

W. Edwards Deming

Out of the Crisis
Foreword to the French Edition

It is a pleasure to write this Foreword to the translation and improvement of my book, OUT OF THE CRISIS, accomplished by my friend Monsieur Jean-Marie Gogue. I am sure that French-speaking people will be deeply grateful to Monsieur Gogue for his efforts to put forth this book. He has been my friend and colleague for ten years.

The fundamental aim of Deming's teachings is to develop a system of management that will ensure pride of workmanship to everybody. In technical terms, the teaching of this aim requires some knowledge of psychology, and some knowledge of variation, with the aim to reduce variation of processes, and to understand something of the interaction of forces, and of operational definitions.

The same aim and theory leads to better understanding of the evils of the so-called merit system or annual appraisal of people. Actually, such ratings are not ratings of people, but are mostly ratings of the system that they work in, and of the interaction of the system with the people that work in it. The fact is that the system that people work in and the interaction with people may account for 90 or 95 % of performance.

Understanding of common causes of variation, and understanding of special causes discloses the fallacy of studies of examples of success. Examples of successful companies repeat the mistake of attributing their success to special causes, outside the system, when actually, success on the one tail of the distribution and failure in the other tail, both come from the same common cause-system. Understanding of variation, common causes, special causes, interaction of forces, and operational definitions should be ingredients of a liberal education.

People that follow the teachings of the underlying theory find that their own lives have changed; likewise their relationships with members of the family and with companions and with associates in business.

I close with indebtedness to my friend Monsieur Jean-Marie Gogue.

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