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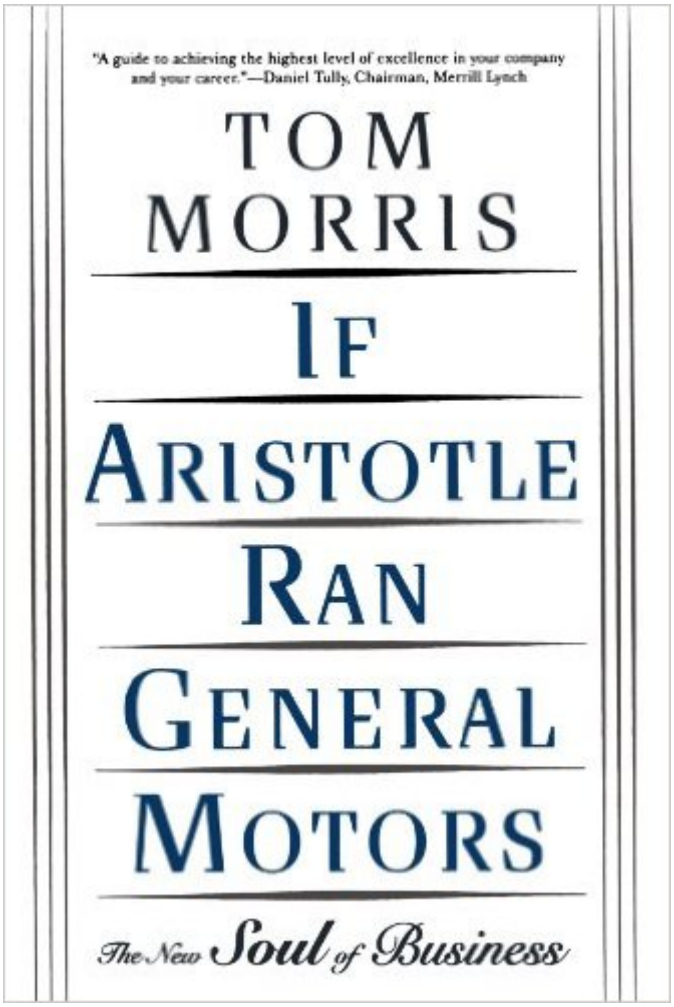
# If Aristotle Ran General Motors

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## Synopsis

Since its hardcover publication in 1997, If Aristotle Ran General Motors has been one of the year's most talked about books, not only in the United States but around the world, where it has been translated into many languages. Author Tom Morris has emerged as one of America's most popular motivational speakers, bringing his inspirational message of ancient wisdom in modern business to thousands of employees at major companies like AT&T and Merrill Lynch. In 1998 Morris will give more than 100 keynote speeches at corporate seminars to further establish If Aristotle Ran General Motors as a must-read for anyone doing business today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When you ask business people what they think about ethics and morality, they usually answer that these are important things in today's business environment. When you ask them what they REALLY think about ethics and morality, most of them don't want to answer you in any detail. A few will reply that morality is "idealistic" and that one must be "pragmatic" in everyday business practice. The belief that "morality is a topic to be debated after the bills are paid" seems to be the dominant belief in business (and other) circles. This book, brilliant in every way, attempts, and succeeds, in arguing that wisdom and its concrete manifestation in ethics, should be the cornerstone of business life. The author is a philosopher, and not a business owner, but with his insight into the dynamics of the marketplace and its optimization, his ideas are clearly thinking "out of the box". One can only hope that business leaders (and others) will discover the ideas in this book or some other like it. With

today’s headlines in corporate fraud and other scandals (some justified and some not), business people need to start believing in the efficacy of ethics in optimizing their business ventures. The preface to the book concerns "reinventing corporate spirit", the author drawing on the thoughts of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle to set up the foundation for his arguments in the book. He recognizes correctly that it is ideas that fundamentally move the world. Throughout the book are many interesting insights into the psychology of business practices. When speaking of happiness for example, in relation to Aristotle’s notion of eudaemonia, one of these is the recognition that money is frequently not the end goal for business people, the real goal being to achieve admiration in the eyes of others.

This book is not intended for the professional philosopher but for those in the business world who have an interest in business ethics. It would be quite useful as a text for kicking off an undergraduate business ethics course. Morris takes a different approach than one might expect when addressing the foundations of business ethics and excellence. Rather than focusing on rules, compliance, and the like, he places the soul of business in the context of a good life in general. He offers the idea that the foundations for sustainable excellence in business are the same as the foundations for excellence in life: truth, beauty, goodness, and unity, which correspond to four dimensions of human experience- intellectual, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual.Truth is the foundation of trust in all of life, including the life of business. Pragmatically speaking, an atmosphere of trust will actually increase efficiency in the workplace, given the amount of time and energy wasted by gossip, rumor, and speculation. An environment with respect for the truth should contain respect for people as well. Given this, the truth must be handled in a manner consistent with beauty, goodness, and unity.Beauty is important in part because it liberates, refreshes, restores, and inspires us. If we surround ourselves with beauty, and are attentive to its presence in our work, this can foster excellence. For Morris, the best businesses are those that are beautiful structures in which human beings can work, grow, and flourish.Goodness is about living well, to the fullness of our capabilities. Ethical living is not restrictive or constraining, but fosters fulfillment. In any corporate human endeavor, good people in harmonious relationships yields individual and corporate strength.

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