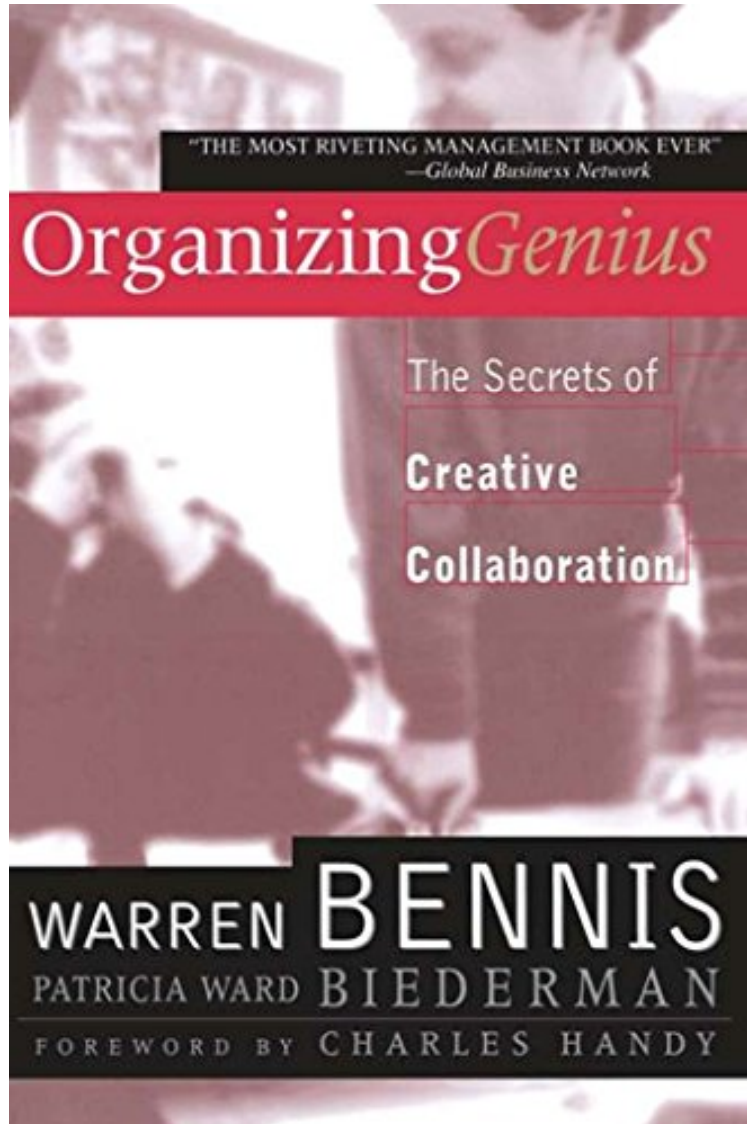


## Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration

Warren Bennis, Patricia Ward Biederman  
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**Warren Bennis, Patricia Ward Biederman : Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining Look at Organizational Behavior and LeadershipBy Edward J. BartonExploring exceptional groups, such as the Manhattan Project, the Lockheed Skunk Works, Apple Macintosh and others, the authors explore the commonalities of high performing teams. The approach the authors use is a series of vignettes, each focusing on a different exceptional group - their composition, accomplishments,

approaches, commonalities and travails. Identifying 15 different traits common to high performing teams, the book provides a reasonably entertaining look at the studied groups, as well as a pretty concise and useful recap of the traits at the end of the book. The introduction and the summary are solid, if unspectacular. As noted by a few other reviewers, the book occasionally bogs down in spots. However, it is one of the better of its type and a quick, entertaining read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent concept

By S Richardson

This is why I surround myself with capable people! I don't have to know everything - but I am smart enough to know some things and when I don't know, I do know who I can go to for a perfect answer; I'm in the field of education, and I have my "reading genius", my "assessment genius", "School improvement genius", etc. I even give them credit (suicide not to!) but I still seem (and get) brilliant because I get the perfect answer each time. I don't mean to make light of the concept - the book gives examples where surrounding yourself with capable people and cultivating that talent has worked, and I can think of few areas in life where that would not be a wise and productive thing to do.

