

哈佛商学经典·英文原版影印

# THE 新规则 NEW RULES



*EIGHT BUSINESS  
BREAKTHROUGHS TO CAREER SUCCESS IN THE 21ST  
CENTURY*

*How to Succeed in Today's Post-Corporate World*

*JOHN P. KOTTER*

约翰·科特 著



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JOHN P. KOTTER

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THE NEW

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POST-CORPORATE WORLD

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# THE NEW RULES

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# INTRODUCTION

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SUCCESS AT WORK FOR MOST PEOPLE MEANS A JOB THAT IS ECONOMICALLY and psychologically satisfying, that makes a contribution to society, and that supports a healthy personal or family life. This book is about how paths to success at work have been changing over the past two decades, and why. The material is based largely on the experiences of 115 Harvard MBAs from the Class of '74. For two decades I have been following these people's careers, their choices, actions, successes, and failures. Information on this group is supplemented by six other projects, all conducted between 1975 and 1993, involving another eighty-five executives, most of whom do not have MBA degrees.<sup>1</sup> In total, the twenty-year journey has been fascinating, with major implications in many directions.

The story that has emerged relates to an important set of changes occurring in the business world, to individuals who are sometimes controversial, to career paths that will surprise many people, and to a powerful set of economic forces lurking in the background. Although no one would have predicted this twenty years ago, the key factors that have been affecting the Class of '74 are driven largely by the globalization of markets and competition. This shift in the economy is altering the nature of managerial work, career paths, the structure and functioning of organizations,

wage levels, and much more. At the heart of the story reported here is how 115 individuals have experienced this change and how many of them are taking advantage of it.

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The roots of this work go back to 1968. At that time I was a graduate student employed by Professor Edgar Schein at MIT's Sloan School of Management. Schein had been following the careers of a small group of his alumni,<sup>2</sup> and while helping him, I learned about the power of tracking studies—where people are watched over many years. My interest in this kind of work was reinforced in 1972 when I discovered the Grant study—a huge effort which followed Harvard college graduates over multiple decades.<sup>3</sup>

The original concept was very simple. Select a group of students, gather as much background information on them as possible, and then watch the way their careers and lives evolve over a decade or more. I realized that such a project would require considerable time and energy, but I vowed to keep it a manageable undertaking that would be much less ambitious than the Grant study. Although I had some ideas regarding what I might find, they certainly were not very precise. My hope was simply that over time I would learn something interesting about these people, their jobs, and their careers.

In retrospect, this idea sounds both naïve and arrogant. Decade-long studies are almost never funded, and if they are, the money does not go to unknown assistant professors. When financial backers said no, the project survived only because Dean Larry Fouraker at Harvard Business School said he would find the money somewhere. "Do it," said Fouraker. And I did.

With the cooperation of 115 Class of '74 MBAs, I collected yearly questionnaires starting in January 1975, conducted some interviews, and for half the group, gathered extensive psychological test data. On basic dimensions like age, gender, and socioeconomic status of parents, the 115 were similar to the overall class,

so I am confident they are not an unusual group. Most were very responsive over the years; 90% sent back each questionnaire.<sup>4</sup>

A strategy of relying mostly on questionnaires has turned out to be both good and bad. This approach has not allowed me to get to know many of the 115 in any deep personal sense, but it has kept the project manageable in terms of time and money and has allowed me to follow over 100 people instead of just a dozen or two.

I have often wondered why these 115 individuals stuck with the study all these years. No doubt part of their loyalty was due to a very natural inclination to want to help a potentially good cause. But I also think that many of them found pausing once a year and thinking about what they were doing and how they felt about life to be a valuable experience. I certainly found it fascinating to watch and listen to this group of my contemporaries. Thinking about their experiences has helped me put my own life into a broader perspective and helped me think about the choices I have faced.

In the original plan, I was going to begin a book after ten years. When I tried to write about these people in 1983, I found that their stories were both incomplete and difficult to understand. Eventually, I stopped writing but continued collecting information. Over the next few years, I realized that other studies I had been conducting could provide useful insight into the Class of '74. Finally, around 1990, everything began to crystallize. By 1992, the total amount of information gathered from the 115 MBAs filled eight filing cabinet drawers. I sorted through all this in stages starting as early as 1979. The synthesis reported here was done in 1990, 1991, and 1992. This manuscript was written in 1992 and 1993.

