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## A Whole New Mind

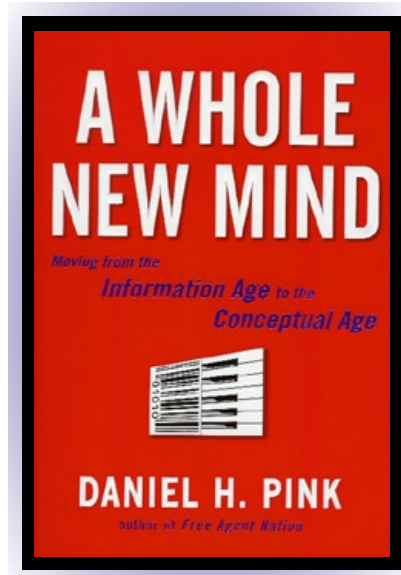
*Moving from the Information Age  
to the Conceptual Age*

**Daniel H. Pink**

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*Reviewed by Sharon Baldwin Sittner*

### Introduction

So, there's good news and bad news. The bad news is: people who earn their livings using linear, logical, analytical skills (e.g., computer programmers, engineers, CPA's) may soon find their jobs in jeopardy, if they haven't already. The good news is: anyone can develop the traits upon which both professional and personal success and fulfillment will depend in the newly dawning *Conceptual Age*. In **A Whole New Mind**, Daniel Pink describes a new era beginning to take shape in the global economy. This new economy calls for skills and talents that, historically, have been largely discounted in the workplace – creativity, empathy, intuition, and the ability to link seemingly unrelated objects and events into something new and different.

Looking back at the history of the United States, first the Agricultural Age gave way to the Industrial Age, which then bowed to the Information (e.g., technology) Age. Pink ascertains that the each of these economic shifts came about because of the same three factors: 1) affluence, 2) technology, and 3) globalization; and he makes a convincing case that we

are once again at the birth of a new economic era. As in the past, these three social/economic factors (or, alternately and presently, abundance, automation, and Asia) are once again in play – this time driving us into the Conceptual Age.

Skills necessary for success in the Agricultural and Industrial Ages were physical strength and endurance. The Information Age called for linear, logical, analytical reasoning (left-brained or L-directed skills). The Conceptual Age, however, will demand we draw from the right side of our brains, developing what have been considered “soft” (right-brained or R-directed) skills, such as creativity, empathy, and intuition.

Pink provides the evidence that the forces are now in place to propel us out of the Information Age and into the Conceptual Age – whether we like it or not – and introduces six essential right brain-directed aptitudes that will be necessary to succeed in this new economy: design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning. In Part II, Pink devotes a chapter to each of these aptitudes, presenting a case for why each of these skills is crucial in the Conceptual Age (for example, the bewildering design of the butterfly ballot in the 2000 Presidential election which may have altered the course of history) and then a portfolio of exercises to pump up that underdeveloped right hemisphere.

## About the Author

**Daniel Pink**, author of the bestseller, *Free Agent Nation*, is a former White House speechwriter and a contributing editor at *Wired* magazine. He has written on work, business, and politics for *The New York Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Slate*, *Fast Company*, and other publications and lectured on economic transformation and business strategy to corporations, universities, and associations around the world. In addition, Pink has analyzed commercial and social trends for television and radio programs. Pink invites readers to email him at [dhp@danpink.com](mailto:dhp@danpink.com).

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## PART I: THE CONCEPTUAL AGE

Unless you’ve been holed up in a cave for the past decade, you have probably heard some chatter about the battle of the “right-brain” vs. “left-brain,” and of the set of skills and talents attributed to each of the brain’s two hemispheres. In very simple terms, the left hemisphere is

*“The two hemispheres of our brains don’t operate as on-off switches – one powering down as soon as the other starts lighting up. Both halves play a role in nearly everything we do.”*

called on when performing logical, linear, and analytical tasks; the right hemisphere is adept at creativity, empathy, and the ability to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new. Although both hemispheres work in tandem and each of us use both, most people have a propensity to one side or the other. Thus, an artist may find calculus impossible and maddening, while an engineer might find it extremely taxing to draw anything but stick figures.

