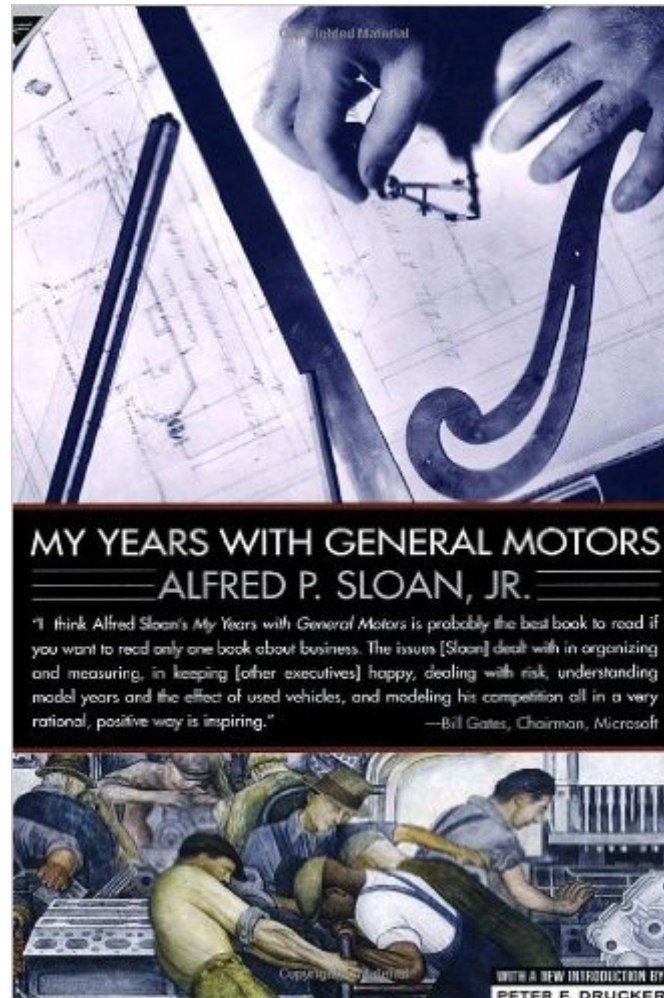


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# My Years With General Motors



## Synopsis

From the book flap: Only a handful of business books have reached the status of a classic, having withstood the test of over thirty years' time. Even today, Bill Gates praises MY YEARS WITH GENERAL MOTORS as the best book to read on business, and Business Week has named it the number one choice for its "bookshelf of indispensable reading." MY YEARS WITH GENERAL MOTORS became an instant bestseller when it was first published in 1963. It has since been used as a manual for managers, offering personal glimpses into the practice of the "discipline of management" by the man who perfected it. This is the story no other businessman could tell--a distillation of half a century of intimate leadership experience with a giant industry and an inside look at dramatic events and creative business management.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (69 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Alfred P. Sloan Jr. was CEO of General Motors from 1923 to 1946. This book was originally published in 1964. Sloan is seen as the first person to have worked out systematic organization in a big company, planning and strategy, measurements, the principle of decentralization - in short, basic concepts of a discipline of management. This is a difficult book to review, since it is more a historic piece on GM's history and development from Sloan's perspective than an autobiography. It does not discuss the individual Alfred P. Sloan Jr., it discusses Alfred P. Sloan Jr. as professional manager. The chapters also come across as business school lessons in different subjects, ranging from general management through to accounting, marketing and compensation strategies. The book consists of two parts. "Part One is an integrated continuous story of the main lines of General

Motors' progress, involving the origin and development of the corporation's basic management concepts in the areas of organization, finance and product." It discusses the extreme growth and development of the automobile industry from the early 1900s through to the early 1960s. It also discusses the methods General Motors introduced used to manage the corporation (Sloan all through the book keeps emphasizing the concept of the corporation). He later became known as a committee-man, because he used different types of committees to get/keep various divisions talking and working with each other."Part Two consists of individually distinct sections dealing in some detail with engineering, distribution, overseas operations, war and defense products, incentive compensation, and other aspects and branches of the enterprise.

This is a true business classic. In this book Alfred Sloan shares his years of wisdom - while heading General Motors - in a variety of areas including planning, strategy, finance, leadership, innovation and management. Alfred was a true pioneer of his time in building the discipline of management and his approach is just as applicable now as it was in the early 1900s. Below are key lessons in the form of excerpts that I found particularly insightful from this must read classic. 1- "I feel that a proper balance can and must necessarily be established in the course of time between the activities of any particular Operation and that of all our Operations together and as I see the picture at the moment no better way or even as good a way has yet been advanced as to ask those members of each organization who have the same functional relationship to get together and decide for themselves what should be done where coordination is necessary, giving such a group the power to deal with the problem where it is felt that the power can be constructively applied. I believe that such a plan properly developed gives the necessary balance between each Operation and the Corporation itself and will result in all the advantages of co-ordinated action where such action is of benefit in a broader way without in any sense limiting the initiative or independence of action of any component part of the group." 2- "I am not going to say that rate of return is a magic wand for every occasion in business. There are times when you have to spend money just to stay in business, regardless of the visible rate of return... Nevertheless, no other financial principle with which I am acquainted serves better than rate of return as an objective aid to business judgment.

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