# Culture

## Master Guide Book

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# 38-11 Contagious Culture

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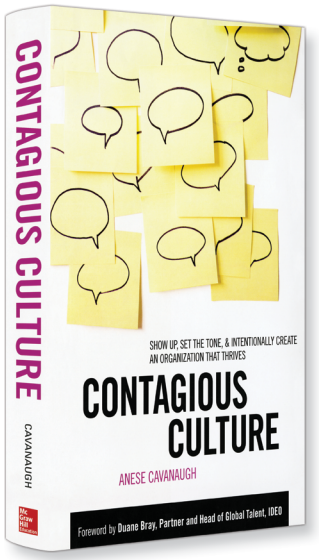
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Leadership

# Contagious Culture

## Show Up, Set the Tone and Intentionally Create an Organization That Thrives




by Anese Cavanaugh

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The key to any company's success lies in its culture. This game-changing guide shows you how to shape and revitalize your culture — by setting the tone, engaging the team and creating a dynamic working environment that encourages growth, productivity and innovation. It all starts with you.

Using award-winning organizational advisor Anese Cavanaugh's unique IEP Method ®, you can take control of the culture you work in and build a healthier, more functional environment — from the inside out.

You'll learn how to enhance your Intentional Energetic Presence (IEP) so you'll always be fully present, purposeful and prepared to share your vision with infectious energy and enthusiasm.

*Contagious Culture* is so much more than a leadership guide. It's a complete cultural mindshift that's not only exciting for you and your team — it's absolutely, positively contagious.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to craft your intention and make a real impact.
- Unleash your energy — and watch it spread like wildfire.
- Show up for others by setting yourself up for success.
- Bring out the best in everyone — including yourself.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **CONTAGIOUS CULTURE**

**by Anese Cavanaugh**

**The author:** Anese Cavanaugh is a leadership and collaboration advisor to leaders and organizations primarily in the design, service and innovation spaces. In addition to creating and teaching the IEP Method®, she writes a "Showing Up" column on Inc.com and contributes to other publications, including *The Huffington Post* and CEO.com.

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## Introduction

As we step into this next era of leadership, when we have more to do, more to care for and more opportunities to make impact, there is a call, a demand even, to show up bigger, better and more in service of others than ever. The more we listen and honor this call, the stronger we become. When we lean into it, we ripple. We become productively contagious.

The days of being able to lead based simply on our titles, skills, competencies and even our emotional intelligence are gone. The days of it being enough to just be a good leader and make cool stuff happen? Gone. In order for us to innovate to the next level of business and to solve the many, many problems that we want to solve, it's going to require a new kind of leadership. It's going to require that we create more leaders than ever. And it's going to require that we intentionally infect our cultures with impact-focused leadership, love and care — starting with ourselves first.

## The Fundamentals of Showing Up

Let's talk about "showing up" in culture, regardless of whether that culture is you as an individual or your team, your organization or your family unit as a whole. How you show up will impact everything. Showing up includes your intention, your energy and your presence, which emanates from you everywhere you go. Your presence creates impact on every level. This can be a great thing.

### Holding Your Fate

First, let's get one thing straight about your fate: You determine how you want to show up and what you're going to create in your life. You have power. Your fate starts with taking accountability for what you're creating and for owning your impact.

Here's the gift: You can change your culture, your team, your family dynamics, your satisfaction with your job, the amount of energy you have in the morning, anything. Why? Because you *do* have control of *you*.

No matter how horrible your boss is, your employees, your sister, the stranger on the street who just yelled at you because he's having a really bad day, even your culture, *you* are in control of *you*. With intention, presence and action, you can shift it.

The team member who's not showing up as you like, your boss not "seeing" or acknowledging you, your culture being restrictive, your kids who are fighting constantly, your spouse not listening to you — believe it or not, you have influence in all of this. And the influence starts with your awareness, your presence, your intention and how you show up.

The fate of your culture — whatever culture we're talking about — is yours for the influencing.

### You Are Contagious

Consider the leaders who inspire you most, who feel the best to be around. What makes them contagious?

Consider when you're at your best. What's present? What's going on? A likely common denominator is that there is a rich quality of energy and presence that *feels* good to be with. It's contagious. And so are you.

This is great because it means you can create the culture you want ... if you're intentional about whom and what you want to infect. It also means that you can decide whether or not to "catch" someone else's attitude. You're contagious and so are others.

**1-800-SUMMARY**
**service@summary.com**

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **S. Dayton,** Contributing Editor

Team X, a team of eight, was having some issues with collaboration and productivity. The majority of their issues were coming from two people — let's call them Julie and George. Both were brilliant and talented; however, they were also completely committed to snarkiness, judgment, blame and basically bringing everyone down.

Here's what would happen. Everyone would get started, and the room would feel good. People would be happy, and then Julie or George would make some Debby Downer comment that would put a bit of a stink in the room. The other would climb on. And down the whole team would go.

Here's the thing: it wasn't so much what they said; it was more how they "showed up" in that meeting. Body language, tone, facial expressions were all at hand. Even more powerful, though, was their energy and intention. You could *feel* that it wasn't a positive thing. All the momentum and positivity that could have resulted in a killer meeting was deflated.

They all leave feeling less than inspired, a little or a lot frustrated, already dreading the next meeting. Not Julie and George though — they feel great and validated, "See, these meetings suck; they're a waste of time."

Julie and George are a catalyst but actually just a symptom of the bigger problem. The bigger problem is that the team and company are not taking a stand for focusing on results, being intentional and showing up well. And the leaders are not holding people accountable for doing so (or themselves in many cases).

## Showing Up with Intentional Energetic Presence (IEP)

As a leader, you have a ton of people who want things from you. People needing things, pulling at you, needing nourishment and direction from you — all important. And the stronger your Intentional Energetic Presence (IEP) is, not only do you have more to give them and a better perspective to give it from, you have more of you as well.

Consider a time (maybe now), when you're feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, maybe frustrated or even resentful about a relationship or something you're leading. If you drill down, it's likely that there is a place where you are feeling depleted and you're not filling your own reserves. When we take the time to stop, breathe and look at where we ourselves need that nourishment — and we honor it — more space and patience open up to be there for others.

The art of showing up is a dance between being there for yourself and being there for others. We need to have all the pieces of the puzzle — self-care, people impact — in order to be the most energized, healthy, vital person possible. The best way to have all the pieces is to *show up* for your life. We all have the power to show up.

Showing up is a choice. It's that moment when you're moving along in your life, or in that meeting, and you have the urge to do something, say something, to step in, to take the high road, to swing out, to be accountable, to say yes! or no! — it's that moment. And stepping in is the difference between whether your life moves forward and you drive it and big awesome things happen and you feel tuned in and turned on, or your life moves forward (or maybe backward or not at all) and it drives you, leaving you feeling left behind. Showing up and stepping in makes the difference between power and hope, passivity and hopelessness, adventure and big ... or beige. It's the difference between leadership and abdication, inspiration and force. It is the difference.

There are five components of showing up.

**Intention** is what you want to have happen, a desire. It's what you plan to achieve, a determination.

**Energy** is how you take care of yourself as well as what you bring to the table. It's how you set yourself up to be the most thriving, sustainable, powerful instrument of change possible.

**Presence** is how you show up, how people experience you, how present you are to your life right now and to the person in front of you. It's right here, right now, in this moment.

**Action and skills** are what ensures that you move forward and accomplish your goals. Action is where you make things real.

**Impact** is what you make happen. It's what happens overall as a result of applying great intention, energy, presence, actions and skills to what you wanted to create in the first place.

You combine action and leadership skills with your IEP, and you have a powerful force for impact.

## Crafting Intention and Creating Impact

Here is a scenario. You have a big conversation coming up with your *partner* (insert: spouse, colleague, direct report, kid, parent and landlord) today. You have three ways you may be going into this; clear, clean, powerful, tuned in — you are ready to roll. *Or* nervous, unclear, defensive, scared — you'd love to postpone. *Or* you haven't even given it a thought; it's just another of 50-plus conversations you have today — you'll figure it out when you get there.

Think about the meetings or the conversations you have planned today. How clear are you on what you want to talk about, the impact you want to have, how you want to feel, how you want others to experience you and what you want to make sure you all walk away with? This one is totally in your control. And this is part of your leadership IEP.

How you enter your state of being entering these meetings and conversations will have a big influence on how easy and effective each conversation is. It will also influence whether or not you get the outcomes you want and whether this meeting or conversation or whatever you're up to was a great use of your time, with solid next steps and a plan, or just another thing to trudge through.

Here is the framework or formula to use to help create intentional impact. This is a core component of the IEP Method.

**Step 1: Outcomes.** What are the outcomes you want to get out of this interaction or meeting? What do you want to have as a result? What do *you* want to walk away with?

**Step 2: Impact.** What's the impact you want to have on these people or this person? The emotional impact? How do you want them to feel? How do you want them to experience you? How do *you* want to feel?

**Step 3: Presence.** How will you have to show up to create the outcomes and impact you want to create? What will your body language be, your energy, your vibe, your intention? What will others have to feel from you?

**Step 4: Beliefs.** What will you have to believe in order to show up this way? What will you have to believe about this person, the project, the company, the meeting, your kid, your partner, your dog?

**Step 5: Action.** This is often a two-parter: What will you have to *do* in the meeting or conversation? And what will you have to do afterward to move it all forward? Very often simply nurturing steps 1 through 4 will set you up beautifully for presence and impact, but more often, if you do just steps 1 through 4 but don't do any action, you are missing the good stuff that will make this all real in the world.

## Showing Up for You

You're about to walk into a meeting, you've got to be "on," but you've got all this stuff whirling, you've just had a fight with a colleague, and now, you've got to show up. But you're in the weeds. What to do? Do a Presence Reboot.

The intention of the Presence Reboot is simply to show up intentionally. Here's a breakdown of each step in real time and what it might look like:

**1. Get present and notice.** As you're about to go on stage, or walk into a room, or step into a conversation, notice your posture, how you're feeling, what your energy is like, what you're putting out there and your attitude.

**2. Intend and decide.** If you're not where you want to be, own it. Envision what you'd like instead, and decide to shift. Notice what's in the gap between where you are and where you'd like to be instead. What's missing? What's present? What do you need to do to take care of yourself?

**3. Take care and notice.** You might notice that you just need to breathe and shift your posture. You might need a quick attitude adjustment. You might need to access the state of gratitude or curiosity. You're going to actually take care of those things as best you can in this moment.

**4. Breathe and envision.** Again envision how you'd like to feel and show up instead. What experience do you want to have? What is your desire? What is your desired experience right now? How do you want others to experience you? Envision that in your mind's eye, feel it in your body and then ...

**5. Step in and reboot.** Keep doing this over and over again anytime you check out or lose presence.

Fortunately, the more you practice your reboots, the easier they become.

### You, Yes, You

The Essential You is *you* at the core of it all. This is the authentic you, not the you that your boss or partner or organization or society or even your mother thinks you should be. Just you.

You are at the center of the model, because leadership starts with you. Consider this "home base." This is where we dive into your core values, your purpose or "why," the vision for your life (or your culture or organization if you're applying the model to your company), your beliefs and desires, and your natural state. This is also where we explore how to work with your space as a contagious leader. We'll call this space your "bubble."

With everything you have to engage with every day, it's essential to be able to "Bubble Up" so you can create space for yourself to breathe and lead from. Your bubble is a sanctuary and an important first step in grounded leadership.

Inside the bubble is your stuff: your hopes, dreams, fears, energy, creativity, power, lightness, darkness, beliefs, presence, all of it. Outside of the bubble is the rest of the world's stuff: their hopes, dreams, fears, energy, lightness, darkness, projections, demands and to-dos for you. Their stuff is their stuff — especially the stuff they want you to do or be.

