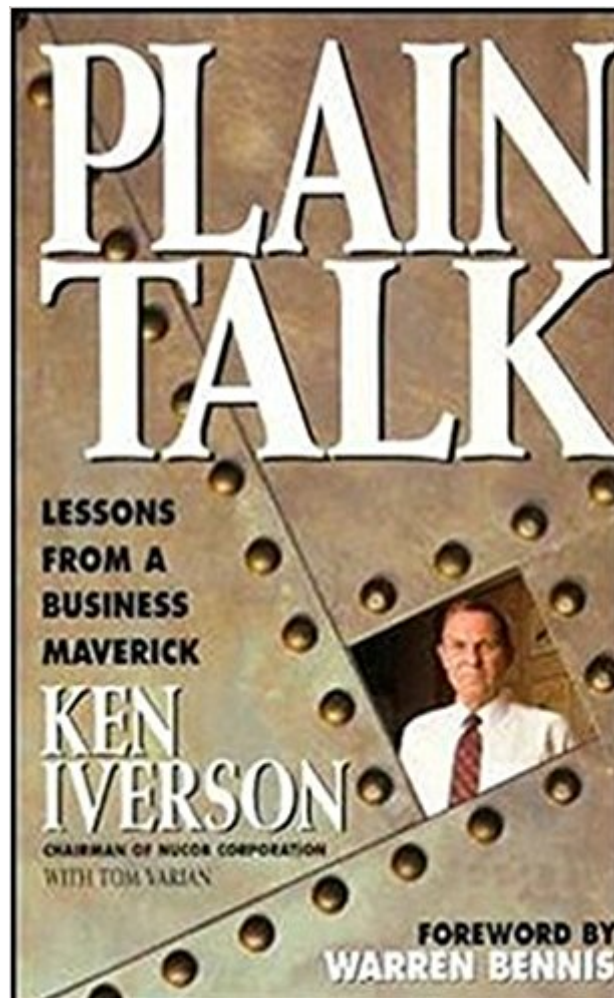




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# Plain Talk: Lessons From A Business Maverick



## Synopsis

A visionary, maverick, and genuine American business hero, Ken Iverson is one of the most closely-watched business leaders in the world. Credited with single-handedly rejuvenating the rapidly declining American steel industry to the status of world-class producer, Iverson is one of the most successful and, as he likes to point out, one of the lowest-paid CEOs in the U.S. In his long-awaited book, Ken Iverson shares his ideas, observations, and the lessons he's learned about what it takes to grow a super-competitive, world-class organization.

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## Customer Reviews

"Ken Iverson is a leader whose vision shaped an industry and the future, a leader whose character, values, and ethics merge seamlessly with the mission and values of a successful, innovative business." -Frances Hesselbein, President and CEO, The Peter F. Drucker Foundation Ken Iverson taught us that America could compete in a tough global economy. He did it in an industry where being a maverick was the only way. His accounting of Nucor's story should serve as a blue print or us all. -David Glass, President and CEO, WalMart Stores, Inc. No theory; just important, practical ideas proven by Ken Iverson in the furnace at Nucor.-Peter Larson, Chairman and CEO, Brunswick Corporation It is a masterpiece! Plain Talk provides a penetrating analysis of why Nucor has performed so well for so long, full of insights and solid conclusions. The book is easy to follow, very well written, and a 'must' read for every executive...a major contribution to business. -Vijay Govindarajan, Earl C. Dum 1924 Professor of International Business, Amos Tuck School of Business Administration, DartmouthCollege This is a story about Ken Iverson, a man who built a

major steel company from ground zero, much of it during a period when the U.S. steel industry was losing 25% of its capacity. But most of all, it's about motivating people to a level of remarkable accomplishment. You will enjoy reading this book as much as the people who work for Nucor enjoy being there.-James F. Collins, President, Steel Manufacturers Association

A visionary, maverick, and genuine American business hero, Ken Iverson is one of the most closely-watched business leaders in the world. Credited with single-handedly rejuvenating the rapidly declining American steel industry to the status of world-class producer, Iverson is one of the most successful and, as he likes to point out, one of the lowest-paid CEOs in the U.S. In his long-awaited book, Ken Iverson shares his ideas, observations, and the lessons he's learned about what it takes to grow a super-competitive, world-class organization.

This book was a required reading for a manufacturing course I took at the University of Minnesota. It was also the topic of our final paper in the class. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. As a student in the manufacturing field, Ken Iverson is truly an inspiration and an example that I hope I can follow closely. His methods for achieving a successful business are straight forward and simple but seem to be overlooked by the majority of the industry. The book itself is an easy read, providing clear explanations and examples from Ken's and Nucor's (the steel company) experiences. I highly recommend this book, not only to students in the manufacturing and business fields, but also to those already in the field who would like some inspiration and a change in the common preconceptions of the manufacturing industry.

Excellent no-nonsense approach to management geared towards solving the principal-agent problem all economists know about (yet no management guru talks about). If you had to choose just one management book to read, pick this one.

Business and society need more leaders like Ken Iverson, who is now deceased. Ken was a businessman and altruistic at the same time. Though he was not fond of Andrew Carnegie, my hero, there are many similarities between them. Ken states that his book was not a model for other businesses, but it could surely be such. I have experienced his described business reasons for failure, and I know Nucor. His descriptions for both are absolutely correct.

Plain Talk is full of ideas. Ken Iverson is one of those clear thinking, logical business leaders that

can so easily articulate great ideas. He focuses on major business objectives involves passionate employees so that they can connect with the objectives and feel a major part of the solution. Great leadership ideas and examples brought forward through "plain talk."

I love this book and tell many people about it. I even quote it in my own writing. Ken Iverson's approach to guiding organizations is the wave of the future--empowering the workforce to manage, improve, and innovate their processes and products and rewarding them for their team efforts. Anyone who has been ground down by the drudgery and politics of top-down hierarchies will enjoy and appreciate this short, easy-to-read guide to letting go and becoming a truly successful leader in the workplace.

Great book. Dont read it because I need to keep the competitive edge. My biggest take away: your employees are your most valuable resource, compensate them accordingly and listen!

I really enjoyed this book and think this is an excellent model for how to treat your people. The book might be old, but the principles are still effective today.

I've read a lot of books on management and leadership, but what Ken Iverson did with Nucor is unbelievable. This book is that story in which he lays out his philosophy and the culture at Nucor. This was, as the title alludes, no nonsense, plain talk. Everyone involved in business could benefit from reading this book whether you adopt its principles or not.

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