James Watson, Nobel Prize recipient for helping to discover DNA, describes the human brain as “the most complex thing we have yet discovered in the universe.” Composed of 100 billion cells, and weighing approximately three pounds, the brain is divided by a thin vertical ridge into two halves, each identical in size and appearance. Forging an elaborate network, each of those 100 billion cells form one quadrillion (1,000,000,000,000,000) connections that determine everything from our speech patterns to our learning styles and abilities to the rhythm of our heart and breathing, and even to our preference for classical music over hip hop or vice versa.

Until recently, it was widely believed by the scientific community that the left hemisphere was by far the more important; was, in fact, the side that distinguished humans from other animals. As far back as the time of Hippocrates, physicians believed the left side, the same side of the body that housed the heart, was the essential half. By the 1800’s, evidence was mounting to support that premise. In the 1860’s, French neurologist, Paul Broca, discovered that a portion of the left hemisphere controlled spoken language. Shortly thereafter Carl Wernicke, a German neurologist, discovered the left half of the brain also enables humans to *understand* language. Because language is what separates humans from other species, the prevailing belief was that the left side of the brain makes us human, and the right side

merely subsidiary, possibly the remnant of an earlier stage of development. This view prevailed through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

In the 1950's, however, Caltech professor Roger Sperry conducted a study on patients who, due to epileptic seizures, had had the thick bundle of nerve fibers that connects the brain's two hemispheres removed. His experiments on these "split-brain" patients established that, in Sperry's words: "The so-called subordinate or minor hemisphere, which we had formerly supposed to be illiterate and mentally retarded and thought by some authorities to not even be conscious, was found to be, in fact, the superior cerebral member when it came to performing certain kinds of mental tasks. . . There appear to be two modes of thinking represented rather separately in the left and right hemispheres, respectively." Sperry was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine for this research, which has forever changed the fields of psychology and neuroscience.

*"Analysis and synthesis are perhaps the two most fundamental ways of interpreting information. You can break the whole into its components. Or you can weave the components into a whole. Both are essential to human reasoning."*

Since Sperry's groundbreaking results, much research has been done on the differences and interactions of the two hemispheres of the brain, occasionally resulting in two misconceptions which are opposite in spirit. While one camp proclaims the right side of the brain as "savior," believing it to be the repository of all that is good and noble. Partly in response to this rush to embrace R-directed attributes at the expense of the left, the opposite bias has also taken hold. Left-brain enthusiasts emphasize that so-called R-directed thinking risks sabotaging the economic and social progress that has been achieved by using the force of logic and that it is our ability to reason analytically which separates us from other animals. The truth lies somewhere in the middle ground. We all use both hemispheres of the brain in everything we do. People may have a natural predilection or bias for one side over the other, but the skills attributed to the non-dominant side of the brain can be learned and developed.

For the past couple of decades, however, individual, as well as national and global, achievement has depended predominantly on the use of left-brained skills. America in The Information Age, as Pink calls the latter half of the

20th century, needed and sought "knowledge" workers. Computer programmers, contract attorneys, MBA's, CPA's, physicians, and engineers owe their success to logical, linear, analytical reasoning – skills associated with the left side of the brain. Indeed, even gaining access to joining one of these lucrative professions requires the development of L-directed skills.

Consider the standardized tests (i.e., PSAT, SAT, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT) that determine entrance to colleges and graduate programs. Each of these tools essentially measures left-brained skills, requiring logic and analysis; the tests, themselves, are linear, sequential, and bounded by time. Test-takers answer each questions with a single answer, which is either right or wrong, then move on to the next, and so on until time runs out. These tests have become what Daniel Pink calls a "SAT-ocracy" – a system in which L-directed skills are the gatekeepers to middle- and upper-class society.