The main reason we want to nurture our bubble and hold our space is so that we stay clear and aware of what energy belongs to us and what doesn't.

By using the concept of the bubble, we make it easier to stay true to our own authentic energy without changing it to match someone else's.

If you find yourself not feeling clear or strong, take a moment to refill your bubble with your own energy. If there's anything holding you back, or if it feels like other people's negative energy keeps getting in there, no worries; let that stuff go. Notice it, and release it back to its rightful owner. The bubble is a practice of intention, and the more you do it, the stronger your bubble becomes.

**Values and Purpose.** Your values are the things that drive you. They're what's important to you, what you stand for, what you hold dear. They're you. Your purpose is why you get out of bed in the morning. It's what you want your life and your impact to be about.

When you are on track with purpose, there's energy and inspiration. Burnout does not exist. When you are disconnected from purpose, burnout and resentment build, sleepiness occurs, you hear a lot of "I'm tired. I'm in a funk. I need to be inspired." When values are dishonored, they flare and deflate and create disconnection. Feeling the ick, feeling out of integrity and getting triggered by the littlest things can all tie back to misaligned and dishonored values and purpose. It's all related.

You need to be present and pay attention to what's true for you. Your body and intuition, your friends' reflections, the questions you ask yourself, the stories you tell and what you do all point to your values and purpose every day. The more aware you are of your core values and the more in alignment you are with them, the better, clearer, stronger and more grounded you'll feel — and the more solid your leadership and message. It doesn't mean you're honoring them perfectly — it means you know where you are, and you take full ownership for them.

When you're present and grounded in the Essential You (your bubble, your vision, your values, your purpose), you're working your Internal and External IEP to set yourself up for success, and you're working your leadership skills and competencies to get done what you want to get done, you're better set up for impact.

## Setting Yourself Up for Success

There are two quadrants of Internal IEP: Physical and Environmental Energy and Mental and Emotional Energy. They are often the most foundational, offering the quickest and highest leverage in optimizing one's presence and impact.

**The Physical and Environmental Energy Quadrant** includes things like self-care, food, hydration, closets, calendars, wellness practices, health care, travel wellness, hygiene, the people you hang out with, your home, your office space and other things that have a huge impact on your internal energy.

Anything you put into your body, do with your body or surround your body with has an impact on your Physical and Environmental Energy. You have a ton of control here.

If you think of your body as an instrument for impact and as a partner that you are in a very important relationship with, things open up. You can be more intentional with eating food that fuels you, supports the relationship and gives you a stronger energetic field.

You must be your own advocate and driver for feeling good.

Intentionally nourishing your Mental and Emotional Energy field is another quick and high leverage way to build a strong Internal IEP foundation.

**The Mental and Emotional Energy Quadrant** includes things like your thoughts, assumptions and beliefs, your focus, your complaints and how much space you leave for authentic emotion. Anything you think, feel or make up has an impact on your Mental and Emotional Energy. You also have a ton of control here.

Mental and Emotional Energy bleeds into everything: your level of productivity, how you show up, how you feel, your presence, how you navigate conflict, even the tone in which you respond to email. What you think impacts how you feel, which impacts how you show up.

## Showing Up for Success

Just like Internal IEP, External IEP has its own two quadrants. The third quadrant, Vibrational Energy, is about the energy you bring to the table and how people experience you. The final and fourth quadrant, Relational Energy, is about how you show up in relationships and how you create healthy relationships.

**Vibrational Energy** is your third quadrant for nourishing and optimizing your Energetic Presence. While you have little control over how others "experience you," you have a ton of influence in how you set yourself up to show well. When it comes to presence, know this:

- You are always having an impact, and that impact is entirely up to you.
- What you put out there is constantly being cycled and reflected right back to you. You create your impact and experience.
- People may forget what you say and do, but they'll remember forever how you make them feel.

- The minute you walk into a room, onto a stage or into a meeting, you're being assessed for your presence: how you look, how you feel and how you make people feel.
- If you think Vibrational Energy and Presence don't apply to you, it's highly possible you have the most to gain from playing with it.

It's helpful to notice what you default to when it comes to presence. We all have a default presence; it's the presence we hold when we're not being intentional, when we think no one is paying attention to us, when we're simply not present. Furrowed brows, crossed arms, slumped shoulders — they all portray irritation or disinterest, and so often this is not reflective of what's going on. It's the default. Just being aware of it can often change it.

Your Vibrational Energy is contagious. Remember, the lowest vibration will win, unless you lead it.

**Relational Energy** is your fourth quadrant for nourishing and optimizing your Energetic Presence. Just as you have your own unique energetic field and presence, so do your relationships. Your IEP plays a big role in the energy of your relationships. You set the tone.

Every relationship you're in qualifies as a "system" — your team, your organizational culture, your partnerships, your marriage, family relationships and friendships. Each system has its own energy and dynamics.

Consider the relationships you have that make you soar; you feel amazing when you leave a conversation; you feel seen. Feel into *that* energy. Now consider the relationships that, when they pop up on caller ID or they walk into the room, you feel your heart sink. Feel into *that* energy.

While you have people who have that impact on you, you are also that person for others. Which person are you?

Remedying the challenging relationships starts with awareness and the desire to make it better. To address this by going straight to "fixing the culture" is a spiritual bypass. We want to address this individually and in the different relationships that make up the culture. As always, it starts with you.

If the relationship is rocking it, name it, thank it and let your person or team know how much it means to you. If the relationship is not rocking it, it needs more TLC, more intention, more truth telling and self-reflection, and ultimately more work. This will be as easy or as difficult as you choose to make it.

If you hang out with mission-driven people who take care of themselves, you're more likely to be mission driven and taking fine care of yourself. Hang out with people who complain, focus on the "ick" and don't take care of themselves, and you're more likely to follow suit.

Consider the five people you spend the most time with, personally and professionally. Think of this core group of people as your "Posse." There are two things to consider: first, who you're spending your time with. Are these people a good influence on who you're becoming, or not? And second, you have an opportunity to be incredibly intentional and craft a professional Posse or advisory board. Whom do you want to surround yourself with?

The right Posse will provide you with the following benefits:

**Community.** Being a leader or an entrepreneur (or parent, teacher, human being, etc.) can be a very lonely venture; don't do it alone.

**Support.** Having people around you to champion what you're up to and believe in you will be priceless, providing wisdom and courage when you need it most.

**Possibility.** Seeing what your peers and colleagues do, how they generate, how they lead and how they navigate obstacles exposes you to new possibilities, ideas and opportunities you won't see alone.

**Growth.** Having people in your sphere committed to your being your best and rocking it with your work in the world provides you with great feedback and acceleration.

**Care.** Your Posse will love and support you through thick and thin. They'll see you as big, even when you're falling down. And they'll catch you, help you brush yourself off and then send you back out there to get bigger.

Having a Posse is a two-way street of reciprocity; the power is in connection, complementing skill sets and learning together.

You don't have to ditch anyone. Proactively search out people you want to surround yourself with. And with this new level of intention, enjoy as you find people serendipitously start to drift in and out of your sphere.

## Showing Up for Others

Now that we've built your own personal internal foundation, we shift our focus to leading and Showing Up for others.

### Out-Gracing "Busy" and Burnout

What's your organization's relationship with busy? We buy into this idea of being busy like it's a badge of honor. We've turned busy into the new "fine." Often we don't even realize we've been infected until someone, in a moment of care, presence and curiosity, asks, "Really?

What are you so busy with?" And then we get to get present to what really is.

Having a lot going on is not going to go away. You likely have more to do than ever. And you can do it — maybe even all of it. It's not about being less busy; it's about being more intentional.

Personalize "busy," and treat her as a friend. She's here to inform you of when you're feeling overwhelmed, when you need a reboot, when you need to be more intentional, and when you need to re-evaluate if you're spending your time and leveraging yourself as optimally as possible. Busy can teach you to ask for help, to delegate and to intend better.

Burnout usually gets attributed to people working too hard or too long. But that's just a piece of the puzzle. There are bigger factors at play, and all of them are addressable. More often, burnout comes from one or a combination of the following:

- Lack of connection to purpose in what one's working on, resulting in boredom, disinterest and apathy.
- Lack of connection to people, not feeling seen or cared for and not having a shared sense of purpose.
- Lack of celebration, appreciation and acknowledgement for wins (little or big).
- Lack of safety for vulnerability, creative expression and authenticity.
- Lack of a reboot and recovery between projects or trips.
- Lack of empowerment and accountability, and not being and feeling well used.
- Lack of intention, presence and, therefore, boundaries.

These components alone are powerful, but put them all together and you have an epic recipe for disaster: burnout, attrition and losing your best people. If you see your people approaching burnout, don't just write it off to working hard. Get curious — what else is going on? Get in there.

## Growing Leaders

Your job is not just to lead; it's to make others around you even better leaders than you are. Besides looking at a leader's skills, presence and "hunger," leadership can be assessed on three primary things: 1) How do you make people feel? Do they follow you because they want to or because they have to? 2) How effective are you at forwarding the vision and purpose of your charter? Are you and your people creating positive impact? 3) How many leaders are you creating and activating? Are you catalyzing and nurturing growth, setting people up to be even more successful than yourself?

In today's business climate, doing good work, growing cool companies and putting good stuff out into the world is not enough anymore. In order to lead, innovate and create impact like we want and need to, we have to be growing even stronger and more purpose-driven leaders.

This means you have a tremendous opportunity — and responsibility — to Show Up, create space and hold a powerful "container of potential" for the leaders you lead. With strong and positive intent, solid energy and self-care, and an authentic and powerful presence to lead people with, people will want to follow you. You can grow them.

The size of the container you hold for people you lead is a big deal. It influences who they become, what they believe, what they'll step into and how they'll show up.

The container is what you believe is possible for this person (people often can't see it for themselves) and the energetic space of potential you hold for him or her to step into. It's an intention. When you point people to what you see is possible and the intention you hold for them, they get the gift of seeing their reflection in your eyes. They're seeing what you believe they're capable of.

What's the size of the container you hold for your people? What's the size of the container you hold for yourself? If you're having a hard time holding a container for yourself, hold one for someone else. Nine times out of ten, when we're struggling with our own stuff, the best way to move through it is to go and contribute to another human being.

## Life-Giving Engagements, Agreements and Meetings

In the land of impact and culture, meetings and live engagements are some of the most powerful places we have to ensure that our interactions are life-giving, forward-moving and, at a minimum, meaningful. Even a two-minute encounter can have positive ripple effects on someone else's day — if it's done intentionally and you Show Up.

You can have the best agenda and the best presence, but if the environment is weak, the food is not nourishing or you all show up exhausted, you've lost a huge energetic opportunity.

Before you even plan the meeting, get clear on the why, the what, the how and the who. What do you want to get out of this meeting? Who should be at it — truly?

The point of having agreements set up is so that everyone can show up well, be safe and do their best work together. There are several types of agreements. Cultural agreements are implicit in your cultural values.

Organizational or relational agreements are generally set as a location, as a team or in partnership and are operating at all times. And special agreements may be set for a specific meeting or conversation.

Team agreements will often change over time. The agreements are generally a reflection of what the team values and also any challenges or tensions the team may be experiencing. For example, if the team creates an agreement for *direct engagement*, it means no talking behind one another's backs and taking issues to one another directly. If a team has an agreement of *time integrity*, it may be because they all value timeliness, or often it's because lateness has been an issue in the organization.

Work with your team to figure out which agreements will serve you most. And then revisit them. Agreements are living partners to help us connect, learn and do our best work together. Agreements grow as you do.

## Showing Up for Culture

Culture can be seen on two levels: what the company is *doing* for culture and who leaders are *being*.

The doing can include things like how leaders manage schedules, do training and feedback, set up their environment, manage HR policies, conduct onboarding and exiting processes, and lead meetings, how much fun they have, how they support connection, what kind of food and perks they have in place. What you do is important. All of it provides structure and support for your culture.

