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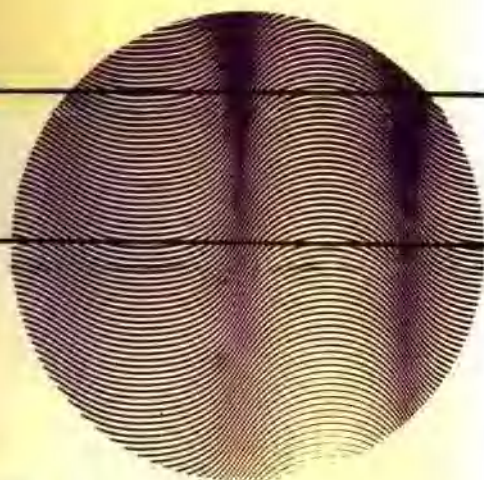
彼得原理

——事半功倍論

LAURENCE J. PETER

許 清 梯 譯

商業管理叢書 1



「有好教養和好風範的人，在最
高度的知識現象上具有最精確的
科學知覺；而具多重性格的人也
是世上最大的富源。」

——赫胥黎

商業管理叢書 1

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商業管理叢書 1

著者：LAURENCE J. PETER
譯著：許清梯
發行人：彭誠晃
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商業管理叢書

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商場怪傑

成功企業家談經營

超越危機之經營法

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開 場 白

或 是

『彼得原理』外一章

「人非聖賢，孰能無過？但是，白紙還沒寫上黑字
前使用橡皮擦，則未免矯枉過正。」

——唐京茲

自從人類發明輪子以來，便成為其創造之奇蹟的狼狽犧牲者。他開墾土地，生產出豐碩的糧食；他用帆挾肘不可見的風，使之截取翻滾急湍的水力；他把熊熊燃燒的熱力轉變成蒸氣，以取得動力；他用電力照亮他的世界，更進而邁向複雜的電動傳播系統、核子分裂、電腦和雷射光等領域；他遨遊太空，且在月球上面漫步。

「在我有生之年，已有長足的進步，但我深恐它正
朝錯誤的方向走。」

——納 許

*這句引言，可望幫助你把新觀念跟我們所熟稔的思想聯結在一起。

「一位作家必須具備兩種主要的力量，一為熟悉新事物，一為使我們所熟悉的事物變得新穎。」

——沙克瑞

Introduction

OR

Beyond the Peter Principle

To err is human, but when the eraser wears out ahead of the pencil, you're overdoing it.

—J. JENKINS

EVER since man invented the wheel he has been the confused victim of the miracles he has wrought. He cultivated the land and produced food in abundance. He harnessed the invisible wind with sails and captured the power of tumbling rapids. He converted the heat of combustion into steam to produce power. He illuminated his world with electricity and advanced into the complexities of electronic communication, nuclear fission, computers, and laser beams. He traveled into space and walked on the moon.

There has been a lot of progress during my lifetime, but I'm afraid it's heading in the wrong direction.*

—O. NASH

* The quotations may help you to relate new ideas to more familiar thoughts.

The two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar and familiar things new.

—W. THACKERAY



由於這些偉大的創造，人類已造成了可怕的畸型現象。在大力推展官僚政治下，即令要完成挺簡單的工作，也需要花費大量的時間和精力。他建立了繁複的郵政制度，今天，人們寄一封信所需的時間，居然比美國西部時期用驢馬車投遞費時更久。他建造了巨型的噴射客機，得以迅速地飛越重洋，却要在降落前，在機場上空盤旋好幾小時，及至著陸，發現行李已運到它自己的地點。他排隊等候計程車，而計程車也排隊恭候乘客。他想試著打電話回家，他聽到的不是自動電話撥號的聲音，而是一聲不響，或是負荷過重的電話錄音器告訴他在通話中。他搭乘通勤火車，却因沿途故障頻頻，以致耽誤時間。

在家裏，新的用具要不了幾天就操縱不靈，或是根本支離破碎。售後服務或修理，總是拖延得很久；況且，這些器具送回買主時，過



*Man has been the confused victim of the miracles
he has wrought.*

Along with all this glorious achievement man has produced some horrendous incompetence. He developed bureaucracy to the point where achievement of the simplest task requires great amounts of time and effort. He built an elaborate postal system, but today it may take longer to deliver a letter than it did in the days of the pony express. He built jet airliners in which he swiftly spans the ocean only to spend hours circling the airport before landing and discovering that his baggage has flown to a destination of its own. He has waited in line for a taxi while taxis have waited in line for customers. He has tried to phone home, but instead of a dial tone has heard only silence or a recorded message about overloaded circuits. He has boarded commuter trains to be delayed by frequent breakdowns.