It is Daniel Pink's claim, however, that a revolution is underway - one that will change the economic and social climate worldwide. Although this seismic shift is, as of yet, undetected by the greater part of the business world, Pink believes, as do a growing number of commerce leaders, that we are moving from an economy built on L-directed skills to one in which R-directed proficiencies will determine economic achievement.

Consider the U.S. economy over the past 150 years as a three-act drama. Act I is entitled, *The Industrial Age*. In Act I, the marketplace is fueled by massive factories and efficient assembly lines, and the protagonist is the mass production worker. His/her success is based mainly on physical strength and personal fortitude. In Act II, *The Information Age*, technology is the driving force in the U.S. and other developed nations. The central characters are "knowledge workers" – lawyers, physicians, engineers, accountants, and computer programmers. Success in the Information Age is based on linear, sequential, analytical thought patterns, as described above.

Now, however, the curtain is rising on Act III, *The Conceptual Age*. The heroes of this act are creators and empathizers; they are artists and storytellers and designers. To be successful in the Conceptual Age, business people need to shift their attention from the analytical to the

abstract. They will have to refocus – from zeroing in on the details to seeing the larger picture.

Looking back even further, the preamble to the *Industrial Age* was the *Agricultural Age*. Each of these shifts in economic development was triggered by the same three influences – 1) *affluence*, 2) *technology*, and 3) *globalization*. As people grow richer, as technologies advance, and as the worldwide workplace/economy becomes more accessible, these three forces push us (sometimes kicking and screaming) into a new economic era. These same influences are the reason North America, Western Europe, Australia, and Japan now find themselves facing another economic revolution. Individuals and organizations need only to examine what they are doing and to ask the following three questions to determine if it may be time to shift focus: 1) Can someone overseas do it cheaper? 2) Can a computer do it faster? 3) Is what I'm offering in demand in an age of abundance?

First, consider affluence. Our left-brains have made us rich, offering up a standard of living in much of the developed world that would have been unthinkable a century ago. Compare the number of shopping malls and super-stores, carrying everything from bananas to computers and electronics to pet supplies, within a 20-mile radius of your house to the same area fifty years ago; or even twenty-five years ago. Also consider these examples of the affluence in the present U.S. economy:

- For most of the twentieth century, the American dream was to own a home and a car. Today, more than two-thirds of Americans own their homes. In fact, thirteen percent of homes purchased today are second homes! As for cars, the U.S. now has more cars than licensed drivers, so on average, everybody who can drive has a car of his/her own.
- Self-storage has become a \$17 billion/year industry in the U.S. – larger, even, than the motion picture business. U.S. citizens have such an overabundance of “things,” they have to rent extra space to store them all.
- And if we're not storing our things, we just throw them away. According to business writer Polly LaBarre, “The United States spends more on trash bags than ninety other countries spend on everything. In other words, the

receptacles of our waste cost more than all of the goods consumed by nearly half of the world's nations.”

And yet it is exactly this prosperity, earned by left-brained skills, that makes it imperative for businesses to

*“L-Directed aptitudes – the sorts of things measured by the SAT and deployed by CPAs – are still necessary. But they're no longer sufficient. Instead, the R-Directed aptitudes so often disdained and dismissed – artistry, empathy, taking the long view, pursuing the transcendent – will increasingly determine who soars and who stumbles.”*

now begin drawing from the right side of the brain. In an age of affluence and abundance, it is no longer enough for a business to make a product that is merely functional and reasonably priced. With so many commodities to choose from, the “aesthetic imperative,” as author Virginia Postrell called it, is to create a product that's functional, reasonably priced, *and* beautiful, unique, and/or meaningful.