The being includes things like organizational values and purpose and how a leader shares them (or not). It also can include how each person shows up as a leader, how leaders regard one another, how they deal with conflict or challenges, and whether they assume good in one another or the worst. The being is in how every single person (especially you) Shows Up.

You can feel the being in the energy of the culture as well: the energy you feel when you get off the elevator or walk in the front door, the amount of care, comfort and integrity you feel just sitting in the room. The feeling people get from the vibe is the culture. The unspoken agreements and ways of being that people have with each other is the culture. How people feel is the culture.

### Organizational Needs for a Healthy Culture

The seven core components to build trust, create positive energy, and create an environment where people can show up authentically and powerfully (at work, at home and in any of your relationships) are

- Shared values, vision and purpose
- The intention of contribution and service
- Safety to show up, speak the truth and take risks
- Curiosity and vulnerability
- Accountability and ownership
- Reciprocity
- Conscious measurement and rewards

### Creating a Culture People *Want* to Catch

What's the difference between a company that creates positive contagions and one that creates negative contagions? Here are five main indicators to consider:

1. The degree to which people feel they can honor their core values and pursue meaningful, purposeful work.
2. The degree to which people feel seen, heard, valued and connected.
3. The degree to which people feel they can make an impact.
4. The degree to which they can grow and be challenged and the size of the "container" people hold for themselves, their clients and one another.
5. The level of intentionality of every leader (and employee) in that company in how they show up and lead.

People want to contribute, they want to know their life matters, they want to get really good at stuff, they want to grow, they want freedom and they want to have an impact. Nurture these desires — these needs — in your organization, and you'll have a self-propelling culture driven by happy impact agents.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Contagious Culture*, you'll also like:

1. ***The High-Speed Company*** **by Laurence Haughton, Jason Jennings**. Jennings shares strategies demonstrated by businesses with proven records of creating cultures with strong purpose, trust and follow-through.

2. ***The Inspiring Leader*** **by Scott Edinger, John Zenger, Joseph Folk**. The authors discuss the behaviors exhibited by the most successful leaders and include advice on how to implement them.

3. ***The 360 Leader*** **by John C. Maxwell**. According to Maxwell, you can learn to develop your influence from wherever you are in the organization by becoming a 360-degree leader.

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# A Cure for the Common Company

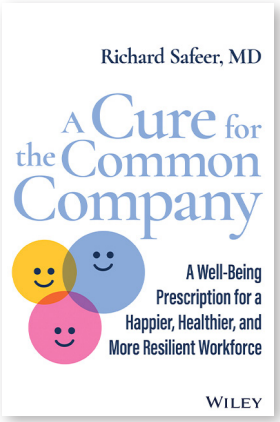
Richard Safeer

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# A Cure for the Common Company

## A Well-Being Prescription for a Happier, Healthier, and More Resilient Workforce

*by* **Richard Safeer**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Every day, leaders in organizations small, large, private, and public are struggling to reconcile their own well-being with their work and figuring out how to support the health of their teams. Many companies offer programs, a wellness portal, and health-promoting policies, but the environment, the people, and the business priorities aren't always aligned. Employees need more–a lot more–for their well-being.

Many executives recognize the impact of workplace culture on employee well-being, especially in light of the global pandemic. But how do we build a well-being culture and what are the culture building blocks of such a workplace? There's a prescription for a happier, healthier, and more resilient team and organization through building a well-being culture.

Leaders who take a systematic approach by using the six building blocks of a well-being culture described by Richard Safeer in ***A Cure for the Common Company: A Well-Being Prescription for a Happier, Healthier, and More Resilient Workforce*** can impact their team's well-being and even the whole company.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The case for building a workplace well-being culture.
- Six building blocks to create a well-being culture.
- Tips and techniques for implementing each building block.
- Ways in which this work will benefit the workforce and the organization.

## The Case for Building a Workplace Well-Being Culture

Our home and our community play a big role in our happiness and health as well. Yes because we spend most of our waking hours working, our thoughts and behaviors during these hours strongly influence our well-being. As a leader, manager, health promotion specialist, human resource professional, lifestyle medicine clinician, or any other professional influencing employees, you have a unique opportunity to create a happier, healthier, and more resilient team and workforce. You might even like the way it feels yourself!

There are plenty of reasons to have health and well-being goals. Foremost, in the wake of a global pandemic, there is an epidemic of mental health challenges. Our stress levels and feelings of happiness (or sadness) impact many, if not most of our other health choices. Who hasn't sat down in front of the TV with a bowl of ice cream or a bag of potato chips after a stressful day of work? The same health challenges that plagued us before the arrival of COVID-19, such as smoking, obesity and insufficient exercise, still exist–possibly worse than before.

All too often, our society praises individual achievement, while underappreciating collective efforts. Yes, sometimes teams are recognized, but this is America, the land of "rugged individualism," and by and large, the expectation is that we make advances on our own, including with our well-being. Hats off to those who can improve their health and well-being without anyone's help. However, most of us continue to learn and understand that it is communities that have the bigger and more lasting influence on our behaviors, beliefs, and thoughts.

So why aren't organizations taking advantage of what we know to be true? We are more likely to be healthy and well when we are in a supportive group, team, and community that has aligned behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes around well-being (aka, well-being culture). Perhaps it's because we haven't previously clearly articulated the importance of organizational well-being culture and how to shape it.

Most people want to work in an environment in which they feel valued and supported. People generally know what is healthy, but they face challenges adopting healthy behaviors and getting rid of unhealthy ones. Consequently, many people in the workforce seek employers that support health and happiness, and those who already work for these employers tend to stay longer. In addition to improving recruitment and retention, a well-being culture results in improved performance, decreased absenteeism, and thus, a positive financial picture. A well-being culture is a competitive advantage. There are six building blocks any organization can leverage to create a well-being culture.

## Building Block #1: Shared Values

Shared values matter. But it's unusual for a company to put employee health and well-being on the high-priority list, alongside goals like profitability, outstanding customer service, and new product innovation. However, we have clear evidence that a culture that puts employee well-being at the top, starting with its values, will lead to success.

It's a common misunderstanding that employee health and well-being only benefits the individual or only the employer. Everyone benefits. These mutual benefits stem from shared values, the priorities that both employees and the employer embrace. When employees appreciate that their job and their employer value their well-being, then companies flourish.

A company's values serve as the beacon for how the company makes decisions, behaves, and prioritizes its resources and effort. Values = priorities. It's worth the time and energy to focus on the company values because they serve as a rudder to keep the company on course. Hopefully, when assessing your core values, you're starting from a place where values include health and well-being themes.

The themes don't have to be blatant, like exercise. An organization that values work-life balance is doing wonders for well-being by allowing families to flourish, employees to recharge before coming back to the office, and keeping stress levels down as employees deal with life's speed bumps. Exploration of shared values will help you land on some very meaningful themes. One step toward making your shared values meaningful is to translate them to a vision for your well-being culture. Your well-being vision helps employees understand what well-being ideally looks like as it pertains to the organization.

Once the health and well-being values and vision are identified and recognized, the message needs to be broadcast frequently and through a myriad of avenues to reinforce and amplify the importance of this value to the community. This is not the kind of thing you want to keep secret. The last thing your organization wants to do is spend time and energy creating shared values and letting them sit on a shelf. It will be disheartening and demoralizing if the workforce doesn't see the shared values lived.

Working in a toxic environment wreaks havoc on well-being but obviously it doesn't have to be this way.

## Building Block #2: Social Climate

The social climate at some companies is sunny and warm, while at others it's cloudy and can even be downright frosty sometimes. Working in a toxic environment wreaks havoc on well-being but obviously it doesn't have to be this way. From frontline supervisors to the C-suite, leaders can promote a positive social climate by building a sense of community, fostering positive attitudes, and creating a shared vision. Ladders set the tone by making people feel included and united in their efforts. Feeling good about where you work and the people you work with is a big, big part of well-being.

A good social climate is also good for the organization. Research that goes back 50 years shows that a good social climate positively impacts the organization in the following ways:

- Improves recruitment and retention
- Enhances trust
- Increases resilience
- Lowers the cost of doing business

A good social climate contributes to happier, healthier, and more resilient teams and a more financially sound organization. It's really the essence of creating a "work family." Most of us yearn to be part of a caring, uplifting, positive community; when it's not available, we may look elsewhere. Being part of a group fills a human need. Socializing is not a "nice to have." Socializing actually reduces our risk of catching colds and developing chronic diseases and helps us recover more quickly from an illness. The absence of feeling socially connected increases our health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

Indisputably, those with social support will live healthier, happier, and longer. It's imperative that we create a sense of community within the workplace if we expect healthy and happy employees and a thriving organization.

Here are some ways to enhance your sense of community:

**Onboarding:** This is the time to set expectations for how they will contribute to the greater workplace community. Don't leave the important message of collegiality, trust, and collaboration to a self-paced mandatory pre recorded training.

**Meet and Greet:** Creating spaces where employees can congregate and socialize is one way to create a sense of community.

**Vulnerability and Trust:** When we trust our colleagues, we feel safe, which lowers stress levels and allows us to be our authentic selves, allowing full collaboration with others on the team. One way to improve trust is to foster vulnerability by showing that we are human.

**Feeling Respected and Having Our Opinions Count:** Trust enables us to feel comfortable offering an opinion. This contributes to greater levels of creativity, collaboration, and productive solutions.

**Communication:** If you want everyone to feel like they're on the same team, you'll have to master communication.

**Having Fun Together:** Organizations that integrate fun into work have lower levels of absenteeism, greater job satisfaction, increased morale, and a greater sense of team bonding.

**Volunteering:** Volunteering lends itself to being grateful, which contributes to happiness. It also helps bring purpose to the day, creates teamwork, and generates positive feelings about the contribution one is making.

Having a good social climate makes it easier to establish and maintain relationships. These relationships extend well beyond your immediate team when the atmosphere fosters accessibility and approachability. When a positive social climate exists, people look forward to coming to work. Consider how your organization can implement strategies that support a good social climate across the entire organization.

## Building Block #3: Norms

There is power in norms to influence individual behavior when the circumstances are right and they give us leverage when trying to create a well workforce. Think about your

own struggles to adopt a healthy behavior. It's hard when our goals go against norms in our immediate social circles. Likewise, it's much easier to adopt a behavior when all the cool kids are doing it and when norms align with our own goals.

Norms are one of the key building blocks of culture. Norms are "the way we do things around here," the usual way of acting in a given circumstance, behaviors that are done without much thought. Norms also include the attitudes and beliefs prevalent in the culture that support those common behaviors and habits.

You might be thinking that you're facing a long, tough climb with certain behaviors in your workplace. The difference is that we know so much more about how to create norms and thus how to influence behavior than we once did. Norms can be shaped much more quickly now.

Norms play a big role in your team or organization, but norms can be intentionally changed or new ones can be developed. To change norms, you need to build infrastructure. Create alliances with communications, human resources, and procurement departments. Press for integration of the effort with business goals. Some norm changes are better managed over a longer time; a cataclysmic shift that happens too fast can provoke resistance.

Norms can be intentionally shaped, and that work is the crux of change management of almost any kind. Shaping norms to support healthy behaviors can be more complex because we don't have the right to dictate how people behave when it comes to their well-being. The key to remember is that in a culture of health, personal choice is respected. Norms encourage healthy practices *and* support individual discretion. Despite the subtle balancing act required, healthy norms are being developed in organizations around the world every day.

With so many unhealthy behaviors in almost any culture, it may not seem difficult to choose a few norms to shift or shape. To increase the chance of arriving at a decision that is most likely to benefit your organization, you have to be strategic and focused. Consider three fundamentals.