At home new appliances fail to operate or fall apart within a few days. Service and repair are long delayed and

不多久又壞掉了。

「所謂進步，只是把麻煩換成另一種麻煩。」

——艾力士

政府寄給老百姓一份所得稅申報表，它複雜得簡直叫人看不懂它的規格。它寫著：『假如 15 款 a 項這一行在五千元以下，且只包括免稅額數目內的薪資，與不超過二百元的股息，利息以及超過免稅額的寬減薪資，那麼，您就不能在 15 款 b 項中要求作任何調整，並省略 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 與 26 行各項（但請勿省略 19 行），如此您即可在記錄欄上算出應該繳納國稅局的稅額。』

當人們在偉大的成就與愚蠢的錯誤兩相對照下，他就會察覺，他自個兒或別人所造成極不妥當的犧牲品。在學校裏，由於老師教得不好，使得他痛苦不堪；他把汽車送給機匠修理，結果你猜怎麼來著，這部汽車送回來時，不但舊毛病沒修好，還平白增添許多新毛病。他選舉出來的政府，曾許下要建立一個理想社會的承諾，却始終沒能平衡他的收支預算。

「墜落更加墜落，咆吼復咆哮，事情愈弄愈紊亂。」

——美爾敦

我發現人這種有能力做大事，却無能力做小事的矛盾情形之後，與之所至，便創造了『彼得原理』。

「在一個機構裏，每一個職工都時尚爬上其能力所不逮的階層。」

當我研究『彼得原理』時，我發覺自己已建立起一套新的科學——機構學，專司鑽研階層體系的學問。

Introduction

the appliance when returned to the purchaser is soon inoperable again.

What we call progress is the exchange of one nuisance for another nuisance.

—H. ELLIS

His government has sent him an income-tax form that is so complicated he cannot comprehend the instructions. He reads: "If line 15a is under \$5,000 and consisted only of wages subject to withholding and not more than \$200 of dividends, interest and non-withheld wages, and you are not claiming any adjustments on line 15b, you can have IRS figure your tax by omitting lines 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 (but complete line 19)."

As man thinks about his monumental blunders in contrast to his spectacular achievements, he realizes he may become a victim of his own or others' incompetence. In school he languished under a teacher who could not teach. He submitted his automobile to a mechanic who returned it with the original defects and some new ones added. He elected a government that promised a great society but could not even produce a balanced budget.

With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded.

—J. MILTON

My investigations of this competence-incompetence phenomenon led to my formulation of the Peter Principle:

IN A HIERARCHY EVERY EMPLOYEE TENDS TO
RISE TO HIS LEVEL OF INCOMPETENCE

While doing research on the Peter Principle, I discovered that I had founded a new science, hierarchiology, the study of hierarchies.

Man orders his affairs in hierarchies. His schools are ordered in grades from kindergarten through graduate

人們在機構裏處理業務。學校即從幼稚園到研究所，循序漸進。各門企業由各階級的職工來推展。政府組織是由納稅人爲基礎構成金字塔，那些政府的領導人物，乃成爲金字塔的頂端了。同樣，那些軍隊、兄弟會、社會福祉、競技，以至於黑手黨社會，無非全都隸屬於機構的結構。

因爲我們都在機構中服務，而且，因爲我們的生活大都也受這種制度的掣肘。所以，爲了我們本身的幸福與生存起見，必須對這種機構要有深切的了解。

每一種機構都包括有各種不同的職位，等級或階級的層次安排，同時，每一個人必然歸屬於其中某一級。倘使他幹練的話，那麼，必定會對人類做積極的貢獻。擢拔一個人，或許會把他從勝任愉快的階層，提升到他能力所不逮的階層上去。

世界上的每一種行業，必然有某些人在某些職位無法勝任。如果時間夠長，升遷夠多的話，這種人最後終歸會得到那項差事。自是而後，他便停留在那個職位上，呆滯不前，習慣性地對工作敷衍塞責，困擾他的同事，並破壞了整個組織的效能。

「彼得原理」所指並不是攸關過錯、失言、疏忽，或是那些能使我們侷促不安的偶然小錯誤。每一個都會犯錯。歷史上最幹練的人們，也難免有犯錯的時候。相反地，那些笨頭笨腦的人，有時候瞎闖瞎撞，居然也會做出聰明絕頂的事來。

「我不責備小過錯，因爲，這種天賦的弱點都可以饒恕。」

——羅斯柯門伯爵

、唯有那些還沒達到巔峯狀態的人，才能不斷蒸蒸日上，推陳出新，每一個人都要受到『彼得原理』影響。所有的人都無聲無息地往上爬。一些人獲得他不能勝任的職位，於是，像枯枝敗葉般堆積，產生了無能的衙門政治，降低品質，平庸出人頭地，團隊一敗塗地，政府

The Peter Prescription

school. His businesses are operated with employees arranged in order of rank. His government is organized with the taxpayers forming the base of the pyramid and the national leader as the apex. Similarly, the military, fraternal orders, social welfare, sports, and the Mafia are all structured as hierarchies.

