

The Art of Public Strategy: Mobilizing Power and Knowledge for the Common Good

By Geoff Mulgan



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The strategies adopted by governments and public officials can have dramatic effects on peoples' lives. The best ones can transform economic laggards into trailblazers, eliminate diseases, or sharply cut crime. Strategic failures can result in highly visible disasters, like the shrinking of the Russian economy in the 1990s, or the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005.

This book is about how strategies take shape, and how money, people, technologies, and public commitment can be mobilized to achieve important goals. It considers the common mistakes made, and how these can be avoided, as well as analysing the tools governments can use to meet their goals, from targets and behaviour change programmes, to innovation and risk management.

Written by Geoff Mulgan, a former head of policy for the UK prime minister, and advisor to governments round the world, it is packed with examples, and shaped by the author's practical experience. The author shows that governments which give more weight to the long-term are not only more likely to leave their citizens richer, healthier, and safer; they're also better protected from being blown off course by short-term pressures.

The book is essential reading for anyone involved in running public organizations - from hospitals and schools to national government departments and local councils - and for anyone interested in how government really works.



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Editorial Review

Review

Riveting fizzing with insights and ideas... a "must read" or anyone interested in strategic choice and action in government. Professor Colin Talbot, Manchester University Geoff Mulgan's deep insights into the politics of change derive from a profound understanding of the dynamics of modern societies, impressive creativity in the design of new social institutions, and an abiding commitment to social progress. Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business School Bold ... intelligent, well-argued and challenging. I recommend it. Peter Shergold, former head of the Australian Public Service Unusually useful and clear ... it shows how vision, courage and discipline can achieve change ... and avoids empty pieties by being firmly based on fact and experience. Les Echos, France What is needed to close the gap between existing government capacity and urgent problems is skilled strategists who can successfully integrate public aspirations, operational capacities to deliver results, and a sharp and unrelenting focus on the production of publicly valued results. Geoff Mulgan, relying on both a strong scholarly base, and broad experience in government, has written a wonderful book that can provide invaluable guidance to those who would like to offer such value creating public leadership. I recommend it highly. Mark Moore, Hauser Professor, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Good government takes the long-term seriously and there can be few people better qualified than Geoff Mulgan to show how this aspiration can become part of the day-to-day work of departments and agencies. Sir Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary & Head of the Home Civil Service, UK Government

About the Author

Geoff Mulgan CBE is director of the Young Foundation, an organization specialising in social innovation that in the past helped give birth to organizations such as the Open University and Which. He has held various roles in government in the UK, including director of the government's Strategy Unit and head of policy in the Prime Minister's office. He has lectured and advised governments in countries all over the world, from China and the USA to Australia and India. He is a visiting professor at LSE, UCL, and Melbourne University. His most recent book is *Good and Bad Power: The Ideals and Betrayals of Government* (Allen Lane, 2006). He is on the editorial board of *Political Quarterly*; a trustee of the Work Foundation and the Design Council; chair of Involve and of the Carnegie Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland.

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