1. The right norm aligns with the organization's values.
2. The right norm has to be meaningful to employees.
3. The right norm needs to be meaningful to the organization.

Every culture is full of norms, whether we're acknowledging them or not. In too many organizations, more of the norms fall on the wrong side of the health and well-being scale. But this is not an insurmountable problem. Norms can be identified, and they can be changed, and when we make the effort, we can have a profound positive impact on people, teams, and organizations.

## Building Block #4: Culture Connection Points

Your organization is making innumerable decisions every day that not only impact your organization's success, but also the well-being of your team and workforce at large. Many of these decisions either make having a healthy day easier or harder. The prompts can be subtle and happen throughout the day or they can be overt and have a long-term presence. Our well-being is shaped by cues and levers developed and deployed by our organization. Collectively, these culture connection points shape our behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.

A culture connection point is defined by the intersection between the design of our workplace experience and our well-being. Culture connection points can influence healthy behaviors and attitudes, or they can be complicit in unhealthy behaviors and attitudes. Workplace levers need to be positioned to influence human behavior so that they are all pointing toward supporting the healthy beliefs and choices aimed at achieving a healthy workplace culture.

Achieving daily health and well-being practices requires examining the culture connection points and then making strategic adjustments. Faced with innumerable choices that impact our well-being every day at work, employers can design the employee experience so that it's easier to support a well-being culture.

It starts with recruitment and candidate selection. Your well-being culture can be embedded into your job announcement. Interview questions can be designed to ask how applicants will contribute to the well-being of their future team. Making culture connection points before the job is offered will set the tone for future interactions with the new hire.

Onboarding refers to mechanisms through which new employees acquire necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviors to become effective organizational colleagues and insiders. You can ensure that employees' early impressions are positive ones by explaining the wellness vision, team well-being norms, and the importance of self care throughout the workday. Actions speak louder than words so make sure

Willpower is a flawed strategy when it comes to making healthy choices.

actions are aligned with the professed wellness vision.

Some methods of communicating and sharing information are more effective than others and can make a difference. If your organization includes a physician or someone who is known to be healthy, positive, and generally a great well-being model, it can be helpful to have this person's endorsement. Leverage humor, word of mouth, and family inclusion to multiply the impact.

Communication is likely to be the most common culture connection point used in our well-being culture toolkit but communication alone won't be enough to change behavior. It's important to include several culture connection points simultaneously to foster adoption and maintenance of healthy choices.

Other connection points include:

- Benefits and programs beyond a retirement plan, days off, and health insurance such as heart rate monitors, wearable wellness devices, mindfulness programs, and more.
- Sharing stories and narratives around well-being journeys, especially that of leaders.
- Rewards and recognition that are financial and extrinsic but also ones that are intrinsic, based in fun, creative, and joyful motivation.
- Learning and training to provide opportunities for every employee to build happiness and resilience skills, including training managers to lead with a well-being lens.
- Symbols and traditions that represent the beliefs, such as institutional stretch breaks or annual fun runs or walks to create a wellness bond between employees.

Culture connection points give a plethora of opportunities to shape the culture of an organization and workplace. By using multiple ways to shift the culture in a healthier direction, you are bound to make progress. Sharing these culture connection points with a group of leaders can make it easier to brainstorm solutions for barriers to health and well-being during the workday.

## Building Block #5: Peer Support

Perhaps the greatest predictor of success for adopting and sustaining a healthy lifestyle habit is whether a friend, family member, or close co-worker practices that same healthy habit. Peer support can make the difference between success and failure as peers are in a unique position to provide the ongoing support needed to achieve lasting lifestyle change.

Willpower is a flawed strategy when it comes to making healthy choices. Many people eat regardless of whether they are hungry and prompts for overeating abound. When the conference room table has donuts placed in the center of it on Monday morning, our brain wrestles with itself. We know our intent and our goals and yet sometimes we can't resist the temptation. Peers can unknowingly make it tough for you to reach your health goals.

Conversely, they can help you build healthier habits. It's easier to be happy and feel well when you're with a buddy. Peer support is not only about helping each other build healthier habits or get rid of unhealthy ones, but also about having a shoulder to lean on and a pair of ears to listen. Buddies can enhance a well-being culture. Two people are paired, get to know each other, and look out for each other's well-being in an "I have your back" way.

Buddies in such a system get to know each other by talking about work, home, life, hobbies, and family. They set up times to check in with each other and listen carefully to each other as they share experiences and feelings. They help each other and monitor workloads, stress, health, and in short, make their buddy feel safe and supported. Buddies can be used as early as onboarding to lower stress and to accelerate the newbie feeling like he or she is part of the team.

Peers can come from anywhere. They can be on our work team or a different one. They can be from the same profession or another. That's the power of peers. Obviously the more often you see and interact with your peers, the more helpful they can be in your quest to shape whatever behavior, belief, or attitude you choose. There are a growing number of lifestyle medicine programs that can be delivered in the workplace that build in peer support. In fact,

that's the secret sauce. Groups of employees with similar health goals, led by a qualified instructor, meet once or twice a week for a few months to focus on new skills, problem solve, and build healthy habits.

Take it further by offering training to those interested in providing peer-to-peer support in areas such as:

- Listening
- Helping set a goal
- Finding a good role model
- Helping eliminate barriers to a healthier, happier day
- Building trust
- Helping locate supportive environments
- Helping a peer work through a setback
- Celebrating success

Peer support is assistance provided by family, friends, and co-workers. Without such support, many people will be unable to achieve their personal well-being goals. Helping someone achieve a healthy lifestyle goal is a great way to show we care.

## Building Block #6: Leadership Engagement

Leaders have the same challenges as everyone else, including attending to the health of themselves and their family members. In addition to setting the expectations for an organization, a leader also needs to be unafraid to be vulnerable. This makes it easier for the rest of the workforce to not only seek help, but to also tighten relationships over similar struggles.

You don't have to be at the top of your organization to make a difference in the health and well-being of the people you lead. There is leadership across all levels and all parts of the organization that, when applied, will create the energy needed to allow a culture of health to flourish.

Leaders play a role in supporting all the well-being culture building blocks and in addition, have special responsibilities such as:

- Setting well-being as a priority
- Managing with well-being skills
- Serving as a role model
- Leading change

If we leave the responsibility of building a well-being culture only to executives, momentum will never build, and the message will fall short of penetrating the fabric of the organization. The challenge then, is to harness the plethora of leaders that exist within an organization to exert their positive influence on well-being.

Leaders must make well-being a priority. When you start with that premise, it makes it possible for all of the other priorities to be fulfilled. If you do your job well, you'll have healthier, happier, and more resilient employees. Intentionally aligning business ambitions with well-being will make it easier for your workforce to appreciate the importance of their own well-being.

Here are three ways to show that well-being is a priority on your team and in your company:

1: Put Well-Being on the Agenda

Just like finance, customer service, and quality improvement have regular updates, so should employee health and well-being. Your agenda time can be used for more than just regurgitating upcoming events and programs. For example, you could lead a gratitude exercise where each person at the table shares one thing they're grateful for related to work. When there's a standing space for health, it forces the meeting leader to consider the content for that week or month.

2: Incorporate Well-Being into Annual Events and Other Customs

Promoting and participating in organization well-being programs, events, and traditions are a meaningful way to express your ongoing commitment to the well-being culture. This effort can be as simple as organizing a spring walk attended by your immediate team or a more ambitious undertaking, such as including the departments around yours or the entire building. The consistency of a healthy practice led by organizational leaders becomes ingrained throughout the organization and reflects its values.

3: Address Institutional Barriers to Success

It can be frustrating for your employees to keep hitting speed bumps in their efforts to participate in company well-being programs. They need to understand that you see their participation as worthwhile, so try to reduce barriers to participation. Perhaps a flexible schedule or some other arrangement can be made so that employees can participate without detracting from their work.

You now have the prescription to shape a healthy, happy, and more resilient team culture. Beyond the basic needs of survival, your job and your workplace profoundly impact your health and well-being, which in turn greatly influences those around you and the success of your organization. Just as human behavior is complex, so is workplace culture. Anything short of a comprehensive approach will not provide the results you are seeking.



For the past 20 years, workplace health pioneer and thought leader Richard Safeer, M.D. has assessed cultures, trained leaders, and conducted and explored research on the intersection of individual and organizational behavior. Dr. Safeer currently serves as the Chief Medical Director of Employee Health and Well-Being for Johns Hopkins Medicine where he leads the Healthy at Hopkins employee health and well-being strategy. He is a regular conference speaker on the topic of building a culture of health and well-being and has published numerous journal articles on the topic.

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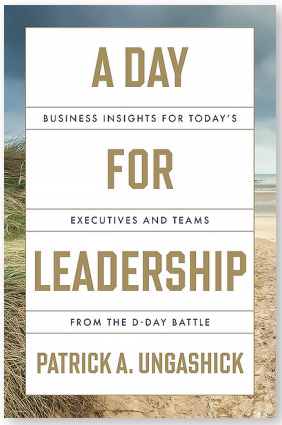
# A Day for Leadersip

Patrick A. Ungashick

Executive Book Summaries®

# A Day for Leadership

## Business Insights for Today's Executives and Teams From the D-Day Battle




*by* **Patrick A. Ungashick**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Business executives often seek powerful, real-world examples to sharpen their leadership skills and steer their organizations and teams to sustained growth and success. ***In A Day for Leadership: Business Insights for Today's Executives and Teams from the D-Day Battle***, Patrick A. Ungashick turns to one of history's most pivotal moments, D-Day, to uncover lessons that resonate in today's corporate world.

D-Day, the launch of the most complex military operation in history that ultimately led to Allied victory in World War II, was the product of years of planning and the coordinated efforts of millions. Yet, its success hinged on a small group of leaders making high-stakes decisions under extreme pressure. Ungashick explores how elements such as strategy, culture, logistics, delegation, and execution shaped the outcome, and how these same principles can guide business leaders in navigating competitive markets and complex challenges.

Drawing from his experience as an entrepreneur, advisor, and author, Ungashick presents the battle's leadership stories as a playbook for executives, entrepreneurs, and teams, offering actionable insights to elevate performance and achieve strategic goals.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Understand how to apply strategic planning principles from D-Day to your organization's toughest challenges.
- Build a resilient team culture capable of thriving under pressure.
- Master delegation to ensure the right people make the right decisions at the right time.
- Find out how to make decisive calls when timing and clarity are critical to success.

## INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, June 6, 1944, the pivotal operation that would decide the outcome of humanity's largest war commenced. On that day, forever known as D-Day, about 156,000 American, British, and Canadian soldiers with 20,000 vehicles invaded the Normandy coast in German-occupied France, transported and escorted by a seaborne fleet of 7,000 ships and seacraft and an airborne armada of 11,000 planes. Within a month, more than one million soldiers representing those three Allied nations, plus a dozen others, stood ashore in France, engaged in a vast struggle that ten months later achieved the final downfall of Germany's heinous Nazi regime. D-Day was the greatest combined amphibious-airborne invasion in history and the most complex military operation ever executed.

This book's purpose is to present and examine leadership moments that both entertain and educate today's business owners, executives, and managers. Our leadership laboratory will be one of the most famous and important battles of World War II—the Allied invasion of Normandy, France, code-named Operation Overlord.

This book is written for business owners, executives, leaders, and managers. The core content consists of case studies providing readers with insights and lessons relevant to real-world leadership roles and responsibilities. Case studies unlock conversations and foster individual and team development. They can:

1. Enhance problem-solving skills.
2. Apply theoretical knowledge.
3. Improve decision-making.
4. Promote learning from successes and failures.
5. Encourage collaborative learning.
6. Develop communication skills.
7. Build a learning organization.

