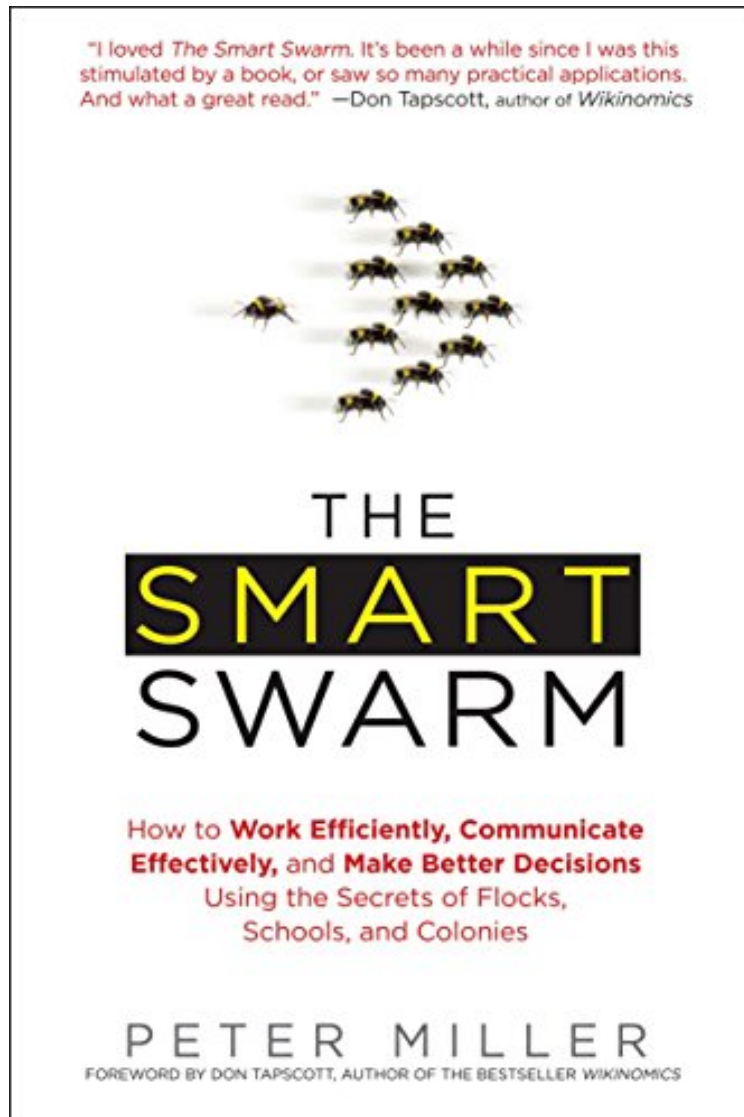


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The Smart Swarm: How to Work Efficiently, Communicate Effectively, and Make Better Decisions Using the Secrets of Flocks, Schools, and Colonies

Peter Miller

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Peter Miller : The Smart Swarm: How to Work Efficiently, Communicate Effectively, and Make Better Decisions Using the Secrets of Flocks, Schools, and Colonies before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Smart Swarm: How to Work Efficiently, Communicate Effectively, and Make Better Decisions Using the Secrets of Flocks, Schools, and Colonies:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Unusually good read for science writing
By Drew Wallen
This book is a clear, concise exposition of certain behaviors in macro-organisms which consist of many individuals. By themselves, the individuals are not too "smart" but each is programmed with certain simple rules. When gathered together the hive, colony, swarm or flock behaves with more appropriate reactions than each individual can. Systematic and well written. Understandable almost to the point of being "dumbed down" and organized to sell the lesson. This book couldn't be better for an interested layperson.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fun science book
By Erik A. Saltwell
A good introduction to complexity theory as it applies to social animals like bees and ants. I wouldn't say that I walked away with an understanding of how this can make me "better at communicating, decision making and getting things done" but as a basic science book aimed at a lay audience, I thought it was a fun and informative read!
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I always worried that without great leaders our organizations and churches might falter
By Dennis Nordine
I always worried that without great leaders our organizations and churches might falter. This shows that groups who lack a type A, charismatic leader can still be very strategic and successful.

What ants, bees, fish, and smart swarms can teach us about communication, organization, and decision-making
The modern world may be obsessed with speed and productivity, but twenty-first-century humans actually have much to learn from the ancient instincts of swarms. A fascinating new take on the concept of collective intelligence and its colorful manifestations in some of our most complex problems, *The Smart Swarm* introduces a compelling new understanding of the real experts on solving our own complex problems relating to such topics as business, politics, and technology. Based on extensive globe-trotting research, this lively tour from National Geographic reporter Peter Miller introduces thriving throngs of ant colonies, which have inspired computer programs for streamlining factory processes, telephone networks, and truck routes; termites, used in recent studies for climate-control solutions; schools of fish, on which the U.S. military modeled a team of robots; and many other examples of the wisdom to be gleaned about the behavior of crowds—among critters and corporations alike. In the tradition of James Surowiecki's *The Wisdom of Crowds* and the innovative works of Malcolm Gladwell, *The Smart Swarm* is an entertaining yet enlightening look at small-scale phenomena with big implications for us all.

From Publishers Weekly
Insects are social creatures, perhaps even more social—;in the strict scientific sense—;than humans since they lack such socially obstructing attributes as ego, personality, and opinion. Miller, senior editor at National Geographic, examines hives, mounds, colonies, and swarms, whose complex systems of engagement and collective decision making have catalyzed innovations in engineering and can suggest solutions to such problems as climate change. The sophisticated system of decentralized interdependence exhibited by termites invites a lesson on how to respond to emergencies, while the chemical-based communications among African ants helped officials at Southwest Airlines define their seating policy. Insects, birds, and fish variously demonstrate the plausibility and success of disorganization leading to self-organization and leaderless processes. Adding understanding to the dark side of group dynamics and, inevitably, mob behavior is the study of locusts, innocuous until they become part of a crowd. Miller informs, engages, entertains, and even surprises in this thought-provoking study of problem making and problem solving, and through the comparison of human and insect scenarios, shows how social cues and signals can either bring about social cooperation or destruction. (Aug.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. `Smart Swarm blends zoology, entertaining anecdotes and conceptual discussion in an approachable and insightful way.' - New Scientist
`There have been other recent books about swarm intelligence, and the wisdom of crowds, but Miller's book is the sharpest, most readably intelligent guided tour of current thinking and research about collective intelligence and nature's basic collaborations.' - Iain Finlayson, *The Times*
`Peter Miller gives us a lively account of how studying the collective habits, actions and instincts of animals in the wild means that we can apply these strategies to organising and communicating in our own world. - *The Times*, Eureka
`I loved *The Smart Swarm*. It's been a while since I was this stimulated by a book, or saw so many practical applications. And what a great read!' - Don Tapscott, author of *Wikinomics*
`There have been other recent books about swarm intelligence, and the wisdom of crowds, but Miller's exploration of the insect hive mind is fascinating enough, but his real interest is in the way humans can harness this phenomenon to structure businesses.' - BBC Focus
`It all makes for a fascinating read, not least for the insight Miller provides into the arcane workings of the animal kingdom. The book also raises interesting questions about our own behaviour and what it takes for us to work for a common goal.' - BA Business Life
About the Author
Peter Miller has been a writer and senior editor at National Geographic for over twenty-five years. He lives with his wife PJ in Reston, Virginia.