Take the chain store, Target, as an example. World-famous designers such as Karim Rashid and Philippe Starck, Mossimo, and Isaac Mizrahi design a full range of products for this middle-class, middle-American chain of stores. For less than \$25, you can buy a trashcan designed by Mizrahi. Or how about a toilet brush designed by Princeton University architecture professor, Michael Graves? Graves is one of the most renowned architects and product designers in the world, and yet you can buy his designer toilet brush for under \$10. The point is that faced with consumers who have access to an overabundance of products, successful product lines now must also be aesthetically pleasing. Mastery of “soft” aptitudes – design, empathy, play, vision – are now needed for a product to stand out in a crowded marketplace.

Technology is the second factor that precipitates a shift in economic focus. The fable of John Henry can be taken as a metaphor for technology driving the economy into a new era. John Henry, “a man born with a hammer in his hand,” worked on the railroads following the Civil War. It was said he could drive steel faster and more powerfully than any other man alive. Henry was part of a team whose task it was to pound its way through mountains, creating tunnels for the railroad. As the tale goes, one day a salesperson arrived at the workers' camp with a steam-powered drill. The strength of Henry was pitted against the efficiency of the drill; and Henry, pushing himself past the limits of human endurance

to keep up with the newfangled machine, collapsed and died. This parable ushered in the Industrial Age.

A similar story in more recent history pits chess grand master, Garry Kasparov, against a computer. Kasparov won his first world championship in 1985 and, over the next decade, he never lost a match. But in 1997, Kasparov was defeated by a 1.4-ton IBM super-computer. In disbelief, Kasparov arranged for a rematch. Again, he lost. While Kasparov was able to look at a chess board and analyze one to three moves, the computer was able to evaluate between two and three *million* moves per second. The world had moved into the Information Age. Just as the story of John Henry illustrated that machines could replace human strength, this story proves that computers can replace the need for left-brained human traits. Management guru, Tom Peters, believes that with the advent of the accessibility of

*“Knowledge workers, meet your new competition: Srividya, Lalit, Kavita, and Kamal of Mumbai, India.”*

computers, any job that depends on routines steps – or can be broken down into a set of repeatable steps – is at risk.

The third influence that will require a shift to R-directed thinking is globalization. Few issues have generated more controversy and anxiety in the workplace than outsourcing. The job of a computer programmer earning \$70,000 per year in the U.S. can be performed in India for less than \$14,000. India’s colleges and universities produce about 350,000 engineering graduates each year, one reason why more than half of the Fortune 500 companies now outsource software jobs to India. For example, nearly half of GE’s software is developed in India. Similarly, finance firms such as Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase, and Lehman Brothers have outsourced financial analysis to MBA’s in India. This is only a small number of the corporations finding outsourcing a necessity to remain competitive in today’s marketplace.

India is not the only part of the world where corporations can find highly qualified, well trained personnel to work for less than half of their American counterparts. Motorola, Nortel, Intel, and Boeing are outsourcing software development and aerospace engineering to Russia, and the computer services conglomerate, Electronic Data Systems, has software developers in Brazil, Egypt, and Poland. Other large corporations are employing the workforce in Hungary, the Philippines, and China, sometimes paying as little as

six percent of the wages that Americans would expect. For white-collar, left-brain workers in Europe and North America, the implications of this outsourcing trend can be alarming. Consider:

- One out of ten jobs in the U.S. computer, software, and information technology industry will move overseas in the next two years. One in four IT jobs will be “offshored” by 2010.

- According to Forrester Research, “at least 3.3 million white-collar jobs and \$136 billion in wages will shift from the U.S. to low-cost countries like India, China, and Russia” by 2015.

- By 2015, an estimated 1.2 million European jobs will be lost to offshore locales.

Although these statistics are frightening and this trend will be difficult for many, the upheaval is much the same as was experienced during previous economic transitions. Just as factory workers had to master a new set of skills as the Age of Information dawned, many of today’s left-brained knowledge workers will have to develop and implement more R-directed skills to maintain their place in the Conceptual Age. MFA’s (Master of Fine Arts) are beginning to replace the coveted MBA’s of the Information Age.

