

THE WINDOW

“I don’t predict. I just look out the window and see what’s visible but not yet seen.”

— Peter F. Drucker

Letter from Amman

Greetings from the Middle East.

We’ve come to the capital of Jordan—more than 7,000 miles from home—to put on a symposium, “Essential Drucker for the 21st Century.” And nothing could be more essential today than having the tools to manage through turbulent times.

As Nidal Bitar, director of Optimiza Academy, our partner and host for the event, remarked: “We believe there is a huge need to sharpen the management and leadership skills in this region, especially right now. And we believe Peter Drucker’s philosophy is best practice. This program has added huge value for the people here.”

The symposium—a full day of lectures, case studies and discussion with a distinguished group of public, private and social sector executives from Jordan and across the region—focused on four pillars of Drucker’s thinking: values, innovation, people and effectiveness.

Tying it all together were Drucker’s blunt assessments of how failures of leadership often end in the kind of crisis in which we now find ourselves mired.

Writing about a financial meltdown in the 1990s—when Barings, Bankers Trust, and Yamaichi Securities were felled by their recklessness—Drucker refused to buy into the notion that senior managers had been blind to their employees’ egregious behavior.

He wouldn’t buy into it now, either. “In the first place,” Drucker wrote, “there is a limit to coincidences. Such widespread breakdowns cannot be blamed on ‘exceptions.’ They denote systems failure.”

Besides, Drucker added, “in every single one of these ‘scandals,’ top management seems to have carefully looked the other way as long as trading produced profits (or

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Drucker Society Spotlight

How Drucker Societies worldwide are advancing ethical leadership and effective management.

Baseball, it’s been said, isn’t something you talk about; it’s something you do.

The same goes for the teachings of Peter Drucker: More than mere discussion fodder, they are a means to organizational effectiveness and social responsibility.

Members of the Drucker Society Global Network will gather for their annual symposium from May 20-22 in Claremont to share best-practices and assess their results in “doing Drucker.”

“This year’s symposium marks a departure from the past,” notes Lawrence Greenspun, the Drucker Institute’s Drucker Society program manager. “Instead of declaring, ‘This is what Peter’s writings are all about,’ Societies will be saying, ‘This is what we’re doing with them. And this is how we’re going to do it better.’”

Two years ago, the Drucker Society Global Network was little more than a

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Applications are now available for the 2009 Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation. The first-place prize is \$100,000. [Click here](#) for more.

BusinessWeek

“The Drucker Difference” on BusinessWeek.com

Rick Wartzman, director of the Drucker Institute, writes a bimonthly column for *BusinessWeek* online that ties Peter Drucker’s work to today’s headlines. For a list of all of his columns, [click here](#).

Rick’s recent “Drucker Difference” columns:

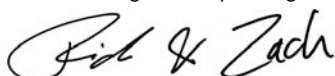
- [The Old College Buy](#) April 20, 2009
- [How Lack of Focus Hurt Detroit](#) April 3, 2009
- [AIG, and Drucker’s Glimpse at a Very Dark Place](#) March 20, 2009
- [Out with the Dead Wood for Newspapers](#) March 10, 2009

Letter from Amman, cont'd

pretended to produce them). Until the losses had become so big that they could no longer be hidden, the gambling trader was a hero and showered with money."

Although lessons from the financial crisis permeated much of the day, participants were eager to talk about opportunities, too. One attendee observed that the youth bubble in Jordan—more than 40% of its citizens are under the age of 18—is often described as a problem to be solved. Instead, she suggested, it should be viewed as a chance to harness a massive wave of new energy and ambition.

It was comments like these that underscored why we couldn't have asked for a more appropriate location to unveil our "Essential Drucker" program. Jordan lacks major oil reserves, and so knowledge work plays a particularly critical role in its economy and society. Sharing a little of Drucker's own knowledge with our Jordanian friends was a genuine privilege.



Rick Wartzman and Zach First
Executive Director and Managing Director

FROM THE ARCHIVES

March 31 marked Cesar Chavez Day in California, honoring the famed civil rights champion and founder of the United Farm Workers.

Chavez is known, of course, for his courage and his selflessness. But he possessed something else, as well: deft management skills. "Great management," Chavez said, "means getting common people to do uncommon things."

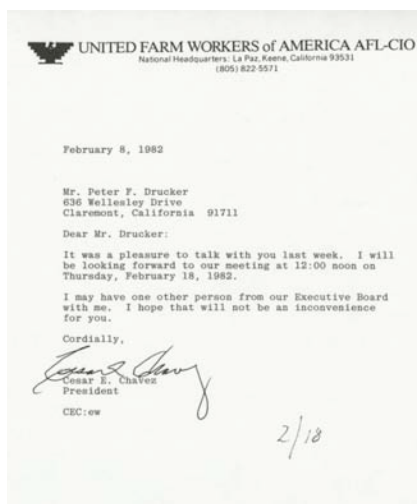
Like many accomplished leaders of his time, Chavez sought out Peter Drucker's counsel. In fact, he called Drucker "the greatest management thinker in the world."

In 1982, the two held a long meeting at Drucker's home in Claremont to discuss Chavez's questions about the UFW's organization and structure.

Richard Ybarra, who accompanied Chavez that day, recalls that one of Drucker's deepest insights came when Chavez asked about the very nature of labor unions: Were they parasites because they relied on the business of others for their existence?

"In many cases I might say yes," Drucker replied. "However, in yours, we must remember that for about the next 45 years immigration will become an important issue and you must be the spokesman for all those immigrants who will come here."

Drucker uttered those words in 1982, back when Communism was far more likely than immigration to dominate the headlines. It was another example of his keen farsightedness.



The Evidence

The need for ethical leadership and effective management—that is, the need for Peter Drucker's principles and practices—has never been greater.

In 2015, the UN projects, a full

15%

of the world's population will still be unable to read or write.

What are we doing to ensure the future of our knowledge society?

Source: United Nations

Society Spotlight, cont'd

vision. At the first global symposium in 2007, founding Drucker Societies and supporters gave shape to the concept of a worldwide network dedicated to promoting Drucker's ideas and ideals.

By 2008, Societies had formed on four continents with the mission of stimulating effective management and ethical leadership across all sectors of society.

Now, through a series of programs and workshops created with the Drucker Institute, Societies are actively sharing those principles with high school students, nonprofit organizations, business leaders, and government officials.

At this year's symposium, Society representatives will join with professional facilitators from WildWorks, a Dallas-based firm, to develop strategies for continued action and community impact.

"It's not just the ideas anymore," Greenspun says. "It's also the implementation that matters."