12 of 17 people found the following review helpful. E Pluribus Unum

By Robert Morris

If you were to look up the word "leadership" in any reputable dictionary, it would probably suggest that you contact Warren Bennis. No one has written more and more enlightening commentary on the subject of leadership than has he. In *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*, he and Patricia Ward Biederman examine a number of what the authors call "Great Groups." Perhaps the most important point is introduced in the first chapter: "None of us is as smart as all of us." That is to say, the "Great Man" theory is invalidated by the achievements of truly creative teams such as those at the Disney studios which produced so many animation classics; at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) which developed the first personal computer; at Apple Computer which then took it to market; in the so-called "War Room" which helped to elect Bill Clinton President in 1992; at the so-called "Skunk Works" where so many of Lockheed's greatest designs were formulated; at Black Mountain College which "wasn't simply a place where creative collaboration took place. It was about creative collaboration"; and at Los Alamos (NM) and the University of Chicago where the Manhattan Project eventually produced a new weapon called "the Gadget."

Bennis and Biederman conclude *Organizing Genius* by providing 15 "Take-Home Lessons." Each is directly relevant to any organization which aspires to accomplish what Steve Jobs once described as being "insanely great." With all due respect to the command-and-control skills of great leaders in the past (including most of those enshrined in the "Business Hall of Fame"), such skills simply are not effective today. "None of us is as smart as all of us." A group can become "great" only if and when it possesses both genius in each member and the leadership necessary to achieve creative collaboration by those members. With rare exception, "Genius" in isolation simply cannot accomplish what "genius" in creative collaboration can.

Uncovers the elements of creative collaboration by examining six of the century's most extraordinary groups and distill their successful practices into lessons that virtually any organization can learn and commit to in order to transform its own management into a collaborative and successful group of leaders. Paper. DLC: Organizational effectiveness - Case studies.

For years, Warren Bennis has written about leadership in works such as *Learning to Lead*, *Beyond Leadership*, and the bestselling *On Becoming a Leader*. His aim in these well-received titles was to catalog the traits and styles of leadership that help individuals excel in their work. In his new book (and already another bestseller) *Organizing Genius*, Bennis declares the age of the empowered individual ended: what matters now is "collaborative advantage" and the assembling of powerful teams. Drawing from six case studies that include Xerox's PARC labs, the 1992 Clinton campaign, and Disney animation studios, Bennis and coauthor Patricia Biederman distill the characteristics of successful collaboration, showing how talent can be pooled and managed for greater results than any individual is capable of producing. Organized in easily digested chapters and written in clear, concise prose, *Organizing Genius* will be useful to folks finding their way in new organizational structures. The lessons Bennis and Biederman offer in the final chapter of the book don't constitute the obvious advice most business books convey; these are real experiences gleaned from the stories of collaboration they surveyed.

From Publishers Weekly

University of Southern California business professor Bennis and Los Angeles Times reporter Biederman examine six "Great Groups" whose work affected and sometimes changed the modern world. They are the Disney organization and its animated films; the Xerox Corporation's Palo Alto Research Center, which designed the first user-friendly computer; the Clinton presidential campaign of 1992 for what the authors deem a remarkable victory; Lockheed's Skunk Works, where the U-2 spy plane and the Stealth bomber were developed; Black Mountain College in the foothills of North Carolina, which lasted only from 1933 to 1956 but attracted many major artists; and the Manhattan Project, whose scientists created the atomic bomb. All of these groups, the authors stress, consisted of enormously talented people with a sense of mission, who worked under a strong leader and were imbued with pragmatic optimism. Each segment is so well told that it has lessons for all. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

To determine the characteristics of creative groups, Bennis (business administration, Univ. of Southern California) and Biederman, a Los Angeles Times reporter, here consider Disney Productions, PARC for Xerox, President Clinton's presidential campaign, Lockheed's Skunk Works, Black Mountain College, and the Manhattan Project. The authors conclude that creative

groups usually operate in dull or tacky surroundings, are young and optimistic past the point of realism ("Great groups believe they're on a mission from God against a big, bad enemy"), are poorly paid, and go unrecognized. In these examples, many of the leaders were difficult to verbally abusive. The authors warn that it is possible for great minds to work in groups to accomplish great evil, and care must be taken to scrutinize the intended results. Sexual references are included that do not add to the story and are in poor taste. The authors acknowledge the noticeable absence of female participants in creative groups but do not give an adequate explanation. While interesting, this is not a necessary purchase. ?Peggy D. Odom, Texas Lib. Assn., Waco Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.