



The Agenda: What Every Business Must Do To Dominate the Decade

By Michael Hammer
Three Rivers Press

Hammer is generally credited with developing the core concepts of reengineering. His published works include *The Reengineering Revolution*, *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution* with James Champy, *Beyond Reengineering: How the Process-Centered Organization is Changing Our Work and Our Lives*, and most recently *The Agenda: What Every Business Must Do to Dominate the Decade*.

In his newest book, Hammer identifies and illuminates “a set of nine emerging business concepts that underlie how the best companies around are mastering today’s turbulent environment.” He devotes a separate chapter to each of the nine “Agenda Items.” They are:

1. Make yourself easy to do business with you (ETDBW)
2. Add more value for your customers (deliver MVA)
3. Create a process enterprise (make high performance possible)
4. Tame the beast of chaos with the power of process (systematize creativity)
5. Base managing on measuring (make managing part of management, not accounting)
6. Loosen up your organizational structure (profit from the power of ambiguity)
7. Sell through, not to, your distribution channels (turn distribution chains into distribution communities)
8. Push past your boundaries in pursuit of efficiency (collaborate whenever and wherever you can)
9. Lose your identity in an extended enterprise (integrate virtually, not vertically)

At the end of each chapter, Hammer provides a brief but precise summary of recommended guidelines and action steps based on key points. Hammer proposes a full “agenda” of items and relevant issues which, obviously, decision-makers in each organization must modify to accommodate their own organization’s specific needs, interests, issues, problems, resources, and opportunities. How to plan and then implement a program once an agenda has been formulated? Hammer responds to this question in Chapter 11. He suggests several strategies for integrating efforts with sharp focus. He explains why it is so important to devote much more attention to “people issues.” He offers what he calls a “20/60/20” formula for managing different constituencies differently. He explains why committed executive leadership must constantly be evident, indeed actively engaged. He also shares some ideas about effective communication. And finally, he emphasizes the importance of achieving verifiable improvement throughout each phase of the implementation process. This is an important and especially timely book as organizations throughout the world (regardless of their size or nature) struggle to formulate an “agenda” which is appropriate to their current and imminent circumstances while being able to accommodate whatever may (and may not) happen later. Any such agenda is (literally) a work in progress. In this book, Hammer succeeds brilliantly in achieving his primary objective: To redefine the terms of engagement for what is certain to be a perilous future. ❏