## CASE STUDY ONE

### Readying the Big Red One
### CREATING ELITE CULTURE

Operation Overlord's senior leaders, starting at the top with Supreme Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had specifically assigned Omaha Beach on D-Day to General Clarence R. Huebner's 1st Infantry Division, also known as the Big Red One in reference to the division's distinct shoulder patch with a red number one. The Big Red One was America's foremost division in name and fame, having already spearheaded two Allied amphibious invasions earlier in the war. Eisenhower would entrust only the elite Big Red One with Omaha Beach, the most heavily defended and isolated of D-Day's five target beaches. And the Big Red One could only be entrusted to Clarence Huebner, even though Huebner had not led the division during its prior wartime victories, and just ten months earlier was widely despised by the 1st Division's soldiers.

Few characteristics of a company or team have a greater impact on across-the-board results than culture. It is an enterprise's DNA, the collection of values and beliefs that define and govern its relationships and behaviors. The right culture propels sustained business growth and excellence. The wrong culture weakens or destroys an organization.

**This case study explores how Huebner, following in the footsteps of a venerated leader, General Terry de la Mesa Allen, reshaped the division's cavalier culture into one befitting its elite reputation and illustrates the close tie between behavior and culture and how to extract elite performance from an organization.**

While Huebner's tools were different, his tactics and process are applicable to molding elite culture in today's business organizations. He began with a clear vision of the culture he sought to create. From there Huebner:

1. **Built a leadership team that embraced the desired culture.**
2. **Communicated expectations and relentlessly followed up.**
3. **Led by example**

## CASE STUDY TWO

### Where to Put the Panzers
### SELECTING STRATEGY – PART 1

By late 1943, Germany's only potential hope to stop an Allied invasion and throw it back into the sea was its feared panzers. The question left for Hitler and his commanders was where to put the panzers. German-occupied western Europe included more than 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) of coastline to defend, and there simply were not enough panzer units to defend everywhere. Where to put the panzers to meet and defeat the expected Allied invasion was arguably the most important strategic question German military leaders faced.

To scale and sustain growth, at some point companies and their leaders must design and follow processes that are formalized: documented, communicated, measured, re-evaluated, and continuously improved over time.

No leader or team can accomplish everything all at once. All leaders must pursue important objectives with finite resources. The strategy that leaders select to employ and deploy those resources may make or break achieving the goal or mission.

**This case study examines how German miliary leaders, facing an existential threat with severely constrained resources, failed to select and align around a viable strategy for positioning their tank forces to have any legitimate chance of defeating the invasion.**

Today, corporate leaders possess a variety of methods to pursue their organization's strategic goals and plans. Most strategic planning approaches recognize and follow a similar methodology, usually including some variation of the following steps:

1. Clearly define and prioritize objectives and deadlines.
2. Engage all stakeholders.
3. Analyze the organization's current internal and externalsituation and environment, including its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).
4. Identify and validate assumptions.
5. Make fact-based decisions.
6. Communicate the selected strategy and tactics across the organization.
7. Monitor performance and update goals and plans as needed.

While struggling to select their panzer strategy, the German military leaders either strayed from or skipped most of these steps.

## CASE STUDY THREE

### The Battle for the Bombers

### SELECTING STRATEGY – PART 2

For months prior to D-Day, both the Allies and the Germans fought internal battles to determine how to best prepare for and win the impending clash. For the Allies, the most contentions pre-D-Day question was how to incorporate their thousands of large bombers already striking German industrial and urban targets from their English air bases. The question turned into a rancorous debate that raged for months between British and American leaders across both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

**The Battle for the Bombers reveals how teams can devolve into parochialism and lose sight of primary objectives, and how great leaders can navigate disagreement and conflict to establish consensus around a shared vision and plan.**

There are innumerable ways executives and managers can formally or informally arrange teams and work together to pursue important objectives. Leadership teamwork leverages individual talents and increases the likelihood of achieving shared objectives. Few individuals are equally skilled and effective in all leadership functions. Defining vision, setting strategy, planning for growth, building teams, molding culture, creating processes and systems, fostering accountability, and coaching development—these are common examples from the extensive and diverse demands put on today's leaders.

## CASE STUDY FOUR

### Ike's Call

### MAKING EFFECTIVE DECISIONS

It is illustrative that historian Carlo D'Este opens his 864-page biography *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* with General Dwight D. Eisenhower's decision to launch the D-Day invasion. Eisenhower—"Ike"—spent the majority of his seventy-eight-year life serving his country: as an Army officer, where he eventually ascended to the rare rank of a five-star general; after the war as the first supreme Allied commander of NATO; and finally as the thirty-fourth president of the United States. During those decades of service, Ike made countless decisions of immense importance and impact. Yet, Eisenhower's momentous call setting D-Day in motion was the apex decision of his career, and a turning point in history. It also offers a fascinating study in effective decision-making

for today's business leaders. Successful leadership and management requires effective decision-making. Effectiveness does not mean accuracy; no leader gets every decision right. Instead, an effective decision-maker applies a reliable and repeatable process that isolates what is important, balances patience while gathering relevant information against the urgency of time, considers potential options, and then cleanly chooses the best course of action.

**This case study explores the events leading up to Ike's decision to commence Operation Overlord.**

The modern business leader may gain a valuable insight into effective decision-making methods by reviewing Ike's approach to this momentous decision, and the steps he took to improve his odds for making a successful call and thereby achieving victory.

Effective decision-making may be one of the least studied leadership skills. Decision-making tends to be idiosyncratic—individual experiences, perspectives, and intuition strongly influence the process and outcome. But developing decision-making skills and applying sound processes translates into superior business performance.

## CASE STUDY FIVE

### The Tanks That Sank Off Omaha

### APPLYING BUSINESS PROCESSES

Prior to Operation Overlord, amphibious assaults against an enemy beach had required the first groups of soldiers to wade ashore without protection from tanks, which could only be delivered once the beach was safe for ships to unload them. Allied military commanders and planners wished to change this and rewrite the invasion playbook on D-Day by putting hundreds of tanks on the beaches *prior* to the foot soldiers landing.

To achieve this change, the Allies invented and manufactured a secret weapon – a tank that could float and swim to the beaches under its own power, surprising the Germans and revolutionizing amphibious warfare.

Unfortunately, things did not go as planned for the top-secret swimming tanks. Choppy seas on D-Day morning seriously challenged the tanks' fragile technology. At Omaha Beach, senior US leaders failed to create and communicate a sound process for their subordinates to determine if the swimming tanks should deploy in the difficult seas. Consequently, one of the more senseless D-Day tragedies occurred, causing lost lives in the waters off Omaha and contributing to the Americans' desperate struggle on the beach.

**This case study examines the importance of creating and applying sound processes to help organizations maximize their likelihood of sustained success and minimize risk and the potential for failure.**

All businesses are a collection of systems and processes and the people who establish and interact with them. In some situations, the systems and processes may be informal: unwritten, unmeasured, and not widely communicated or understood beyond one or a few people. However, to scale and sustain growth, at some point companies and their leaders must design and follow processes that are formalized: documented, communicated, measured, re-evaluated, and continuously improved over time.

## CASE STUDY SIX

### Hitler Snoozes

### PURSUING CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Pick up a handful of books about D-Day, and many mention that Adolf Hitler slept late on the morning of the Allied invasion. While the military consequences of Hitler snoozing may be debated by historians, for today's business leaders the events surrounding Hitler sleeping on D-Day morning present an opportunity to examine the importance of identifying and pursuing an organization's critical success factors (CSFs) that determine mission success or failure.

**This case study tells the story of how the Germans lost focus on their critical success factors and delivered an unnecessarily confused and disorganized response at the start of the invasion, most vividly portrayed by Hitler remaining asleep long after his senior commanders knew an attack was underway.**

For today's business executives, the Nazi lethargy on D-Day presents a powerful example of the need to identify and act on an organization's critical success factors.

All teams have goals or objectives, and thus all teams should identify those very few steps or activities that they must get right to be successful. CSFs will vary across companies, teams, industries, situations, and with time. Examples could include the following:

- Increase market share
- Maximize cross-selling of existing accounts

Teams and organizations that excel at anticipating and leveraging change differentiate themselves from competitors, stay ahead of tmarket trends, attract and retain top talent, increase their value to customers, and achieve sustained profitable growth.

- Accelerate project completion rate
- Shorten launch time for new products or office locations
- Reduce costs of goods sold (COGS)
- Increase recurring revenue
- Minimize materials wastage
- Improve customer satisfaction or renewal rate

Avoid confusing CSFs with key performance indicators (KPIs). CSFs focus on the actions or steps that make the greatest contribution to success, while KPIs measure the pace and impact of those actions or steps. Convene stakeholders to discuss and identify CSFs to create a team aligned around its highest-impact activities. Once you define the CSF, identify and implement the managerial, operational, cultural, financial, and other steps your team must take to best achieve it.

## CASE STUDY SEVEN

### Those Damned Hedgerows
### ADAPTING TO A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

In preparation for D-Day, Allied military leaders and strategists spent two years planning the invasion, keenly focused on how their forces would break through the heavily fortified defended beaches at Normandy. However, as Allied troops moved inland off the sands and into the Norman countryside, in some places the landscape changed into a terrain that shocked senior commanders and rank-and-file soldiers alike. Watching their carefully choreographed offensive slow to a crawl and casualties soar, Allied senior leaders realized they had no immediate answers for how to advance in this unexpectedly challenging environment.

**This case study explores how Allied top military commanders neglected to prepare for a changing terrain after D-Day, and consequently how it was up to mid-level leaders to recognize the challenges and innovate solutions.**

The Allied armies' experiences in the Norman countryside serve as an excellent proxy for the importance today's business leaders must place on embracing change and adaptation.

Adapting in a changing environment is essential for today's business executives, leaders, and managers. Business conditions and landscapes, internal and external, constantly change at a seemingly ever-increasing pace. Teams and organizations that remain static inevitably fall behind, decay, and disappear. Teams and organizations that excel at anticipating and leveraging change differentiate themselves from competitors, stay ahead of market trends, attract and retain top talent, increase their value to customers, and achieve sustained profitable growth.

Building organizations that embrace change is easier said than done. Change is messy. It causes individual and institutional discomfort and friction. To drive change, leaders must have a clear vision of the intended outcome, consistently lead and support the process, take personal risks, and nurture critical thinking and creativity. Looking back on the hedgerow case study, business leaders will find two examples of how the US Army in Normandy demonstrated a culture that valued adaptability during the hedgerow crisis: psychological safety and cross-functional collaboration.

## CASE STUDY EIGHT

### Failure at Falaise
### DELEGATING AUTHORITY

By mid-August 1944, about ten weeks after D-Day, Allied armies managed to nearly encircle the bulk of Germany's remaining forces in Normandy, surrounding them in a "pocket" with the open end facing east near the French town of Falaise. Closing the pocket and entrapping the Germans would have produced the kind of total and decisive victory that most generals can only dream about. However, Allied leaders struggled to complete the encirclement before a nucleus of Germans escaped, leaving historians to debate if the primary headline for the events at Falaise should be that of a partial Allied victory or rather a regrettable missed opportunity.

**This case study explores the importance of effective delegation of authority, without abdication of responsibility. Delegation is a critical leadership activity that requires skillfully balancing authority and responsibility between leaders and their team members.**

Leaders who delegate too little weaken leverage and slow individual and organizational growth. Leaders who delegate too much cross over into abdication, undermining accountability and usually leading to inferior results.

To achieve the desired balance, when delegating objectives, leaders and managers must be effective at these eight steps:

1. Clearly communicate the objective(s) and priorities.
2. Share relevant contextual information.
3. Define any important deadlines, considerations, guidelines, or boundaries.
4. Ensure the team has the ability, resources, and decision-making autonomy to accomplish the objectives.
5. Maintain continuous communication and feedback.
6. Regularly monitor their team's progress.
7. Provide assistance if the team's efforts and/or progress is insufficient.
8. Reinsert themselves directly into the situation if the team is in danger of falling short of meeting the stated objectives.

