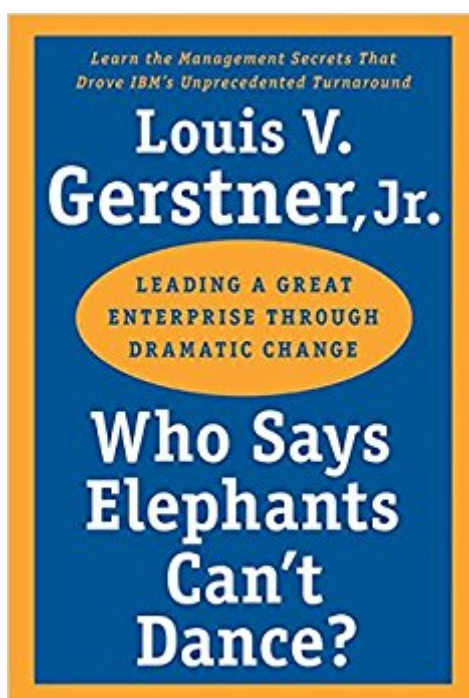


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Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?: Leading A Great Enterprise Through Dramatic Change



Synopsis

Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? sums up Lou Gerstner's historic business achievement, bringing Ibm back from the brink of insolvency to lead the computer business once again. Offering a unique case study drawn from decades of experience at some of America's top companies - McKinsey, American Express, Rjr Nabisco - Gerstner's insights into management and leadership are applicable to any business, at any level. Ranging from strategy to public relations, from finance to organization, Gerstner reveals the lessons of a lifetime running highly successful companies.

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Customer Reviews

Gerstner quarterbacked one of history's most dramatic corporate turnarounds. For those who follow business stories like football games, his tale of the rise, fall and rise of IBM might be the ultimate slow-motion replay. He became IBM's CEO in 1993, when the gargantuan company was near collapse. The book's opening section snappily reports Gerstner's decisions in his first 18 months on the job-the critical "sprint" that moved IBM away from the brink of destruction. The following sections describe the marathon fight to make IBM once again "a company that mattered." Gerstner writes most vividly about the company's culture. On his arrival, "there was a kind of hothouse quality to the place. It was like an isolated tropical ecosystem that had been cut off from the world for too long. As a result, it had spawned some fairly exotic life-forms that were to be found nowhere else." One of Gerstner's first tasks was to redirect the company's attention to the outside world, where a marketplace was quickly changing and customers felt largely ignored. He succeeded mightily. Upon

his retirement this year, IBM was undeniably "a company that mattered." Gerstner's writing occasionally is myopic. For example, he makes much of his own openness to input from all levels of the company, only to mock an earnest (and overlong) employee e-mail (reprinted in its entirety) that was critical of his performance. Also, he includes a bafflingly long and dull appendix of his collected communications to IBM employees. Still, the book is a well-rendered self-portrait of a CEO who made spectacular change on the strength of personal leadership. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"[Gerstner] entertains as he educates." (New York Times Book Review)
"A well-rendered self-portrait of a CEO who made spectacular change on the strength of personal leadership." (Publishers Weekly)
"Effective, to the point...Louis V. Gerstner Jr deserves his place in the management hall of fame." (Financial Times)
"The best business book I've ever read." (Imus in the Morning)
"[Lou Gerstner] has the substance of a genuine and ... interesting story." (Wall Street Journal)

This book illustrates in a direct and clear style, from inside, how the top global executives perform in the real life. It illustrates how to play the real game in global business, changing the game rules, and leading a reengineering process, which before this was an unclear concept. It shows how all the academic and theoretical tools learned in the top business schools are still valid and useful. I guess, this is one of the "must read" books for junior level executives who aspire to become global leaders, not only in technology but also in services.

great product, great service

Gerstner's book about saving one of America's most important companies (IBM) from bankruptcy is interesting and a real page turner. IBM knew what was wrong after the PC became popular and mainframe computers lost much of their appeal, and had file drawers full of strategy documents on how to fix the situation, many of which would have worked, but IBM's top executives just could not change the company. Gerstner's insight was that IBM was its own worst enemy. Discovering what the single critical factor was in changing IBM and how Gerstner fixed it is worth many times the price of this book. However, two of Gerstner's conclusions are also worth reading: (1) He succeeded because of education, hard work, and self-help; and IBM succeeded not because of veniality, but because it found out what its customers and potential customers wanted and needed and supplied

those needs and wants at a price the customers could afford. Life is fair and the world makes sense after all.

Great history of the turn around of IBM and the transformation of it's business model. Really interesting to look at the strategy that was applied in not breaking the company up but leveraging off it's strengths and re-aligning the organization. The EBO was an excellent strategy of innovation to focus on the products and services (like IBM Global Services) that moved the company to a technology, software and services company and turned around the revenue and profit streams to move the company from the brink of bankruptcy to again e a formable giant of the tech industry.

This is one of the best business books I have read, and there have been many. The story telling style of Lou Gerstner is very easy to follow, makes an interesting read, and really gives a good insight to what was happening at IBM and the way he turned the company around. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in business transformation in general, and particularly if you have interest in the technology industry.

The book starts with IBM in state in 1993 and how it IBM emerged like a phoenix. The book is candid on the facts. It provides principles how one can improve work life, with practical examples. . My favorite quote in this book "there is an opportunity to learn in everything we do". Whatever mentioned is true, I see this now in lot of IT companies. Many of them perish after couple of years. This book provides, with example how to over come. If we read the book, we can same thing HP is trying to do, but too late in the game. I am waiting for the continuation of the book from Sam Palmisano.

I read this a year or so after joining IBM and this was an interesting account of (relatively) recent history of transformation inside IBM.

You know what's cool? Since 1993 I had the profile BusinessWeek did on Mr. Gerstner, when I bought the book I re-read it and was spooked by how things turned out...Link here:<http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/stories/1993-10-03/rethinking-ibm> Now both are side by side In my shelf. A great book.

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