At least five different books could have resulted from this single project. One is historical ("The Class of '74"). One is aloof and very analytical ("The New Economic Environment"). One is psychological and developmental ("Becoming an Executive"). There is also a social commentary ("Success?"), and one that focuses on careers and success at work. To a limited degree, this manuscript incorporates all five, but it clearly emphasizes the last (careers/success).

Readers may wonder how anyone can generalize from a study

of a relatively small group of Harvard MBAs to a much broader population. I have thought a great deal about this question and am personally convinced that many of the lessons one learns from the Class of '74 are relevant to a large group of people. These lessons are consistent with what I have found in six other studies conducted over the same time period but which involved a much more diverse group of individuals. Ultimately, readers will have to judge for themselves whether I am right or not in this regard.

The issue here is similar to watching sports stars. Even though generalizing from unusually talented individuals to other people is difficult to do well, nearly everyone can learn something valuable about basketball and football by watching very successful players. I think the same can be said about looking at a group of people who have been very successful in business.

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On the pages that follow, I will be describing the experiences of 115 people as well as the conclusions I have drawn from watching them and others over the past twenty years. The most basic of these conclusions are summarized briefly in the exhibit on the next page. That exhibit also lists where in the book each item will be further discussed. For now, let me just stress four points:

1. What is required to succeed in business and in management has been shifting over the past decade or two in some very important ways. Career paths and approaches to work that were winners throughout much of this century are no longer paying off well. Nevertheless, significant numbers of people are still trying to use the old strategies, with frequent encouragement from most major institutions: big business, big labor, government, and education.

2. A shift in what is required to succeed is being driven by many factors, none of which is more important than the globalization of markets and competition. Globalization is increasing the rate of

## THE NEW RULES

### New Realities

Do not rely on convention; career paths that were winners for most of this century are often no longer providing much success (Chapter 2).

Keep your eyes on globalization and its consequences; everything is changing, offering both gigantic new opportunities and equally large hazards (Chapter 3).

### New Responses

Move toward the small and entrepreneurial and away from the big and bureaucratic; speed and flexibility are winning in an increasingly competitive world (Chapter 4).

Help big business from the outside as well as on the inside; huge opportunities exist for consultants and other service providers (Chapter 5).

Do not just manage; now you must also lead to help make organizations winners (Chapter 6).

Wheel and deal if you can; huge opportunities exist in financial and other deal maker careers (Chapter 7).

### Underpinnings

Increase your competitive drive; high standards and a desire to win are essential today and in the future (Chapter 8).

Never stop trying to grow; lifelong learning is increasingly necessary for success (Chapter 9).

change and producing both more opportunities and more hazards. Put succinctly, people who are prospering nowadays are finding ways to capitalize on those opportunities. Those who are failing are being strangled by the hazards.

3. Most of those who are doing well today in business and management are capitalizing on globalization by pursuing career paths that are less linear, more dynamic, and more unstable than mid-20th century norms. They are also increasingly associated with small business and entrepreneurship, not the big and bureaucratic "corporate" world, with consulting and other services that help big business from the outside, with leadership, not just management, and with financial deal making.

4. Successful use of these new strategies requires high standards, a drive to compete, self-confidence in competitive situations, and a willingness to keep growing and learning new things. In the current economic environment, people who fear competition, want security, and demand stability are often sinking like rocks in water.

These conclusions and others have significant implications for how people should manage their careers today, for how both big and small corporations should be run, and for education at all levels. Before finishing, I will explore these issues with an eye toward our coming transition into the 21st century and with a particular interest in how we can help more people to succeed despite a difficult economic environment.

PART I

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**NEW REALITIES**

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# 1

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## IS THE AMERICAN DREAM DEAD?

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THEY GREW UP IN AN ERA OF GREAT EXPANSION IN THE UNITED States, a time that gave renewed life to the concept of the American dream. Kevin Johnson was one of them.<sup>1</sup> Born near Chicago on March 27, 1946, he was raised in an environment where upward mobility was the order of the day. In 1954, Kevin's father was promoted from salesman to sales manager. The family moved out of their older two bedroom home located just ten minutes from Comiskey Park and into a four bedroom split-level in Winnetka with a two car garage, a barbecue patio, and a real backyard. The economy was a mighty engine back then. Gross national product in the United States increased in real (1992) dollars from 213.4 billion in 1946 to over a trillion in 1968, the year that Kevin and a group of early baby boomer peers graduated from Stanford. During this period, American businesses set the standard for the world and were exceptionally successful. No less than 75 of the world's 100 largest revenue-producing industrial firms in 1955 were U.S. based.<sup>2</sup>

America's global domination was already slipping when Kevin completed college and went to work for Motorola, although few of