

Helping Businesses Thrive

Working as an insurance company corporate officer in the early 1990s, **James Kerr '84** had few kind words for the business consultants who crossed his path. “Many were with internationally recognized firms,” he says. “And I was appalled by the lack of service they delivered.”

His strong convictions about customer service inspired Kerr to turn author (three books so far) and became a springboard for starting his own company. Based in Connecticut, the 15-year-old Kerr Consulting Group has attracted notables such as The Home Depot, AXA Financial, and the U.S. Department of Defense. These and other clients receive direct, focused attention from Kerr himself, not an assistant.

Kerr also continues to write. His newest book came out in April 2006, in concert with a suite of consulting services based on principles outlined in the book. ***The Best Practices Enterprise: A Guide to Achieving Sustainable World-Class Performance*** presents strategies to help companies thrive in the new millennium.

“This book demystifies what I see as the seven most important management programs that an organization can put into place to ensure ongoing success,” Kerr explains.



From guidance on program centric strategic planning, to resilient IT-architecture design, to cross-cultural work force inclusion, Kerr offers a road map for a business climate marked by global interconnectedness, constant change, and intense competition.

Key concepts include using “mass customization” to win — and keep — customer loyalty. “With the Internet, customers have many more choices than ever before,” Kerr says, noting the challenge of holding onto customers in such an environment. “Businesses need to simplify — to go back to basics and put themselves in the customers’ shoes. What level of service would you want as a customer? What kinds of products would you buy? What kind of organization would you want to do business with? My best practices program can be used to help along all three of these dimensions.

“Corporate leaders need to take into account the forces that are going to drive businesses in the 21st century,” Kerr continues. “Organizations must be nimble, service-minded, diverse, and virtually independent of physical location. Putting the customer first is at the heart of my seven best practices — all my strategies derive from that perspective.” ❖

Eileen K. McCluskey

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