Because we work in hierarchies and because so much of our lives is controlled by hierarchies it is essential to our well-being and survival that we understand them.

Each hierarchy consists of an arrangement of ranks, grades, or classes to which the individual may be assigned. If he is competent he may contribute to the positive achievement of mankind. Promotion up the ladder may remove him from this level of competence and place him at his level of incompetence.

For every job that exists in the world there is someone, somewhere, who cannot do it. Given sufficient time and enough promotions, he will arrive eventually at that job and there he will remain, habitually bungling the job, frustrating his coworkers, and eroding the efficiency of the organization.

The Peter Principle is not concerned with the oversight, slip of the tongue, *faux pas*, or the occasional error that can be an embarrassment to any of us. Anyone can make a mistake. The most competent men throughout history have had their lapses. Conversely, the habitually incompetent can, by random action, be right once in a while.

I will not quarrel with a slight mistake,
Such as our nature's frailty may excuse.

—EARL OF ROSCOMMON

Although all consistent achievement is the product of those who have not yet reached Final Placement, everyone is subject to the influences of the Peter Principle. All are latent promotees. As numbers of individuals arrive at

腐敗，文明崩潰，人類未來的前途因而黯然無光。

「在這劇烈急遽變化的時代中，這委實是自相矛盾的話，在我們中間，如同呈現在我們眼前所毀滅了的一般，對於前程如何却茫然無知。」

——胡 華

我出版「彼得原理」以後，接到數以千計『彼得原理』的受害者來信，要求我提供意見解決他們個人上的問題。每當我講演完畢，總有人要求我幫他們處理一些特殊的問題。所有此等請求，大致可以分為下列兩類：(1)我要怎樣才能夠避免最高階層併發症？；(2)作為一個主管，我要如何才能把我的下屬，妥於安排在各自適當的職位上？因此，本『事半功倍論』就是專為解決這些問題而撰寫的。

「書籍的真正目的，乃在引導人們獨立思考。」

——莫 里

許多作者在還沒有了解問題以前，往往便先提供答案。『事半功倍論』並無意如此。我明白『彼得原理』的作用，我所提供的解決方法，是經多年仔細研究而得的。我並不鼓勵投機取巧的招式，然而，這種種萬靈丹，可望引導人們得到偉大的個人成就，和真正成就的喜悅。

「每一個人的問題，總有一套輕易的解決辦法——即靈巧，表面似是而却根本錯誤。」

——繆 肯

Introduction

their levels of incompetence, deadwood accumulates, inefficient bureaucracies grow, quality deteriorates, mediocrity triumphs, companies fail, governments fall, civilization crumbles, and the promise of man's future is obscured.

It is a paradox that in our time of drastic rapid change, when the future is in our midst devouring the present before our eyes, we have never been less certain about what is ahead of us.

—E. HOFFER

Following the publication of *The Peter Principle*, I received thousands of letters from victims of the Peter Principle requesting solutions to personal problems. At the conclusion of my lectures I was always asked for remedies for specific problems. All of the requests fell into two general categories: (1) What can I do to avoid the Final Placement Syndrome? (2) As a manager, how can I keep my employees at their appropriate competence level? This book, *The Peter Prescription*, was written in response to those questions.

The real purpose of books is to trap the mind into doing its own thinking.

—C. MORLEY

Many authors offer answers before they understand the questions. This is not the case with the Peter Prescription. I understand the operation of the Peter Principle, and the remedies offered are the product of years of research. I do not always recommend the easiest course of action, but the prescriptions will lead to great personal fulfillment and the joy of real accomplishment.

There is always an easy solution to every human problem—neat, plausible, and wrong.

—H. L. MENCKEN

「事半功倍論」一書，則旨在使人在生活各方面都臻幸福美滿之境。如要達到這個目的，務要先身體力行，或是十足發揮你的最佳潛力，以避免不能勝任的陷阱。簡而言之，乃是：

彼得處方：以獲得更美好的生活為目標

要真正進步，就必須不斷往前邁進——不是往上攀到高不可及的階層。『事半功倍論』即在告訴你，真正的成功是往前邁進，創造更理想的生活，而不是一味往上爬到不能勝任的生活圈子裏。這本『事半功倍論』在告訴你，應該改善生命的本質，而不在盲目地爬雲梯。

「我樂意去任何能夠往前進的地方去。」

—— 李文史頓

