

The Smart Swarm: How to Work Efficiently, Communicate Effectively, and Make Better Decisions Using the Secrets of Flocks, Schools, and Colonies

By Peter Miller

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What ants, bees, fish, and smart swarms can teach about communication, organization, and decision-making.

The modern world may be obsessed with speed and productivity, but twenty-first-century humans actually have much to learn from the ancient instincts of swarmers. A fascinating new take on collective intelligence and its colorful manifestations in some of our most complex problems, *The Smart Swarm* introduces a compelling new understanding on solving our own problems relating to such topics as business, politics, and technology.

This lively tour from *National Geographic* reporter Peter Miller introduces ant colonies that have been the inspiration for streamlining factory processes, telephone networks, and truck routes; termites, used in studies for climate-control solutions; schools of fish, on which the U.S. military modeled a team of robots; and many other examples of the wisdom to be gleaned about the behavior of crowds.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Insects are social creatures, perhaps even more social—in the strict scientific sense—than humans since they lack such socially obstructing attributes as ego, personality, and opinion. Miller, senior editor at *National Geographic*, examines hives, mounds, colonies, and swarms, whose complex systems of engagement and collective decision making have catalyzed innovations in engineering and can suggest solutions to such problems as climate change. The sophisticated system of decentralized interdependence exhibited by termites invites a lesson on how to respond to emergencies, while the chemical-based communications among African ants helped officials at Southwest Airlines define their seating policy. Insects, birds, and fish variously demonstrate the plausibility and success of disorganization leading to self-organization and leaderless processes. Adding understanding to the dark side of group dynamics and, inevitably, mob behavior is the study of locusts, innocuous until they become part of a crowd. Miller informs, engages, entertains, and even surprises in this thought-provoking study of problem making and problem solving, and through the comparison of human and insect scenarios, shows how social cues and signals can either bring about social cooperation or destruction. (Aug.)

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Review

"I loved *The Smart Swarm*. It's been a while since I was this stimulated by a book, or saw so many practical applications. And what a great read."

-Don Tapscott, author of *Wikinomics*

"With an eye for detail and an easy style, Peter Miller explains why swarm intelligence has scientists buzzing."

-Steven Strogatz, author of *Sync*, and Professor of Mathematics, Cornell University

"Most people can't fathom that ants, bees, and other social insects have found solutions to some of modern society's most vexing problems. In *The Smart Swarm*, Peter Miller offers a fascinating and articulate tour of what these creatures can do, how they do it, and the lessons for humans. This book is a gem, with a message that is as extraordinarily counter intuitive as it is valuable."

-Michael J. Mauboussin, Chief Investment Strategist at Legg Mason Capital Management and author of *Think Twice: Harnessing the Power of Counterintuition*

"[Peter Miller] has proven that there is intelligent life on earth, but it is not necessarily us. What a delightful, eye-opening book."

-Martin Cruz Smith, author of *Gorky Park* and *Stalin's Ghost*

About the Author

Peter Miller is a senior editor at *National Geographic* and has served as a writer and editor at the magazine for more than twenty-five years. He lives in Reston, Virginia, with his wife.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brian Nelson:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love The Smart Swarm: How to Work Efficiently, Communicate Effectively, and Make Better Decisions Usin g the Secrets of Flocks, Schools, and Colonies, you are able to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Bruce Bracey:

Reading a book being new life style in this season; every people loves to examine a book. When you learn a book you can get a wide range of benefit. When you read guides, you can improve your knowledge, mainly because book has a lot of information on it. The information that you will get depend on what forms of book that you have read. In order to get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself you are able to a fiction books, such us novel, comics, as well as soon. The The Smart Swarm: How to Work Efficiently, Communicate Effectively, and Make Better Decisions Usin g the Secrets of Flocks, Schools, and Colonies will give you new experience in looking at a book.

Janice Leon:

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Jason Buckley:

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