. Efficiency vs. Effectiveness: "Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things." For manual work, efficiency was enough. In today world, the center of gravity has shifted from the manual worker to the "knowledge worker" (a term Drucker coined in the 60s). For knowledge work, effectiveness is more important than efficiency. Who is an executive? Executive = a knowledge worker who is ... responsible for contributions (decisions, actions) ... that have significant impact on ... performance and results of the whole organization (derived from pages 5 through 9). Effective executives: 1. Manage time 2. Focus on contributions and results 3. Build on strengths 4. Set the right priorities 5. Make effective decisions 1. Manage time: "Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed" (page 51). Chapter 2, Know Thy Time, starts with a three-step process - recording, managing and consolidating time. Drucker then states the factors that make time a unique resource - the supply of time is inelastic, time is perishable and cannot be stored, time is irreplaceable (i.e. has no substitute), all work takes place in and uses up time.

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