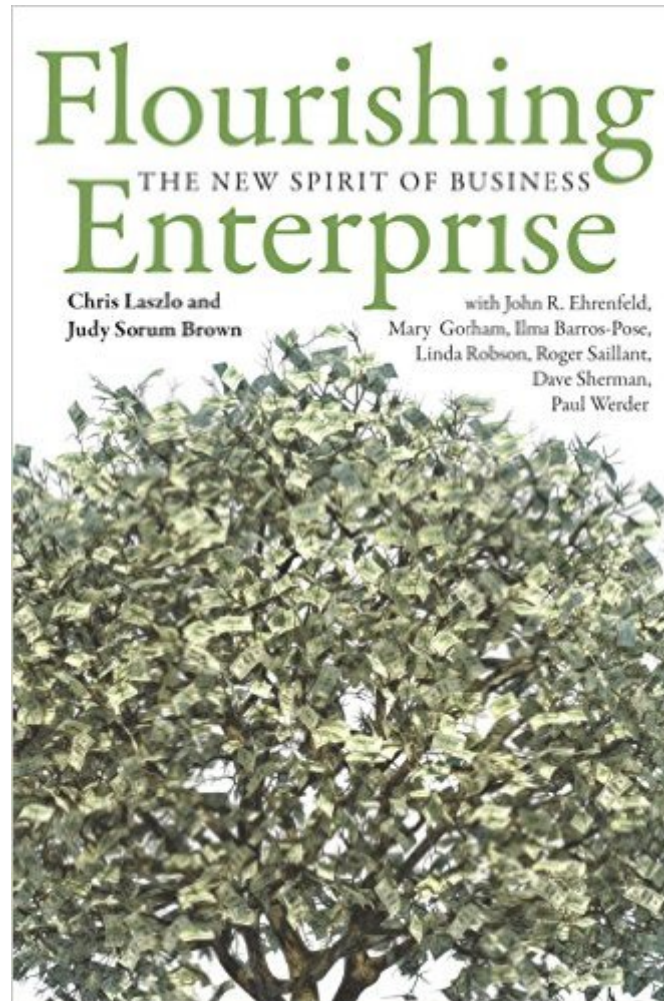


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# Flourishing Enterprise: The New Spirit Of Business



## Synopsis

The notion of responsible business has infiltrated our markets, and "going green" is now a part of our mindset. But, sustainability as we know it is not enough. Flourishing—the aspiration that humans and life in general will thrive on the planet forever—should be a key goal for every business today. This is a bold concept, like sustainability was a decade ago. Just as sustainability has become a matter of course, so too will flourishing become a cornerstone of business tomorrow. How are companies to attain this big-picture goal? Drawing together decades of research along with in-depth interviews, Flourishing Enterprise argues that many strategic, organizational, and operational efforts to be sustainable reach the potential of flourishing when they incorporate one additional ingredient: reflective practices. Offering more than a dozen such practices, this book leads readers down a path to greater business success, personal well-being, and a healthier planet. Readers will find that adding reflective practices to existing business efforts does not require more work; it simply changes the way we do our work and, more importantly, the results we achieve. Cultivating emotional and spiritual health is the next frontier; this future-oriented guide develops these core competencies while stretching the ongoing conversation about profitable, sustainable business.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the Foreword written by Peter Senge -- "William O'Brien, a successful CEO and mentor said: 'I go around talking with people about values-based, vision-driven businesses. People are always

enthusiastic... This raises an obvious question: If everyone really wants this, why are such businesses so rare? I have come to conclude that most people have no idea of the nature of the commitment required to build such an organization.'"

Indeed. This book makes a unique contribution to the literature by presenting the case that change within the organization comes from a series of [spiritual] reflective practices from a multi-level perspective: foundational / individual practices; team and organizational practices; and systems-level practices. While few of the concepts are "new" strictly speaking, what IS new is the explicit linkage of systematically incorporating reflective practices into the hard-nosed work of business for profit. You see the thinking behind 9 diverse authors, writers, and educators in molding and shaping this idea - you would have read refrains of this in other texts. The proposition is simple to grasp: they suggest that for organizations to flourish from the systemic level down to the individual, we must connect how we engage in work with a daily rigor of reflection and discernment. Slow down to act fast. Listen with your mind and your heart to understand more deeply. Engage all of your senses, your body, your hopes and dreams, and not just your cognitive thinking. On an individual level, we already know that, right? If we're stressed out, the doctor tells us to slow down and listen. We're told to pay attention to our emotions, feelings, and physical state. Why? Because chronic stress is bad for our health!

Chris Laszlo's Flourishing Enterprise book questions the modern significance of sustainability and turns it on its head. The author states sustainability has not been successful (or profitable) with many companies in today's world failing to meet their goals and lacking direction in what he terms "sustainability fatigue."

- Companies are exploiting people and natural resources to make profit at any cost. To fix the situation, Laszlo introduces the notion of flourishing, a new way for firms to turn a profit while caring for people (the community) and the environment. The author also mentions neoclassical economics as a force that diminishes human beings, using them as utilities to maximize profits. This part struck me because I personally believe this is the main cause of today's problems. Laszlo also states radical transparency, as fueled by rising information from different news outlets, is engaging people and making them more proactive. Stakeholders' demands are rising; they want not just profits but also environmental solutions and a more humane approach to things. Spirituality is also mentioned as a crucial piece to achieve flourishing. The author describes spirituality, which he notes has been a missing piece in many modern businessmen, as a system of interconnectedness rather than merely linking it to religion. In addition, to successfully achieve flourishing, it must be tackled differently than sustainability. This starts with a positive handprint, rather than a negative footprint. To further make the point, Laszlo's quotes

Starbucks president Howard Behar as saying "caring is not a sign of weakness" but rather, a sign of strength and it can't be faked. • In other words, you must truly care for people to trust you. Caring is a vital part of successful enterprising.

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