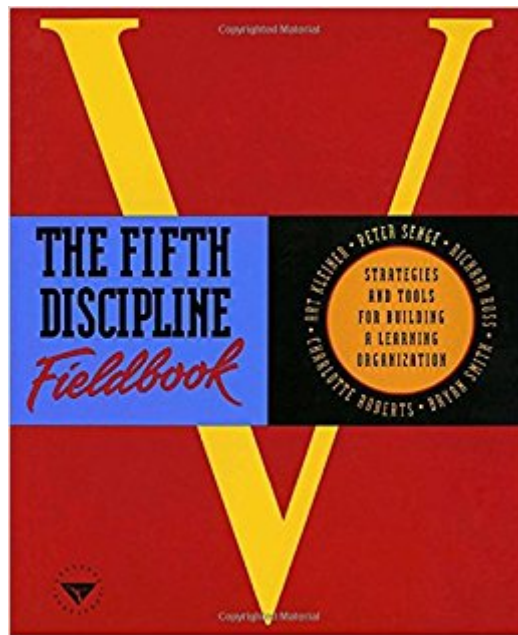




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# The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies And Tools For Building A Learning Organization



## Synopsis

Senge's best-selling *The Fifth Discipline* led *Business Week* to dub him the "new guru" of the corporate world; here he offers executives a step-by-step guide to building "learning organizations" of their own.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This should be a valuable guide and reference to those leading, or simply taking part in, organizational transformation. There's a lot to learn and use in the Fieldbook. -- Philip Carroll, President and CEO, Shell Oil Company A landmark book. \* *Christian Century* \* Peter Senge's advocacy of the learning organization helped begin a revolution in the workplace. And, the relevance of Senge's work is growing rather than diminishing over time. As more businesses go global, the need to overcome psychological barriers to necessary organizational change increases. \* *Management Today* \* Peter Senge's concepts take work. They take time. They take personal commitment. But, I believe, they hold the potential for sustained success. -- Robert E. Allen, Chairman of the Board, AT&T Senge's message of growth and prosperity holds strong appeal for today's business leaders. \* *Fortune* \* If you believe, as I do, that people are the only long-term competitive advantage and lifelong learning is the way to fully develop that advantage, you must read this book. It's about the real work, the work of implementation! -- Richard F. Teerlink, President and CEO, Harley-Davidson, Inc.

Senge's best-selling *The Fifth Discipline* led *Business Week* to dub him the "new guru" of the corporate world; here he offers executives a step-by-step guide to building "learning organizations" of their own.

Peter M. Senge focuses to dismantle people's mindset of the out-there vs. in-here mentality, as a precursor of understanding the inter-connected nature of our world. Regardless of location and time, every chain of events affect one another systematically, specially the globalization of business and technology. This book is an absolute must for those seeking to understand the nature of human and technological inter-dependencies within our ecosystem. Senge emphasizes on 5 main disciplines that evolve a company in to a "Learning organization". They are virtually practiced by the best fortune 500 companies (Verizon, Coca-Cola, Google, etc.). The disciplines improve from Dr. W. Edwards Deming's work of quality management, which rose japan from ashes to being the 2nd largest economy in the 1960's. This book is a useful guide for those taking university statistics. It's filled with history, personal experiences, and must-knows. It's dense, however simplified impressively well. For example, he describes the complex system behind a descent beer company through the perspective of the Brewer, wholesaler, and retailer. Along with week by week events, Data, charts, and descriptions. Somehow, he even connects the truck driver into all this. There are so many examples, he taps into every body's perspective. There is one minor drawback: he cites too many examples and naturally does not have space to explain all of them. This book might require a bit of personal research if read critically. For example, he makes controversial claims like the modern education system being flawed, and the influence of terrorism, but hesitates to dissect the issues. He throws them in as fun facts, and trusts the leader to take it from there. His revised edition contains almost 100 new pages: -step-by step teachings on how to be not just a leader, but also a designer, teacher, and steward-how to reconnect within society as a whole

This book explains a lot not only in a business environment, but also government, family, and anywhere else where several humans must get along and get the job done. Well written and full of examples. Might even explain why the latest election turned out the way it did (and the Russians have nothing to do with it!)

