

Dr. Beyster's Responses to Questions from Bruce Bigelow, San Diego *Union-Tribune*
June 27, 2006

Why write a book about SAIC?

From the time I founded SAIC in 1969 until it grew to an \$8-billion business powerhouse 36 years later, we were told by people inside and outside the organization that there was something different about SAIC. We were a group of aggressive and reasonably smart people blending knowledge of science, entrepreneurial business methods and employee ownership into a unique business culture that worked. (*Fortune* magazine listed SAIC as one of America's 10 Most Admired Computer and Data Services Companies.) Since retiring from SAIC in 2004, I have been reflecting on what we did and trying to articulate the principles that contributed to our success. The result is this book.

And why write it now?

I never had time while building SAIC to sit down and think about the ideas we were developing and executing. I have time now, and with my 82nd birthday being celebrated this year, the time seems right!

How/Why did you decide to use a blog?

The idea of a blog was first proposed at a brainstorming meeting on how best to develop the book. I was not sure how it would work. My original plan was to send out e-mails to people I knew. But the public blog has attracted responses from people I would not have approached otherwise. It has expanded the universe of people involved in the dialogue on the project.

And why collaborate at all?

SAIC was built on open collaboration among a large network of diverse and talented people who were encouraged to contribute their ideas to the enterprise. I think a book about SAIC should be written in the same way – with input from people who made the company such a big part of their lives and contributed to its success. The blog is tapping into that network.

Have you gotten as many responses as you expected? Was the content of the responses what you expected?

The blog has been valuable to me for the added perspective it has brought on some of the issues being discussed in the book. I have received some good ideas from many of the responders and have been impressed by the thoughtful comments submitted by those who are participating.

What audience do you envision reading this book?

This book is not a history of SAIC that will only be of interest to employees and customers, or a “tell all” book about battles in the executive suite. It will be a broad-based business book that highlights the principles behind a unique company succeeding in a very competitive environment over several decades of change in the government contracting and corporate governance environment. I am writing this book to inspire other entrepreneurs to start their own science or technology companies, to turn their dreams into reality, and to motivate America’s youth to join them on their journey. And I want them to know that it is possible to work with agencies of the federal government to help them stay at the forefront of technological innovation – and to make money in the process.

Is the tone of the book formal or informal?

The book is written in a “tell it like it is” style, with anecdotes and personal experiences that highlight the themes of the 14 chapters. It is written in the third person rather than by “I” and “me” because I believe all of SAIC’s employees created our results – that “none of us was as smart as all of us.”

Does it take a critical view of the company?

The book will take a critical view of what things worked, and what things didn’t. In the book, as in the history of SAIC, there are plenty of both. I hope to make readers understand how the lessons we learned, often by trial and error, can help them grow their own businesses and ensure their success.

Will the book include your views about the course SAIC has taken since you retired? Will you have anything to say in the book about current management or the planned IPO?

What are your views about the IPO?

The book is a reflection on what we did during the decades I was CEO of the company. It is based on the unconventional and sometimes counterintuitive approaches we took to our business model. It is not about historical events, other than using facts to illuminate principles, and it is not about current events.

How are the Beyster Institute and the Foundation for Enterprise Development involved in the project and how are they different?

The Beyster Institute at the Rady School at UC San Diego is a non-profit training, education, and consulting organization dedicated to advancing entrepreneurship and employee ownership as tools for building high-performance enterprises worldwide. It is one of the programs with which I am involved, but is not involved in the book.

The Foundation for Enterprise Development is a private foundation that seeks to foster science and technology innovation through small business. We feel the book can make a contribution to this Mission and the Foundation, with the support of my daughter Mary Ann Beyster, the Foundation's President, has adopted the book as a project and is contributing time and managing resources for its development.