A few years ago, Bob Lutz was hired for a top-level position at GM. Lutz doesn’t fit the image that springs to mind when thinking of a typical right-brain person. In his 70’s, Lutz is a former marine who has served in executive positions at all of the big three American car manufacturers. When asked how his approach would differ from his predecessors’ at GM, however, he responded, “It’s more right brain . . . I see us being in the art business. Art, entertainment and mobile sculpture, which, coincidentally, also happens to provide transportation.” That’s a profound statement. Lutz considers GM as being in the *art business*.

The time for what Pink calls “high-concept skills” (the ability to create artistic and emotionally satisfying products, to detect patterns and unexpected opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into a novel invention) and “high touch skills” (being able to empathize, to understand subtleties of human interaction, to find joy in one’s self and elicit it in others, and to engage in the pursuit of purpose and meaning) is at hand.

## PART II: THE SIX SENSES

Daniel Pink identifies six high-concept, high-touch, R-Directed aptitudes needed to complement L-Directed reasoning in *The Conceptual Age: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play, and Meaning*. Each of these competencies are now called upon because of the three factors outlined in Part I – abundance, Asia, and automation. Pink’s “six senses” are all R-directed skills that cannot easily be reproduced by computer technology, by low-wage labor in underdeveloped nations, and which are required in order to appeal to customers faced with an abundance of choices and to differentiate oneself from competitors’ products.

**Design** – In our world of abundance, it is no longer enough to create an economical, functional product; it is economically crucial, as well as personally rewarding, to create something that is emotionally engaging. Pink relates the story of the late Gordon MacKenzie, longtime creative force at Hallmark Cards. MacKenzie, who often spoke to school groups, always started his speech with the question: “How many artists are there in the room?” Inevitably, in groups of children in kindergarten and first grade classes, every child would enthusiastically wave his or her hand in the air. In second grade, about three-fourths of the children would raise their hands, and in third grade classrooms, only a few children would admit to being an artist. By the sixth grade, not a single hand went up as the students looked around to see if anyone would admit to what they had now learned was *deviant behavior*.

Pink sees this as a cautionary tale. The wealth of nations and the well-being of individuals, he asserts, now depend on “having artists in the room.” While not everyone will become a world-class artist, it is absolutely essential that business leaders become designers if they hope to succeed in today’s economy. Consider the “butterfly ballot” fiasco in the 2000 Presidential election. The confusing design of the ballots used in Palm Beach County in Florida caused dramatically skewed results, and more than 5,000 ballots were invalidated because voters had mistakenly voted for two candidates because of the confusing design. Not paying enough attention to design may, literally, have altered history.

Design is the differentiating force in the marketplace today. As Norio Ohga, former chairman of high-tech Sony said, “At Sony, we assume that all products of our

competitors have basically the same technology, price, performance, and features. Design is the only thing that differentiates one product from another in the marketplace.” And, similarly, BMW’s Chris Bangle said, “We don’t make ‘automobiles.’” Instead, they make, “moving works of art that express the driver’s love of quality.”

**Story** – As information becomes more freely and

*“When facts become so widely available and instantly accessible, each one becomes less valuable. What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in context and to deliver them with emotional impact.”*

instantly available (i.e., internet), facts become less valuable. Instead, the context in which these facts are placed and the delivery of the facts with emotional impact become the critical element. That is exactly what the aptitude of Story (or narrative) is: context enriched by emotion. Story means big money. The art of persuasion – advertising, counseling, consulting, public relations – accounts for twenty-five percent of U.S. gross domestic product. Estimating, on the conservative side, that Story is a component of half those persuasive efforts, then Story contributes about \$1 trillion a year to the U.S. economy.

