

## **Thirty Years in the Idea Factory**

Jon Gertner's wonderful history of the first ~60 years of Bell Labs (1925-1984) celebrates a number of the unique aspects of the Bell Labs culture that made working there such a memorable experience. I arrived in 1982, just before the consent decree broke AT&T apart, and, over the next 30 years, was witness to the changes that led people to declare, somewhat prematurely, that "Bell Labs is dead". Drawing examples from my own experience, I'll describe some of the principles that formed the essence of Bell Labs and, hopefully, spark a discussion about the role of research in today's corporations.