



The Inventor's Dilemma: The Remarkable Life of H. Joseph Gerber

By David J. Gerber

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The extraordinary life and career of the iconic twentieth-century inventor, technologist, and business magnate H. Joseph Gerber is described in a fascinating biography written by his son, David, based on unique access to unpublished sources. A Holocaust survivor whose early experiences shaped his ethos of invention, Gerber pioneered important developments in engineering, electronics, printing, apparel, aerospace, and numerous other areas, playing an essential role in the transformation of American industry. Gerber's story is remarkable and inspiring, and his method, redolent of Edison's and Sperry's, holds a key to a restored national economy and American creative vitality in the twenty-first century.

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Editorial Review

Review

"David Gerber has produced an extraordinary account of a life that combined human drama and courage with a nearly magical knack for invention and business. Gerber's portrait of his father, Joseph Gerber, is lyrical, engrossing, and crystal-clear in its exposition of often-arcane technological innovation."—Steve Courtney, author of *Joseph Hopkins Twichell: The Life and Times of Mark Twain's Closest Friend*

(Steve Courtney)

"If we needed proof that a single creative person is capable of improving the very fabric of human life, this lively portrait of one of the greatest engineers of the 20th century would offer it, incontrovertibly. H. Joseph Gerber pioneered the marriage between computation and manufacturing, transforming so many industries that it is difficult to imagine what the world would look like without him."—Shirley Ann Jackson, President, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

(Shirley Ann Jackson)

"From the horrors of the Holocaust to Ellis Island to the pages of *Fortune* magazine, Joe Gerber personified the American Dream. He invented the future. His technologies automated many industrial operations and revolutionized manufacturing workflows. These technologies allowed American businesses to compete and prosper around the globe. This book documents how he truly made a difference for his adopted country."—Frank Romano, Professor Emeritus, Rochester Institute of Technology

(Frank Romano)

"This book artfully weaves biography, a good story well told, with perceptive insight into the process of invention. A must-read for the history of technology, it explores the complex aspects of personality, skill, and knowledge that align to make a great innovator."—Peter Liebhold, Chair, Division of Work and Industry, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

(Peter Liebhold)

"A gripping story of a little-known genius—a real-life MacGyver and Thomas Edison rolled into one. Reminiscent of a Robert Caro biography, this book reveals through vivid detail a fascinating life and an important history: how Joe Gerber, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Austria, reinvented both himself and American manufacturing. From clothes and circuit boards to printing and airplanes, Gerber's inventions (starting with a variable ruler made from the elastic of his pajamas!) pioneered industrial automation and revolutionized the production of almost every product we use. By showing us Gerber's systems method of invention and the critical interdependence of manufacturing and innovation, this book is at once an intimate history and a clarion call about our future."—Barry Nalebuff, Milton Steinbach Professor, Yale School of Management, and entrepreneur (cofounder of Honest Tea)

(Barry Nalebuff)

"The Inventor's Dilemma reveals to the general public the genius of inventor Joseph Gerber, an immigrant to

America who created industrial tools and systems that dramatically increased productivity in measurement, plotting, drafting, textiles, and apparel. The book illuminates the inventor's thought processes. It also tells a compelling story of his harrowing escape from Nazi Vienna as a teenager."—Frederick H. Abernathy, Gordon McKay Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Emeritus, Harvard University, and cofounder of [TC]² (Textile/Clothing Technology Corporation)

(Frederick H. Abernathy)

"An excellent addition to history of technology and business collections. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All readership levels." — American Library Association

About the Author

David J. Gerber has been a fellow at the Yale School of Management and has handled legal, technical, and business responsibilities for Gerber Scientific as an officer and a director. He lives in West Hartford, CT.

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