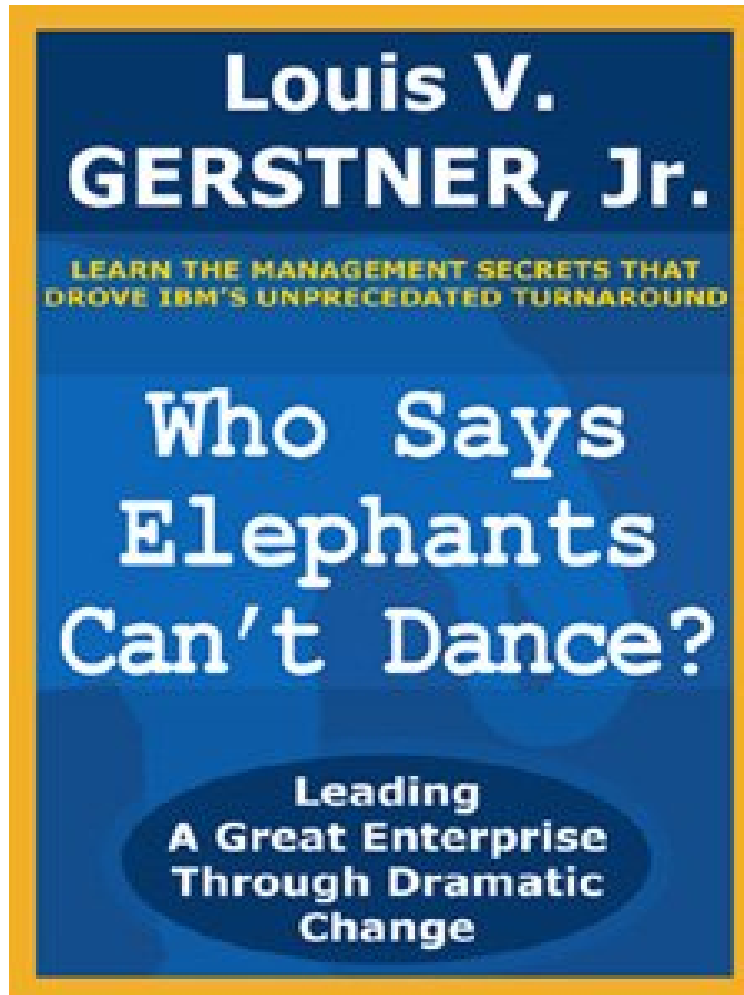


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Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?: Leading a Great Enterprise Through Dramatic Change

Louis V. Gerstner Jr.

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A must read for anyone aspiring to bring a change in their work place. By anandThe book starts with IBM in state in 1993 and how it IBM emerged like a phoenix. The book is candid on the facts. It provides principles how one can improve work life, with practical examples. . My favorite quote in this book "there is an opportunity to learn in everything we do". Whatever mentioned is true, I see this now in lot of IT companies. Many of them perish after couple of years. This book provides, with example how to over come. If we read the book, we can same thing HP is trying to do, but too late in the game. I am waiting for the continuation of the book

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In 1990, IBM had its most profitable year ever. By 1993, the computer industry had changed so rapidly the company was on its way to losing \$16 billion and IBM was on a watch list for extinction -- victimized by its own lumbering size, an insular corporate culture, and the PC era IBM had itself helped invent. Then Lou Gerstner was brought in to run IBM. Almost everyone watching the rapid demise of this American icon presumed Gerstner had joined IBM to preside over its continued dissolution into a confederation of autonomous business units. This strategy, well underway when he arrived, would have effectively eliminated the corporation that had invented many of the industry's most important technologies. Instead, Gerstner took hold of the company and demanded the managers work together to re-establish IBM's mission as a customer-focused provider of computing solutions. Moving ahead of his critics, Gerstner made the hold decision to keep the company together, slash prices on his core product to keep the company competitive, and almost defiantly announced, "The last thing IBM needs right now is a vision." *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* tells the story of IBM's competitive and cultural transformation. In his own words, Gerstner offers a blow-by-blow account of his arrival at the company and his campaign to rebuild the leadership team and give the workforce a renewed sense of purpose. In the process, Gerstner defined a strategy for the computing giant and remade the ossified culture bred by the company's own success. The first-hand story of an extraordinary turnaround, a unique case study in managing a crisis, and a thoughtful reflection on the computer industry and the principles of leadership, *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* sums up Lou Gerstner's historic business achievement. Taking readers deep into the world of IBM's CEO, Gerstner recounts the high-level meetings and explains the pressure-filled, no-turning-back decisions that had to be made. He also offers his hard-won conclusions about the essence of what makes a great company run. In the history of modern business, many companies have gone from being industry leaders to the verge of extinction. Through the heroic efforts of a new management team, some of those companies have even succeeded in resuscitating themselves and living on in the shadow of their former stature. But only one company has been at the pinnacle of an industry, fallen to near collapse, and then, beyond anyone's expectations, returned to set the agenda. That company is IBM.

From Publishers Weekly Gerstner quarterbacked one of history's most dramatic corporate turnarounds. For those who follow business stories like football games, his tale of the rise, fall and rise of IBM might be the ultimate slow-motion replay. He became IBM's CEO in 1993, when the gargantuan company was near collapse. The book's opening section snappily reports Gerstner's decisions in his first 18 months on the job--the critical "sprint" that moved IBM away from the brink of destruction. The following sections describe the marathon fight to make IBM once again "a company that mattered." Gerstner writes most vividly about the company's culture. On his arrival, "there was a kind of hothouse quality to the place. It was like an isolated tropical ecosystem that had been cut off from the world for too long. As a result, it had spawned some fairly exotic life-forms that were to be found nowhere else." One of Gerstner's first tasks was to redirect the company's attention to the outside world, where a marketplace was quickly changing and customers felt largely ignored. He succeeded mightily. Upon his retirement this year, IBM was undeniably "a company that mattered." Gerstner's writing occasionally is myopic. For example, he makes much of his own openness to input from all levels of the company, only to mock an earnest (and overlong) employee e-mail (reprinted in its entirety) that was critical of his performance. Also, he includes a bafflingly long and dull appendix of his collected communications to IBM employees. Still, the book is a well-rendered self-portrait of a CEO who made spectacular change on the strength of personal leadership. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. [Gerstner] entertains as he educates. (New York Times Book) A well-rendered self-portrait of a CEO who made spectacular change on the strength of personal leadership. (Publishers Weekly) Effective, to the point... Louis V. Gerstner Jr deserves his place in the management hall of fame. (Financial Times) The best business book I've ever read. (Imus in the Morning) [Lou Gerstner] has the substance of a genuine and ... interesting story. (Wall Street Journal) About the Author Lou Gerstner, Jr., served as chairman and chief executive officer of IBM from April 1993 until March 2002, when he retired as CEO. He remained chairman of the board through the end of 2002. Before joining IBM, Mr. Gerstner served for four years as chairman and CEO of RJR Nabisco, Inc. This was preceded by an eleven-year career at the American Express Company, where he was president of the parent company and chairman and CEO of its largest subsidiary. Prior to that, Mr. Gerstner was a director of the management consulting firm of McKinsey Co., Inc. He received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Dartmouth College and an MBA from Harvard Business School. Edward Herrmann, a Tony Award-reg; winner and nominee, has starred on both Broadway and the West End, and appeared in well over forty motion pictures; he is perhaps best known for his

portrayal of FDR in Eleanor and Franklin, as well as for his role on The Gilmore Girls.