## CONLUSION

### Paying the Price of Victory

After paying the price for victory in Normandy, the Western Allies would add to their costs at many more battles to come, including Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Bulge, the Hurtgen Forest, and the Ruhr Pocket. Meanwhile, in the east the Soviet Union's colossal struggle against the lion's share of German forces continued. As the combined western Allied and Soviet armies surrounded Germany and pushed toward Berlin, the price of victory rose at an accelerating pace.

During the final four months of the war, between the start of 1945 and Victory-Europe (VE) Day on May 8, an average of 650,000 soldiers died in combat each month, more than double the monthly rate during 1944. Appallingly, the number of civilian deaths and wounded followed the same catastrophic upward trajectory.

However, the Allied leadership and populations at home largely remained committed to paying the price and fighting till the bitter end. History too has largely agreed that the price needed to be paid.

The most effective leaders are lifelong learners. And successful leadership demands the ability to understand and positively influence human nature, beliefs, and behavior. For these reasons, history in general and warfare in particular offer compelling leadership laboratories for all leaders, including today's business owners, executives, and teams.

Some people shun the study of warfare for fear that examining it is the same as glorifying it. Just as we are not glorifying crime when we praise a police officer who rescues a civilian from a violent assault, we are not glorifying war when we acknowledge and honor those who, having found themselves thrust into the conflict, demonstrated courage, sacrifice, or wisdom. It is possible to condemn warfare and seek all possible means to avoid it, and simultaneously study events such as D-Day and Operation Overlord to gain lessons and insights that we can apply to better ourselves as persons, voters, leaders, and members of society.

Because war impacts practically every aspect of human experience and existence—family life, politics, demographics, economics, culture, etc.—war can produce lessons relevant to every human activity and endeavor. By extracting and incorporating those lessons into our personal lives and professional roles and responsibilities, we are applying and enjoying the freedom that was purchased for us by those who went before us.



**Patrick Ungashick** is an entrepreneur and advisor who has founded and led multiple companies in fields ranging from sales training and wealth management to private equity and exit strategy consulting. Author of A Day for Leadership, as well as Dance in the End Zone and A Tale of Two Owners, he is recognized for helping business owners maximize company value, plan successful exits, and navigate leadership succession. An award-winning speaker, he has delivered more than 500 workshops to business leaders and teams.

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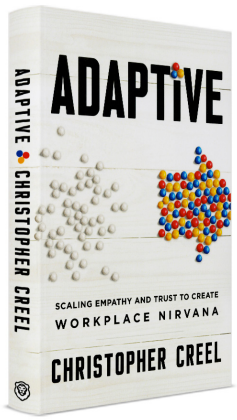
# Adaptive

Christopher Creel

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# Adaptive

## Scaling Empathy and Trust to Create Workplace Nirvana




*by* **Christopher Creel**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many people fear that the increasing presence of bots and automation in business is removing the human element of the work experience.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Christopher Creel's ***Adaptive*** shows definitively that by introducing bots effectively into our collaboration and organizational structure, then adapting that structure to be better served by them, we can free up employees to do the human tasks that they do best. This will in turn enhance your company's creativity, collaborative success, employee satisfaction, and business results in a measurable and transformative way.

The Adaptive method is all about identifying the power structures, lack of trust, and scalability issues that plague workplaces and organizations around the world to correct broken mindsets and foster business growth. It deals with the implantation of bots, but goes beyond this to identify the problems facing modern businesses and how they can truly adapt to rise above them.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to tackle ineffectual strategy execution plans.
- How to manage employees, including addressing underperforming individuals.
- How to correct tragically broken review processes.
- The impact of chatbots on how human beings interact with each other.

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

Many people fear the increased presence of collaboration technologies and smart chatbots in our lives. They fear that as bots begin to take over more tasks that have previously been handled by humans, humans will no longer have a role in the workplace or the world at large. But the truth is quite the opposite. The more robust and effective bots and robots become at handling automatic, robotic tasks, the more humans will be freed up to be, well, human. It will allow them to do human things, like help a colleague in the moment of a family crisis.

Still, many companies expect robotic executions from flawed human beings whose talents would be best used by completing "human" work. And as companies must move more and more quickly to keep up, the margin for error is much smaller.

It's said that people are a company's greatest resource, but the truth is that it's the relationships between people that truly make a company great. These relationships should be constantly evolving, as static org charges are blunt instruments that attempt to describe the components of a machine while completely ignoring its most crucial element—the social network that actually gets stuff done.

Meanwhile, bots can orchestrate complex patterns of collaboration for ten to ten-thousand people or more. Bots working at this scale can facilitate collaboration among large groups of people to solve any number of problems, allowing employees, teams, and orgs to be as socially engaged and evolving as they should be.

## Unearthing An Adaptive Workplace

The Adaptive model outlined in the following sections consistently raises engagement scores within organizations where it's implemented, as high as 40% or more. But for the principles to be effective, it must be seen as more than a one-and-done process. At the heart of the process is cultivating human beings and their relationships with one another. You must monitor the health of your teams and their relationships. You must ensure that your business thrives but also that the human beings who make it run and their relationships with each other thrive as well.

Too many companies today fail to recognize a fact that is right in front of their faces— businesses are organisms composed of individuals with gifts, passions, anxieties, challenges, and, most importantly, relationships. When we holistically address these things on an ongoing basis with the Adaptive mindset, the results are profound.

The systems in the adaptive methodology require you to remain consistently on top of cultivating team members and relationships, but there is also an element of self-regulation and accountability—also facilitated by bots. This means that while administrative burdens will shrink dramatically, your focus on people and relationships will increase proportionally.

One major example of the power of the Adaptive model is the administering of an org chart versus coaching employees. The former is a rote task that most managers could do in their sleep, making it perfect for a bot. The latter requires creativity, focus, discipline, and mindfulness— the perfect task for a human being. The more repetitive work is offloaded to bots, the more time you'll spend doing work that is mentally challenging but absolutely essential.

## The Birth Of Hierarchy

Why is work so often recognized as such a miserable experience? It could be argued that it's due to the dehumanizing effect of expecting robotic performance from organic humans.

Meanwhile, hierarchical organizations result in power dynamics that draw out the worst behaviors in human nature. Rather than just treating the symptoms of such dynamics, we need to abandon these hierarchies in favor of a new model that can scale empathy and trust bolstered by dispassionate bots who target the disease itself.

In a fluid organization aided by AI and bots, value and knowledge are cultivated from the social network as a whole with organizational models that self-adjust based on sophisticated algorithms. By removing the human element from this piece of the puzzle, we remove damaging power dynamics from your organization.

Through the use of the adaptive methodology and by allowing bots to work the way they're meant to work, we can organize our working lives in such a way that everyone wins. Employees will be more fulfilled, business leaders will be able to do a more effective job, and business results will improve in measurable and dramatic ways.

### Enter Technology

The transition away from a mechanical business philosophy is already underway. It's just not being harnessed effectively because we didn't fully understand the implications when it arrived.

But we're already solving big problems one micro-thin slice at a time, forming ephemeral teams and collapsing them within hours or days after tasks are completed, productive socializing that deepens bonds, and collaboration with smart chatbots as though they were coworkers.

Meanwhile, workplace demographics are changing at a breathtaking pace. As workforces continue to shift away from repetitive tasks (now handled by bots) and more towards positions requiring independent thought and creativity, the minds that excel in these roles will not thrive at the hands of hierarchical management. Business results will suffer as a result.

But for companies to adapt, bots need to speak with humans in a way that facilitates positive responses. This will require psychologists and speech therapists, who have already made bot dialogue much more beneficial than in its early days. Because bots now know how to deploy powerful dialogue in the exact moment that it's needed, entire companies can now begin moving towards workplace nirvana.

But to do that, these companies must first put in the effort to correct the things that are halting their progress and keeping them from enacting real change in their organizations.

## Fixing What's Broken

Adaptive organizations use self-determination for employees augmented by bots working in a robust collaboration platform to move fast and beat the competition. Companies like these can quickly crowdsource new collaborative patterns to achieve continuous, sustainable, and strategic change in order to solve massive challenges.

But there are things organizations must do to get ready for this kind of fluidity, or you won't be able to reap the full benefit—and could even end up being counterproductive in your efforts.

First, you need to change your behavioral defaults. You must learn (and teach your employees) to default to trust, rather than distrust. This also means that integrity should be an integral and celebrated trait at your company, as should transparency.

You also need to begin facilitating discussions, rather than ruling by edict. When a challenge or problem arises, don't simply dictate to your employees how you expect it to be solved. Begin a discussion. Encourage thoughtful feedback. Get people involved. Stop making work assignments and start observing, asking open-ended questions first and leading questions second, and doing everything in your power to help employees become more autonomous and less tethered to that stake that tells them they are powerless underlings fulfilling the wishes of someone higher up the totem pole.

### The Golden Straitjacket

In his book, ***The World is Flat***, Thomas Friedman argues that economic prosperity will come to countries that implement practices that force them to give up a certain level of sovereignty. He refers to this as the "Golden Straitjacket."

Similarly, staying competitive in the modern age of business requires that you implement certain practices that cause you to relinquish positional power, which is effectively sovereignty over your piece of the corporate landscape.

As you introduce collaboration platforms and augment your teams with bots, they will evolve from the mechanical business philosophy to an Adaptive one naturally, and without any additional help. Some organizations will do this in what seems like an instant, while the nature of others will mean that the process will take significantly longer.

But there are things you can do to move this process effectively and efficiently. First, document your culture. Be conscious of the culture of your organization and how it affects your process. Next, it's time to introduce a collaboration messaging platform. There are too many of these to weigh the pros and cons of each one, but find one that suits your organization and the culture you've just documented.

You will then need to establish ways that employees can manage their own time and tasks effectively, rather than requiring a great deal of oversight. Tools like Jira and GitHub are excellent for this.

You'll also need to find ways to 'flatten' your organization, meaning changing from a focus on control and territories to a focus on contribution to the overall strategy. How can each individual contribute to the team's effort to drive output? Conversations that would have been clashes can now become negotiations or collaboration.

### Data Analysis

While great leadership is somewhat of an art, there is a science to obtaining the information required to get a handle on what's really happening in your company to help you better lead and implement the Adaptive model. You need to gather important data that will help you optimally organize your network and grow individuals in ways that will serve both them and the company.

First, an organizational network analysis will obtain feedback on who the real power brokers are in your company. With this in hand, you'll be able to understand what your team really looks like— and how individuals function within it.

You can warm up to this analysis by building trust through quantitative analysis. Ask questions of your employees like:

- Whom do you work with to get stuff done?
- How often do you work with them?
- What is the priority of the relationship relative to your work?

These questions will allow you to rapidly map out how work gets done, independent of the org chart. Data analysis in general will help you look past hierarchy to understand what really is helping and hindering your organization's progress.

## Coaching

In business, 'coaching' is a word with lots of connotations. But it is really just a word for ensuring that your employees and team members are constantly learning. This doesn't always strictly mean learning about business concepts in general— it also means learning about their own performance, behaviors, relationships, and how they affect the people and processes around them. The heart of coaching is the belief that people are trying their best, and any failure is simply a failure to understand how to do that effectively.

Coaching resolves network connection blips that show up in your organization network analysis, and it provides a channel through which employees can grow outside of the traditional corporate ladder. But that channel must always be built on trust— your employees should know that you'll follow through on coaching no matter what.

## Common Hurdles

Common roadblocks to adopting the Adaptive mindset include the silo mindset, which isolates teams from each other and resists the breaking up of hierarchy. Dissatisfied employees and internal competition can also lead to less-than-ideal Adaptive implementation. Companies that exist within traditionally hierarchical industries sometimes find this hurdle too difficult to overcome. The medical industry is a notable example of this.

