

BIG IDEA

Management

As the most complex and enthusiastic of social animals we have always found it easy to take responsibility for coordinating each other's efforts and resources toward shared goals.

The first writers on business named and proclaimed management as one of the most critical success factors for enterprises and institutions. But it is disturbing to see how its professionalisation has become bloated, partly through an over-rich diet of rewards and recognition. Drucker's noble dream has become tarnished and satirised. Management is where you move incompetent people to minimise the damage they can do (Dilbert), or the place where bad things happen because we have persisted in promoting people to their level of incompetence (the Peter Principle).

Yet management remains a noble art and skilled practice that has continually to be recovered and transformed, so integral is it to the innovation, vision, and humanity of collaborative endeavour.

➔ To see Nigel Nicholson's book, *The 'I' of Leadership: Strategies for seeing, being and doing* (Jossey-Bass, £18.99), go to iofleadership.com