A new movement called “Organizational Storytelling” is afoot in some of the most prestigious and normally staid business in the world. Business people are beginning to realize that they and their counterparts often learn as much or more from water cooler conversations and discussions over lunch than they do in formal training. 3M now gives its top executives storytelling lessons; NASA has begun using storytelling in its knowledge management initiatives; and Xerox, recognizing that its repair personnel learned to fix machines by trading stories rather than by reading manuals, has collected those stories into a database called Eureka (*Fortune* estimates its worth at \$100 million to the company).

The same is true in the medical field. Dr. Rita Charon, a Columbia University Medical School professor tells of the time when she was an internist doing rounds at the hospital. She discovered that much of what she did as a doctor revolved around stories. Patients described their problems in narratives; physicians repeated stories of their medical successes and ordeals. In 2001, Charon launched the narrative medicine movement in an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that

called for a whole-mind approach to medical care. In it, she declared, “Along with scientific ability, physicians need the ability to listen to the narratives of the patient, grasp and honor their meanings, and be moved to act on the patient’s behalf.” Today, all second year medical students at Columbia are required to take a seminar in narrative medicine. This trend is seen across the board, with three out of four American medical schools now offering humanities courses (R-Directed thinking), where just fifteen years ago, only one-third did so.

*“The Conceptual Age can remind us what has always been true but rarely been acted upon – that we must listen to each other’s stories and that we are each the authors of our own lives.”*

Symphony – Symphony here does not refer, implicitly, to classical music but rather to the facility to put together pieces of seemingly unrelated material. It is the ability to synthesize rather than to analyze, and to detect broad patterns rather than to deliver specific answers (i.e., standardized tests). Once again, because of automation, the outsourcing of technical work, and instantly accessible information, professionals are called upon to perform functions that computers and low-wage foreign workers cannot – recognizing the relationship between seemingly disparate ideas and making bold leaps of imagination.

The most important prefix of our times may be “multi.” Everybody multitasks; our communities are multicultural; the entertainment industry produces multimedia, just to name a few examples. Those who are able to master the art of juggling and, indeed, meshing divergent information and knowledge will be rewarded in the Conceptual Age. As an example, the offshoring of computer jobs to India will create new opportunities for people who are able to manage the relationships between the programmers in the East and the clients in the West. These managers will need to be equally comfortable with each culture, have the “hard” skills necessary to understand the task at hand, as well as a mastery of the “soft” science of sales and marketing. Nicholas Negroponte of MIT put it this way, “Many engineering deadlocks have been broken by people who are not engineers at all. That is because perspective is more important than IQ. The ability to make big leaps of thought is a common denominator among the originators of

breakthrough ideas, multidisciplinary minds, and a broad spectrum of experiences.”

To survive and prosper in the Conceptual Age, we need to be inventors and metaphor makers – to “think outside the box” (a metaphor in itself). Metaphorical imagination (i.e., understanding one thing in terms another) is essential in forging connections and communicating experiences that others do not share. For example, Harvard Business School professor Gerald Zaltman developed a method to supplement polls and focus groups by asking subjects to bring in pictures that describe their feelings toward particular goods and services. Through this technique, Zaltman brings forth the metaphors customers use to think of products (i.e., coffee as an engine, a security system as a watchdog).

Empathy – Empathy is the ability to imagine yourself in another person’s situation and to intuit what that person is feeling. Empathy is not the same as sympathy. Sympathy is feeling bad *for* someone else, while empathy is feeling *with* someone else. In the Information Age, empathy was considered a softhearted, “touchy-feely” concept that certainly had no connection or place in the boardroom or high-tech businesses.

However, Daniel Goleman’s book, *Emotional Intelligence*, published a little over ten years ago, signaled the beginning of a shift from the belief that conventional intellectual abilities by far outweigh the importance of emotional strengths. In fact, the one aptitude that has proven impossible for computers to reproduce is empathy. Empathy includes picking up subtle, non-verbal clues such as facial expressions, posture, and speech patterns. As Cambridge University psychologist, Simon Baron-Cohen described empathy, it “involves inexactness (one can only ever approximate when one ascertains another’s mental state), attention to the larger picture (what one thinks he thinks or feels about other people, for example), context (a person’s face, voice, action, and history are all essential information in determining that person’s mental state), with no expectation of lawfulness (what made her happy yesterday may not make her happy tomorrow).” The abilities Baron-Cohen described are all R-directed skills.