Overcoming these hurdles requires experimentation. While the principles are universal, the tactics you take to implement those principles should be based on your own unique business, organizational structure, industry, and goals.

### Conclusion

We all know that business as usual is no longer working. A new model of business is essential, and the Adaptive model alleviates many problems by offloading administrative work to bots so that we can go back to being human with one another. It allows employees to feel their contribution matters; it makes work a more fulfilling, human experience; and it provides companies with a real edge over their competition.

Who would have thought that a bunch of quirky bots could help us all feel human again?



Christopher Creel has helped clients create leading research and development teams since 1995 for major companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Perot Systems, and CSC. In 2013 he launched a bold, 6-year experiment based on 8 years of research and development to answer one question - can collaboration technologies deliver a dramatically new level of adaptability through crowdsourced organizational designs? The results of the Adaptive experiment improved business results, increased employee productivity, and engagement, promoted collective and individual growth, and raised the general level of happiness in the workplace.

***Adaptive: Scaling Empathy and Trust to Create Workplace Nirvana*** by Christopher Creel
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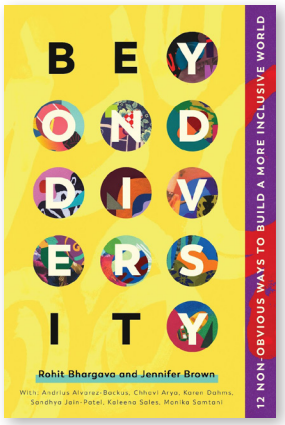
# Beyond Diversity

Rohit Bhargava and Jennifer Brown

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# Beyond Diversity

## 12 Non-Obvious Ways to Build a More Inclusive World




*by* **Rohit Bhargava and Jennifer Brown**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What if we could go beyond the conversation about diversity and take real action? In early 2021, more than 200 widely respected experts gathered virtually for the world's most ambitious conversation about diversity. The aim was to do more than spotlight injustice. They challenged themselves to imagine how to fix it.

The dialogue brought together casting directors, bookstore owners, disabled leaders, healthcare professionals, students, VCs, standup comedians, chief diversity officers, pro gamers, archaeologists, government insiders, startup founders, and even a master puppeteer. Now for the first time, these solutions are compiled into one groundbreaking volume, ***Beyond Diversity,*** organized into 12 powerful themes.

Each chapter paints a revealing picture of the world, how it is, how it could be, and what needs to happen for us to get there. For newcomers to the topic of diversity, and DEI experts alike, ***Beyond Diversity*** offers a much-needed, actionable blueprint for creating a more inclusive world for us all.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To move beyond typical diversity conversations and break down barriers.
- Seven of the 12 themes covered in ***Beyond Diversity.***
- The importance of storytelling in shaping perception.
- Concrete, actionable strategies for developing cultural fluency and effecting real change in the workplace, in entrepreneurship, and in leadership.

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## Introduction

It is a rarely spotlighted irony that so much of the dialogue about diversity ends up emphasizing what sets us apart, instead.

You can see this splintered approach in the structure of many live and virtual events aimed at exploring the theme of diversity. There are conferences dedicated to racial justice, reducing gender discrimination at work, advocating for LGBTQ+ legislation, eliminating ageism at work, creating more accessible digital content for people with disabilities, making corporate boards more inclusive, and much more.

These conferences host important conversations—and they offer a safe space for people who have been excluded and marginalized to share their experiences freely and have their points of view heard and discussed. They play an essential role in our evolving conversation about diversity and equity.

And yet, they are not enough. Focusing on only one aspect of our identities prevents the opportunity to better understand ourselves and others outside that one label.

### The Non-Obvious Beyond Diversity Summit

The term "intersectionality," first coined by American lawyer and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, refers to the idea that none of us can be defined by a single label but only through a combination of social identities. Embracing the idea of intersectionality requires us to switch to a wide-angle lens.

What if we had conferences, TV shows, or corporate recruiting programs dedicated to bringing people and perspectives together that might never otherwise share the same space? How would someone fighting to end gender pay gaps relate to a disabled gamer demanding more accessible experiences?

What would an advocate for racial literacy in schools say to a researcher studying how to end age-related biases at work? What might a local business fighting to expand broadband internet access for those living on Native American reservations ask a community organizer imagining how to transform a neglected local park into a vibrant urban garden?

To truly create a more inclusive world, we need to move beyond the usual diversity conversations and break down the barriers between these topics. In January 2021, Rohit Bhargava and colleagues hosted the Non-Obvious Beyond Diversity Summit, which included over 200 speakers who participated in more than 50 sessions. Over 75 percent described themselves as belonging to an underrepresented group.

It was Non-Obvious because of the types of conversations they hoped to curate. And it went Beyond Diversity, because they knew that if they were truly going to have an impact, they needed to focus every conversation on tangible actions we could all take to build a more inclusive world.

To share the insights with a wider audience, this book presents 12 themes that cut across all the sessions. Seven of those themes are covered here. The goal is to launch you into a journey to understand people unlike yourself.

It all starts by reimagining the stories we tell and share with the world. Our lives, ultimately, are lived through our stories. So let's get started in crafting a better and more inclusive one together.

## Beyond Diversity in Storytelling

In the final days of December each year, thousands of competitors gather in Saudi Arabia for the King Abdulaziz Falconry Festival. Known as the "sport of kings," the ancient art of falconry uses trained raptors to hunt and return prey to captivity. It is a millennia-old sport practiced by cultures across the globe … and usually by men.

But in 2020, there was one participant among the many falconers at the event who made international headlines—Athari Alkhaldi, the first woman to ever qualify. Alkhaldi herself recognized the significance of her entry: "With my participation … I proved I am here, that women can join this field, that it's not only restricted to men," she shared with global media while standing with her falcon, Ma'aned.

These types of barrier-breaking stories, once a rarity, now seem to be shared regularly. A scan of worldwide media on any given day offers plenty of examples. A hip-hop musical from Puerto Rican musician Lin-Manuel Miranda passes $1B in revenue.

African American poet Amanda Gorman is selected to speak at the 2020 U.S. Presidential inauguration. Fifteen-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg rises to international prominence, while referring to her diagnosis of Asperger syndrome as her "superpower."

But what about the thousands of stories like these that remain untold? If stories shape our perceptions, then perhaps the stories we never hear shape our biases through the lack of awareness they perpetuate.

Companies that once focused on selling products and services by making us feel like less have now started to profit by making us feel like we can belong, exactly as we are.

Stories which have been buried for so long (and those who tell them) are finding new homes, audiences, and fans, both inside and outside of the demographic groups they represent. What needs to happen to keep this momentum going?

- Systemic financial barriers that exclude diverse storytellers must be exposed and removed.
- Entrenched biases in media must be consciously acknowledged and addressed.
- Talent pipelines need to be restructured with equity as a priority.

### What You Can Do

The stories we choose to consume—and believe—shift our worldviews. Our support can have a material impact on which stories get told in the future and which storytellers get funded to share their gifts. With that in mind, here are three actionable steps that you can take either as a storyteller yourself or as a consumer of stories produced by others.

**Action #1: Seek out unfamiliar stories and expand your media diet**. We live in a time of target audiences, where every story seems told for a predetermined audience. When stories are dismissed as only for some people, they fail to realize their true potential. One specific tactic Rohit has long suggested is buying and reading magazines not meant for you. Two of his favorites—*Teen Vogue* and *Modern Farmer*—both illustrate the point.

**Action #2: Be more intentional about the stories you share and consume**. Beyond shifting what stories you choose to consume, it is also important for you to consider what stories you are promoting to others. Instead of quickly reposting an article based on its headline, stop for a moment and consider the bigger picture of what you are sharing.

**Action #3: Share your non-obvious story with the world, when you are ready**. Perhaps you have a story of your own that you've kept hidden out of fear or shame. Maybe it hasn't felt like the right time, or it was simply too difficult to share. One of the biggest ambitions for this book is to offer a reminder that every individual story holds the power to change the world and inspire other people. Your story could do the same when you are ready to share it.

## Beyond Diversity in Identity

Identity is race, gender, abilities, and sexuality. It is ethnicity and religion, marital status and political affiliation. Identity is how we wear our hair and the accents with which we speak. It is where our parents came from, how we view the world, the work we do, and the spaces we seek to occupy.

Studies have shown that the experience of having one's identity questioned or attacked, whether through sexism, racism, or other forms of discrimination, activates the same regions of the brain that respond to life-or-death survival situations. In other words, having your identity threatened literally feels like your life is in danger.

The business of identity has started to intersect with the desire for authenticity. Companies that once focused on selling products and services by making us feel like less have now started to profit by making us feel like we can belong, exactly as we are.

Fashion brands are a prime example of this. Today it is not uncommon to see plus-size models, models with Down syndrome, or models with skin conditions like vitiligo all featured on the covers of magazines or used in fashion advertising.

Here are some thoughts on how we can create a world that's better—and more inclusive—than the one we're living in now.

- There must be more safe spaces where people of different identities can meet and engage.
- We must support the institutions and programs that help people explore and embrace their identities.
- Ensure legislation and corporate policy is supportive of all types of identities.

### What You Can Do

Identity is deeply personal, as is our response to it. As a result, there are many things that any of us can do in-

dividually to help create a more inclusive world—and it starts with seeing your own identity as something that transcends any label.

The other, complementary side of this process is choosing to be more accepting of the unfamiliar identities of others. Here are several steps we can all take to accomplish both things.

**Action #1: Welcome conversations about identity with less judgment and more patience**. Any conversation about your identity is an opportunity for you to foster more understanding in the world. But it will never happen if your first instinct is to react with outrage and judge someone instantly for asking the wrong question or for unintentionally offending you.

**Action #2: Use less labeling language and be more aware of how you describe or stereotype people**. Labels can easily become shorthand for how we describe people. Each of us must resist the tendency to categorize people in this limiting way. It harms their potential and creates an environment where others may feel forced to live inside a single, outside perception of who they are.

**Action #3: Lean into the intersections of your own identity and become a role model**. When each of us becomes comfortable with the numerous layers of our own identities, we not only find fulfillment for ourselves, but we can also serve as an example for the people around us.

In 2007 Waylon Pahona Jr. was close to rock bottom, contemplating suicide. A Hopi and Tewa/Maricopa who grew up on the Hopi reservation, Waylon had been abused at age 9, saved his mother from attempted suicide at the age of 16 and struggled with weight his entire life.

It was fitness that transformed Pahona's life, and today he is the founder of a group called Healthy Active Natives (HANs) that has helped more than 75,000 fellow Natives get healthier. As a rare Native American voice in the world of fitness, Pahona feels a deep sense of responsibility as a role model not only for his community but for his two sons, who will grow up with a far different relationship with their father than he had with his.

## Beyond Diversity in Culture

Our culture is not only based on the language we speak or the region we live in or the food we eat or the way we describe our identity. It is not only the place we work or the faith we choose or the stories we believe. Culture is all these things together, and an inclusive world is one where all of us are free to belong to the cultures we choose without being judged for our choices.

The truth is, for much of human history different cultures have not always happily co-existed. Instead, dominant cultures have consistently destroyed other cultures along their way to becoming dominant.

In response, people have developed unique coping mechanisms to blend their own cultures with the one they often see represented in films and television. And they have started subcultures to rebel against the mainstream and redefine themselves and shift culture around them in the process.

This is the paradox at the heart of our modern culture. There are simultaneous forces that subsume other cultures, traditions, and languages, and emerging culture wars between people with differing worldviews, even as there are global movements rising up to keep those same unique cultures and beliefs alive.

What will it take for us to build a more inclusive culture that allows for these different experiences to not just co-exist but be truly valued, celebrated, and transformed through a mixing of cultures into something unprecedented and unique?

