

# Two page summary on chapter 3



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What can I contribute? Order No. 249258 November'08 What can I contribute? This paper outlines what Peter Drucker in Chapter 3 of his book *The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done* has to say on the importance of an executive focusing on contribution towards his organization. An effective executive must focus on what he can contribute as against what is merely required. He must focus “outward” and work towards a goal and not “downward” occupying himself with efforts and not on results. According to him executives must ask of themselves, “What can I contribute that will significantly affect the performance and results of the organization.” This will assist him in staying focused on results as opposed to efforts.

#### Introduction

In the chapter, *What can I contribute?* Drucker focuses on contributions and results. An executive sometimes gets bogged down and distracted by unnecessary things like office politics, the future of the company, his own personal growth, etc. This will make him unproductive. Instead he should ask himself “What can I contribute”. Drucker (2006) feels that to ask this question “is to look for the unused potential in the job”. He is of the view that, “The focus on contribution turns the executive’s attention away from his own specialty, his own narrow skills, his own department, and toward the performance of the whole.” Further he discusses the four basis requirements necessary for effective human relations which in turn are absolutely necessary for effective contribution. The four requirements are:

- a. Communication
- b. Teamwork
- c. Self-development

#### d. Development of others

##### Key Points in What Can I Contribute?

"What can I contribute that will significantly affect the performance and the results of the institution I serve?" This question, which Drucker thinks, an effective executive must ask, forms the basis of Drucker's views on an executive's contribution to his organization. Here, by contribution, Drucker means what one can do better than anyone else to make a difference. An executive's goal must be to make a difference and be effective. It is not about doing well in what you have specialized or your specialized area of work. It is about achieving excellence in other areas as well. An expert in one field has to learn and know about other fields, other people's perceptions, needs and limitations and use this knowledge to be effective in his work. Contribution depends on others too. One has to know what others have to contribute to make one's own contribution effective. One should also know how, when and in what form others should contribute.

For an organization contribution may mean different things. But for Drucker it means "performance in three major areas: direct results, building of values and their reaffirmation; and building and developing people for tomorrow."

A person who wants to contribute must ask himself these questions: 1) What knowledge must I acquire to make effective contribution 2) What are the efforts I must put in and the strengths I should have 3) What standards I must set in my workplace?

An executive's contribution depends on his work. It depends on the contents, levels, standards and impact of his work. His contribution also depends a lot on his relationship with other people like his associates, his superiors and his

subordinates. And lastly it depends on the tools, such as reports or meetings, he uses

### Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that an effective executive has to focus on how to make a significant contribution to his company's performance and results, must be aware of his role in the company and must be able to communicate with other people in the organization. According to Drucker (2006), " Executives who do not ask themselves " What can I contribute? " are not only likely to aim too low, they are likely to aim at the wrong things. Above all, they may define their contribution too narrowly." An executive who focusses only on efforts and " stresses his authority downwards" is likely to remain a subordinate however high his ranking may be in the company. Whereas an executive who focuses on contribution and who takes responsibility for results, no matter how junior he is, is, in the most literal sense of the term, " top management"."

### References

1. 1. Drucker Peter (2006), The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done, Collins Business