If apples were oranges: the public/nonprofit/business nexus in Peter Drucker's work

Mary E. Guy (Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, USA, and) Janice R. Hitchcock (Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, USA)
Journal of Management History (Archive)
ISSN: 1355-252X
Publication date: 1 February 2000

Abstract
The authors review Peter Drucker's writings, framing them within the context of his formative years. Moving to an analysis of the lens through which he views business, nonprofits, and government, they examine the nexus at which public administration, nonprofit management, and business meet. Specifically, Drucker's prediction of the centrality of the knowledge worker to productivity and his focus on organizational mission are situated squarely at the nexus. His attention to nonprofit management represents a useful application of his notion of mission-focused management. However, his treatment of public management falls short, failing to appreciate the dynamics of cultural and constitutionally-imposed restraints.

Keywords
Management history | Government | Business | Philosophy

Citation

To read the full version of this content please select one of the options below

You may be able to access this content by logging in via Shibboleth, Open Athens or with your Emerald Account.

To rent this content from Deepdyve, please click the button.

If you think you should have access to this content, click the button to contact our support team.
business—a functioning board. They also have something even rarer: a CEO who is clearly accountable to the board and whose performance is reviewed annually by a board committee. And they have what is rarer still: a board whose performance is reviewed annually against preset performance objectives. Peter Drucker's family was typical. His grandmother was a musician who had played for Gustav Mahler; his father had been a friend of Sigmund Freud. Drucker grew up in a home where people spoke three languages. They discussed science, books and mathematics in the way that many modern families talk about TV and sport today. Drucker wanted to find out more about big business organizations. But as the world was at war, he knew he had to wait. Every big company in the USA was working as hard as possible to produce equipment for the army. When they were able to work, managers often shouted at them and ordered them to work harder. But as early as the 1920s, people had asked if this was the right way to manage.