Although it is somewhat evident that this book is a bit older and lacking some modern day

examples, *The Fifth Discipline* by Peter Senge captures concepts of how to create a learning organization. Senge masterfully explains how people are stuck in a traditional way of thought and how it affects our decision making in business practices. The book also features a simulation experiment done with MIT students called, *The Beer Game*. The game results from show a repeated pattern of the points Senge is making about how we think similarly in terms of individuality and how it creates cycles in which we fail. From there, he explains his insights on how we can break these cycles from a traditional linear way of thinking to systems thinking which eventually ties in to create a better learning organization. As an engineering major, I felt this book did a very good job in tying a lot of concepts together that is practical in the major. The book also does a good job of highlighting where systems thinking is also practical in improving broader things like family, teams and organizations along with businesses. This book is definitely worth the read for anybody as it applies to everyday interactions. For anybody with management and business control positions, this book will definitely enlighten you on the benefits of operating under a learning organization especially if working in a supply chain industry.

*The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* written by Peter Senge in 1990 has some great viewpoints for upper and middle managers to learn from. The book may seem to apply its learning philosophy for large size companies but is valid for a company of any size. Senge's views of the learning organization are broken down into five disciplines; they are: personal mastery, mental models, team learning, building shared vision, and systems thinking. In chapter 2, Senge explains the seven deficiencies of a learning organization which he calls the "seven learning disabilities". I don't know why but the "parable of the boiling frog" stands out in my mind the most; that of letting threats gradually sneak up on or your system. Or being complacency or too comfortable where you can't react in time because it's too late. Senge does a good job of giving the reader a visual with his illustrations and examples. On page 89 he mentions of how the temperature controls adjustments can overshoot the target and exceed the desired limits. A simple time delay between adjustments can help stabilize the process from overshooting the opposite limits. I've seen this on systems that monitor the relative humidity when storms blow in and change the dew point. Also, when my spouse comes home from work and adjusts the thermostat as low as it can go thinking the A/C unit will cool down faster. By the time I get home the house is freezing. Senge's point is that sometimes delays to a process are sometimes necessary while other delays, like in the

“beer game” orders, may be a burden and create an issue. The beer game was in chapter 3 is a great example of how material flows from the brewery, through the distributor, and then to the retailer for sale to the consumers. The process is a little redundant and maybe a little long winded but is important for the readers or managers to understand how easily things can go wrong. My initial thought was the book was written in 1990 and now that we have the internet with B2B software, it could resolve the communication breakdown between the three parties and have material flow closer to JIT process. This would help the reaction time as sales increase or decrease. Senge references the beer game throughout his book and mentions the game was first developed in the 1960s as a demonstration at MIT’s Sloan School of Management. The “7 Disabilities” of an organization relate to the “11 Laws of an Organization” in chapter 4. The seven disabilities can be conquered by the disciplines of the eleven laws of an organization. What I thought reading through the beer game was somewhat difficult but was nothing compared to the agonizing chapters of 6 and 7. Chapter 8 was refreshing that deals with “Personal Mastery”. I guess the part I enjoyed was the “Personal Vision” where I can evaluate my own visions and not just my goals. It clarifies the vision and what it takes to achieve being a “personal mastery”. It mentions to fill in the gap between my vision and reality; the “gap” is the energy of making my vision a reality. One thing Senge mentions is that “organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs”. Leadership, vision, and disciplines all play a part in creating a learning organization. These are just some of my notes that I made for myself and almost gave the book only three stars for the long drawn out sections. Other than that it is a good book and one to highlight and tag notes inside and keep on your shelf. That is just my take on it - hope my notes help.

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