While any job that can be reduced to a set of rules or fixed pattern can easily be reproduced by computers or an overseas workforce, the capacity for picking up on subtle

signals and forming connections on an emotional level will become a key skill in the Conceptual Age.

**Play** – At the Ford Motor Company’s River Rouge Plant in the 1930’s and 1940’s, laughter was a disciplinary offense, and humming whistling and smiling were considered acts of insubordination. Now, at the far end of the “play” spectrum, Madan Kataria, a physician in Mumbai, India, believes laughter can function like a benevolent virus – that it can spread from one individual to another, one corporations to the next, even from one nation to its neighbors. He, and a growing number of the medical community worldwide, believes laughter can improve a person’s immune systems and overall health; but also, more surprisingly, an organization’s profits. A few years ago, Kataria started a laughter club, a small group people who would gather each morning to begin the day with a half hour of laughing. Today, there are nearly 2,500 laughter clubs worldwide. Many are in India, but also in the U.K., Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Canada, and several hundred clubs have sprung up in the U.S. And what’s the fastest growing venue for these clubs? The workplace.

Combining work and play has become a successful strategy for many corporations. Southwest Airlines, which continues to turn a nice profit while many of its competitors struggle to remain solvent, includes this strategy in its mission statement: “People rarely succeed at anything unless they are having fun doing it.” According to the Wall Street Journal, more than fifty European companies, including Nokia and Daimler-Chrysler, have engaged consultants in “serious play,” a technique that uses Lego blocks to train corporate executives, and British Airlines has hired a “corporate jester” to bring a sense of fun to its employees.

Executives are also discovering that humor is an accurate marker for managerial effectiveness, emotional intelligence, and R-directed thinking; and that laughter has the power to increase productivity. “Play” is coming out of the closet.

**Meaning** – Viktor Frankl was a young psychiatrist living in Vienna in 1942. As a Jew, he and his family were rounded up and sent to concentration camps. Frankl survived three excruciating years at Auschwitz and Dachau; but his wife, brother, and both parents were all killed. During his incarceration, Frankl worked on stolen scraps of paper to

recreate and expand on the text of a book he had begun before the war. One year after the Allied troops liberated the concentration camps, those scribbled notes became one of the most powerful and moving literary works of the 20th century, *Man’s Search for Meaning*. In it, Frankl concludes that “man’s main concern is not to gain pleasure or avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life,” and that the search for meaning is the most fundamental drive within any human being.

Living in this age of abundance, in which a trip to the local mall can cause sensory overload, freed from the struggle for survival, most Americans have the luxury of

*“Humor embodies many of the right hemisphere’s most powerful attributes – the ability to place situations in context, to glimpse the big picture, and to combine differing perspectives into new alignments. And that makes this aspect of Play increasingly valuable in the world of work.”*

spending time pursuing the search for meaning in our lives. If Frankl and his fellow prisoners could pursue meaning in the face of crushing labor, sadistic guards, a starvation diet, and families and lives destroyed, surely we can do the same.

Finding meaning, or spirituality if you like, has been shown to improve nearly every aspect of human life. People who pray or meditate daily have been shown to have lower blood pressure. A study by John Hopkins researchers found that attending religious services cut people’s risk of death from heart disease, suicide, and some cancers.

