

Foreword to *The 2R Manager*

By Peter E. Friedes

By David H. Maister

Peter Friedes knows and understands things about managing that most of us struggle a lifetime to learn. At last, with this book he is sharing his insights with a general audience.

I first encountered Friedes and Hewitt Associates in 1980 when, as an assistant professor at Harvard Business School, I wrote my case study on a professional service firm.

What I saw was an organization with a strong people orientation that was applied equally from shareholders to support staff. I saw a place that had the courage to choose people for different roles according to their skills, not their rank. There were examples of individuals who were managing operating groups but were not yet shareholders (or partners), yet had within the group individuals who were shareholders that excelled at professional tasks but were not necessarily well suited as managers. Unusual for its time (and perhaps even today), Hewitt did not make use of profit centers by offices or services but successfully created a culture of cross-boundary collaboration termed “The One-Firm Firm.”

Yet working at Hewitt Associates was no cakewalk. As I was informed by various associates (junior and senior)

during my interviews, hard work was expected. The central challenge of the case study I wrote was to ask the reader whether Hewitt Associates could maintain its values and culture while continuing to raise its productivity and financial performance. The case study proved to be a litmus test of beliefs. The “requirers” in the classroom could not believe that success could be built on a foundation of concern for employees as human beings. The “relaters” loved what they saw but were also skeptical, believing that commerciality would destroy the culture. They were both wrong. Hewitt’s ever-increasing success showed that the two sets of skills and approaches not only could be melded but must be melded.

In 20 years of consulting to and writing about professional service firms, I learned that the Hewitt approach had general applicability. Its focus on managing people well, eliminating internal boundaries to better serve the clients, and adherence to the highest professional standards were the hallmarks of great firms in every profession. Attention to managing the culture and not (just) the financials was an indicator of success that I learned at Hewitt but have observed repeatedly since.

I never did find out who created Hewitt's culture but I know who sustained it, nurtured it and grew it: Peter Friedes. He was my first teacher (and hero) in how to run a professional firm, and he may still be the best. Everything I learned about professional firms was based on the insights and frameworks that he generously shared with a young academic.

Now it's your turn. Read on. Think. Absorb. And act. We are all lucky to have access to the wisdom contained in this book.



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Prior to launching his (solo but global) consulting practice in 1985, he served as a professor at the Harvard Business School.

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