Six Simple Rules: How to Manage Complexity without Getting Complicated
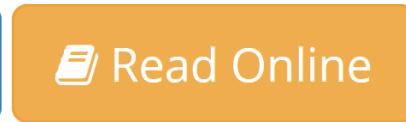
By Yves Morieux, Peter Tollman

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Six Simple Rules: How to Manage Complexity without Getting Complicated
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New tools for managing complexity

Does your organization manage complexity by making things *more* complicated? If so, you are not alone.

According to The Boston Consulting Group's fascinating Complexity Index, business complexity has increased sixfold during the past sixty years. And, all the while, organizational complicatedness—that is, the number of structures, processes, committees, decision-making forums, and systems—has increased by a whopping factor of thirty-five. In their attempt to respond to the increasingly complex performance requirements they face, company leaders have created an organizational labyrinth that makes it more and more difficult to improve productivity and to pursue innovation. It also disengages and demotivates the workforce.

Clearly it's time for leaders to stop trying to manage complexity with their traditional tools and instead better leverage employees' intelligence. This book shows you how and explains the implications for designing and leading organizations.

The way to manage complexity, the authors argue, is neither with the hard solutions of another era nor with the soft solutions—such as team building and feel-good "people initiatives"—that often follow in their wake. Based on social sciences (notably economics, game theory, and organizational sociology) and The Boston Consulting Group's work with more than five hundred companies in more than forty countries and in various industries, authors Yves Morieux and Peter Tollman recommend six simple rules to manage complexity without getting complicated.

Showing why the rules work and how to put them into practice, Morieux and Tollman give managers a much-needed tool to reinvigorate people in the face of seemingly endless complexity. Included are detailed examples from companies that have achieved a multiplicative effect on performance by using them.

It's time to manage complexity better. Employ these six simple rules to foster

autonomy and cooperation and to effectively handle business complexity. As a result, you will improve productivity, innovate more, reengage your workforce, and seize opportunities to create competitive advantage.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Six Simple Rules* should be mandatory reading for anyone and everyone charged with a corporate management responsibility…"Articulate, practical, insightful, informed and informative… exceptionally well written, organized, presented, and thoroughly 'user friendly'" – *Midwest Book Review*

"Innovative and instructive, *Six Simple Rules* merits a place on the bookshelves of all those who aspire to give a new meaning to their management." — *Business Digest* (**France**)

"… an interesting book that prescribes some practical solutions to the problems often seen in organisations." — *Irish Times*

"*Six Simple Rules* is a management book, but it also a social science book, an important asset because it will assist you in both understanding the people in your organization and what motivates and inspires them." — **800 CEO READ**

"an exceedingly interesting book on a very hot topic!" — **Taking Care of Biz Blog (takingcareofbiz.org)**

ADVANCE PRAISE for *Six Simple Rules*:

Lamberto Andreotti, CEO, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company—
"Applying the rules of this book will help those looking to increase cooperation while also removing complicatedness in their organizations."

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director, Reliance Industries Limited—
"We do not want best practices; they are not good enough for us. We want the next practices, and that is what the six simple rules are about."

Erhard Friedberg, Professor DDr, h.c. emeritus, Sciences Po, Paris; Professor and Senior Advisor, School of Government and Public Policy (SGPP-Indonesia)—
"This book will prove seminal. It shows the essential contribution that good empirical social sciences can bring to management, how social sciences can be used to seriously analyze and change what people do at work, and the amazing results you can then produce."

Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, CEO, LEGO Group—
"What the authors call 'complicatedness' is the plague of modern corporations. To simplify is easy, but the cure may be even worse than the disease. What matters is to simplify without ignoring the new complexity of business. You can do it, thanks to the simple rules."

About the Author

Yves Morieux is a senior partner and managing director in the Washington, DC, office of The Boston Consulting Group (BCG). He is a BCG Fellow and director of the BCG Institute for Organization.

Peter Tollman is a senior partner and managing director in BCG's Boston office. He leads BCG's People and Organization practice in North America.

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