Spirituality is finding its way into the business place, too. Five years ago, Ian Mitroff of the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business and consultant Elizabeth Denton conducted a research project called *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, interviewing nearly one hundred executives about spirituality in the workplace. Most of the executives defined spirituality not as religion, but as a basic desire to find purpose and meaning in one’s life. Mitroff and Denton also discovered that, although both executives and their subordinates were hungering to express their spirituality at work, the subject of spirituality was most often purposefully avoided, for fear of offending their religiously diverse co-workers. The most important finding, however, was that companies that acknowledge spiritual values and define their goals in accordance with

those values outperformed those that did not. According to a recent U.S. survey, more than three of five adults believe a greater sense of spirituality would improve their jobs. In the Conceptual Age, Pink foresees a rise in spirituality *in* the workplace as well as an increase in spirit *as* business – businesses that serve a population searching for meaning in their lives.

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*An Afterword, Notes, Acknowledgments, and Index are provided.*

## Remarks

**A Whole New Mind** brings welcome news for those lefties and creative types among us - our time has finally come! The days of straight-laced number crunchers and aloof business leaders are numbered. Today's successful executives will need to develop a new set of skills, predominantly right-brained skills such as creativity, playfulness, and empathy, in order to remain competitive in the marketplace. Although we suspect it may take some time for this lightning bolt to trickle down to the front lines of the workforce, Daniel Pink makes a convincing case for a seismic shift already underway in the world economy.

This book is an easy read, but don't let that fool you. Pink carefully and compellingly lays the groundwork for his premise that the Information Age of the past couple of decades, built on the superiority of left-brain skills, is now giving over to the Conceptual Age, in which a holistic or whole-brained approach will be essential. Evidence of the advent of this shift is irrefutable. Rote tasks, as well as complex technical jobs, are being outsourced at an alarming rate to an eager market of highly trained workers overseas (workers who will work for one-third or less of the wage that his/her counterpart in developed nations would earn); computers can perform nearly all left-brained tasks; consumers in developed countries, faced with an overabundance of products to choose from, are now looking for products that are not just economical and functional, but also aesthetically pleasing. The culmination of these three trends will, understandably, be viewed as threatening

to those who refuse to accept the need to accept its reality and adapt.

Pink provides scientific analysis of the human brain and a historical guide to the world of commerce, which lead logically and systematically (a left-brain skill!) to his premise that right-brained and holistic skills will mark the difference between success and failure in the business world today and in the foreseeable future. Pink also includes a "portfolio" of tools, including extensive reading lists, exercises, and activities, to help bewildered engineers, MBA's, and other predominately left-brained professionals begin to develop each of the six right-brain skills identified as being crucial in the Conceptual Age,

The science of right-brain vs. left-brain is not new. What *is* groundbreaking in *A Whole New Mind* is the melding of that information with the trends in today's global economy, and the resulting revolutionary idea that successful business leaders need to "flex" the right sides of their brains and to manage with a whole-brained approach. In the tradition of other pioneering books such as *Emotional Intelligence*, *Good to Great*, and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, **A Whole New Mind** will no doubt serve as a handbook for those who have the vision to recognize and prepare for the rapidly changing global marketplace.

## Reading Suggestions

**Reading Time: 8-10 Hours, 260 Pages in Book**

**A Whole New Mind** is laid out in two sections. *Part One – The Conceptual Age* – includes a primer on the science the human brain, supported by numerous research studies and neurological experts. Pink even shares his experience of submitting to a traditional brain scan and a *functional* MRI to research the realities of right-brain/left-brain science. Also in this section, Pink builds his case for his assertion that the Conceptual Age is already underway. As Pink, himself, states in the Introduction, he makes "a resolutely hardheaded case, designed to appeal to the most left-brained among you for why three huge social and economic forces

– Abundance, Asia, and Automation – are nudging us into the Conceptual Age.”

In Part II, Pink introduces what he calls the “six senses,” or the skills (design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning - all right-brained activities) that executives, middle-management, and line staff alike need to develop to survive and thrive in the Conceptual Age. Each of the six chapters describes how that skill is being used in business and in everyday life, concluding with a list of tools, activities, and further reading designed to help the reader uncover and develop these skills.

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### **A Note to Our Readers**

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