- We must celebrate examples of a global view of citizenship that honors humanity above nationality.
- Institutions must embrace culturally inclusive conversations instead of avoiding difficult questions.
- Media companies, news outlets, and creators of content must work to reflect a more accurate portrayal of culture.

### What You Can Do

It's important to listen to the perspective of those from inside of a particular culture. Let's consider some ways to do this that we might all individually practice.

**Action #1: Reassess your cultural fluency in the workplace**. Cultural fluency—or the ability to understand people from different cultural backgrounds—is a critical skill for every one of us. Not only is it essential for building trust and empathy in multicultural workplaces, but it has been repeatedly linked to enhanced financial performance.

Leaders can start by trying to practice more cultural humility by stepping out of their own experiences to identify their knowledge gaps about other cultures. Then leaders must take

the next step to broaden their knowledge through seeking exposure to different media, content, and diversifying their personal networks. Eventually, they must evolve to become a champion for more complete cultural representation.

Ironically, the retail economy also has a habit of excluding the one group of consumers who have the most money: seniors.

**Action #2. Be willing to learn about other cultural traditions and support ambitious alliances**. Food is perhaps the most accessible way to experience another culture. It does not require you to have a friend or colleague from another culture, and you don't even need to travel outside your hometown. In tasting food from other cultures, we are reminded that there are different lives that exist outside of our own.

**Action #3. Participate in subcultures that you love and do what it takes to make them more inclusive**. In 2020, University of Illinois Professor Kishonna Gray, a researcher who had long studied "race, gender, and deviance" in the gaming industry, published a book about multiple cultures coming together. The new book was called ***Intersectional Tech*** and explored the experience of Black gamers. It spotlighted a part of the gaming community that was used to being ignored and sometimes harassed.

Kate Sánchez, creator of the popular gaming news platform But Why Tho? echoed this same experience, sharing the importance of telling the stories of the subculture of gamers in a more inclusive way because often gaming and gamers themselves are stereotypically described in a way that doesn't usually include women, non-binary gamers, or people of color.

The efforts of these pioneers in gaming illustrate the perfect model for creating an inclusive culture. If all these groups can work together, appreciate one another, and support the thing they all love, there is hope that we might all accomplish this same result with other aspects of our global culture.

## Beyond Diversity in Retail

Whether it's apparel retailers, grocery stores, restaurants, beauty salons, or even online shopping platforms, the world of retail commerce is by and large designed for consumers of specific backgrounds or body types. For those who fall outside the accepted parameters, shopping can be an excluding or even hostile experience.

More than 60 percent of Black Americans say they have experienced racial discrimination inside a retail store. Nearly three-quarters of disabled customers say they feel forced to shop online due to limited accessibility at physical stores. Ironically, the retail economy also has a habit of excluding the one group of consumers who have the most money to spend: seniors.

If the products we buy and the services we use (as well as the advertising that promotes them) became more inclusive, the entire retail landscape could follow suit. It would not only affect what we buy and consume but also where we buy it and who is involved in the design, production, and distribution of making and selling it.

To see a world where both the "IRL" (in real life) and "URL" (online) marketplaces are tailored for all types of customers, both sellers and buyers will need to make more intentional decisions and put their money where their mouth is.

- Teams designing products and crafting in-store experiences must cater to a broader customer identity base.
- Marketers must trade tokenism in advertising for authentic representation.
- Organizations must go beyond "feel-good metrics" and match actions to words.

### What You Can Do

Let's look at three steps we can all take to support greater equity and diversity in retail.

**Action #1: When you see bias in retail, call it out and demand for it to change**. There are many ways that retail experiences can feel hostile to those customer identities who've been neglected. Many of them are not the product of intentional bias but are, rather, due to ignorance or maintaining a longstanding status quo.

Approach every retail experience with more awareness of these biases, and choose not to ignore them by voicing your concerns. Retailers react to consumer complaints—particularly if they hear the same concern from multiple people.

When you see something, say something.

**Action #2: Wield your consumer power responsibly by doing your homework**. Johanna Zeilstra is the CEO of Gender Fair, an independent platform that makes it easy for consumers to shop their values. The Gender Fair app rates companies on various diversity-based criteria and offers real-time ratings of more than 800 companies, representing 2,500 brands to help consumers make purchasing decisions at all points of sale. Johanna says that supporting purpose-driven and mission-oriented brands may be the strongest tool at the customer's disposal.

**Action #3: Buy from more diverse suppliers for yourself and on behalf of organizations**. Every purchase you make is a chance for you to support more diversity in retail. Are you indiscriminately buying everything you need from Amazon, or will you support local businesses like independent bookstores, even if it means paying an extra dollar or two?

Most of us have moments when we have a chance to spend other people's money as well. There are many examples of moments when you can act on an individual level the same way a supplier or diversity manager might act on behalf of an organization. And if you are working in an organization that doesn't have someone in charge of selecting suppliers, you can start a supplier diversity program yourself to source your materials and products from new, more diverse vendors.

## Beyond Diversity in the Workplace

For years, Crayola labeled its peach-colored crayon "flesh," which provided a constant reminder to children of color that their skin was not viewed as "the norm" in society. Band-Aid only produced bandages in one color—meant to match the skin of White people—until very recently. Fashion brands to this day continue to promote shoes and pantyhose in one "nude" color, which only matches lighter skin tones.

These are the kinds of products we've come to expect from homogenous teams working in places that either lack diversity or fail to listen to the marginalized voices on their team. Changing this reality requires recruiting and hiring more diverse team members and ensuring that their unique perspectives are not silenced but respected and acted upon.

The truth is, regardless of whether someone comes from a neurodiverse background, has a physical disability, or belongs to an underrepresented gender, ethnicity, or age group, most marginalized people describe feeling pressure at some point in their careers to assimilate into a dominant culture. As a result, many are denied the chance to truly flourish in their chosen field.

The solutions to many of these issues need to include understanding how bias impacts decisions, creating goals for increasing diversity in the workforce, and holding people accountable for their part in achieving those goals. In addition, organizations must rethink recruiting processes, ensure equitable opportunities, and in some cases, even redesign the physical environment of the workplace.

How can we shape a world where workplaces are more inclusive and welcoming to those who present themselves outside the usual employee blueprint?

- Leaders must recognize that great diversity exists within marginalized groups.
- Organizations need to listen to what people need and ensure those needs are met.
- Companies must conduct a candid assessment of current diversity and inclusion initiatives.

### What You Can Do

Here are three action steps that each of us can take to foster more inclusivity and diversity in our own workplaces.

**Action #1: Use your privilege to advocate for a colleague who might benefit from your support**. Moving forward, consider what more you could do at work to support those whose opinions and efforts are underappreciated or minimized. This might range from taking more opportunities during meetings to amplify a perspective from an undervalued colleague to inviting more underrepresented teammates to have a seat at the table in the first place.

**Action #2: Broaden your recruiting pools and use non-obvious and innovative interviewing techniques**. Cast a wider net: Explore hiring more people with disabilities, veterans, and older workers; learn more about how to connect with and recruit formerly incarcerated talent and immigrants or refugees. There are many national, regional, and community-based professional associations that are organized around the interests of each of these underrepresented communities.

**Action #3: Embrace your vulnerability at work and practice greater emotional intelligence**. The

Many successful business owners tend to glorify their lifestyle of constant work, relentless positivity, and never-ending "life hacking" to optimize every slice of every day and night.

value of soft skills has been misjudged in the past, as they've been deemed "too emotional" for the office. But our world is evolving every day, and leaders need to pivot as these become skills that are not only expected but necessary. The first step in that journey is embracing vulnerability, especially as we hope to change skeptical minds. When people at all levels of leadership make this a priority, the workplace itself can become a more welcoming and open-minded atmosphere for people of all backgrounds to excel and bring their whole selves to work.

## Beyond Diversity in Entrepreneurship

In the United States alone, NPR reported that Americans were starting businesses in 2021 at the fastest rate in more than a decade. While all of this activity isn't solely due to underrepresented entrepreneurs, it is tempting to see entrepreneurship as the great equalizer to long-standing workplace inequities. More than half of young entrepreneurs, for example, consider age bias to be a factor in why they became entrepreneurs.

Yet, entrepreneurship has a dark side. Many successful business owners tend to glorify their lifestyle of constant work, relentless positivity, and never-ending "life hacking" to optimize every slice of every day and night. Even "sleep hacking"—where you quantify and optimize your sleep—has become a rapidly growing industry.

This so-called "hustle culture" is simultaneously idolized and criticized—but there is relatively little discussion about how this 24/7 concept of work excludes or disadvantages certain groups of people, such as older workers, those with caregiving responsibilities toward children or aging parents, or those with physical disabilities.

Encouraging and empowering more diversity in entrepreneurship will require a combination of both public and private initiatives focused on the dual challenge of providing access to capital and building the support networks, funding groups, educational opportunities, and more that enable a steady flow of successful businesses to emerge, rather than an occasional success story.

- The broader investment community must ensure teams making funding decisions are diverse and inclusive.
- Networks for aspiring entrepreneurs must be created to help address systemic barriers to success.
- Diversity must be reframed as a competitive advantage rather than a barrier to overcome.

### What You Can Do

There is no economic equalizer that can have quite the same impact in creating a more inclusive world as granting all entrepreneurs the opportunity to achieve prosperity—for both themselves and their communities. Let's take a look at what you personally can do to help make this vision a reality.

**Action #1: Spend your money and social capital on finding and supporting marginalized entrepreneurs**. This might start with choosing to buy products or services from diverse businesses. If you're an entrepreneur or have decision-making power at a company, you might also do this on behalf of an organization by seeking out diverse vendors and suppliers.

**Action #2: Seek out less visible and underutilized forms of support, advice, and funding**. There is power in surrounding yourself with people who share your aspirations and upbringing, rather than always being the solitary voice from a different background in a room filled with people who, though often well-intentioned, are unlikely to understand your unique journey or share your values.

**Action #3: Invest more of your time and engagement in cross-cultural thinking**. Austrian billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz famously approached Chaleo Yoovidhya, the original creator of a Thai drink known to local truck drivers as Krating Daeng, after trying it for himself and realizing it cured his jet lag. The drink, originally promoted as a way for factory workers and truck drivers to make it through long shifts, was the inspiration for what would later be rebranded as Red Bull.

## Beyond Diversity in Leadership

The growing focus on diversity and inclusion in companies, governments, and many other institutions has fueled the urgent need to bring more empathy to all levels of management. One way this is being implemented is by formalizing roles and teams dedicated to the work of creating a diverse and inclusive company culture.

The appointing of Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs), for example, is one highly visible choice meant to spearhead the push to make the organizations they work for more diverse, equitable, and inclusive on every level.

But actually achieving representation and inclusive cultures remains a daunting task. Almost 90 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are still White men. If corporate boards symbolize the pinnacle of senior leadership, they paint a sobering picture of how far we still have left to go.

The truth is that creating a reality where leadership is more diverse and inclusive requires changes on an organizational, systemic, and individual level. And it requires commitment across the board.

- The "glass ceiling" cannot be replaced with the "glass cliff" (a phenomenon where women are more likely than men to be promoted to leadership roles during periods of crisis or downturn, when the chance of failure is strongest).
- Mentorship must be available to all, not only a select few.
- Diverse leadership cannot be treated as a "one and done" challenge.

### What You Can Do

As we look ahead to the future of leadership, especially within the DEI space, here are some things we can each do individually to help make change happen.

**Action #1: Demand more diverse representation within leadership teams**. If you work at a company that uses 360-degree reviews, where employees at all levels are asked for feedback on peers and managers, consider if you are doing all you can to understand the perspectives of co-workers from marginalized backgrounds on whether they perceive they are getting equitable access to opportunities to succeed.

**Action #2: Become an internal champion for third-party certifications and industry best practices**. Dozens of DEI certifications, advocacy programs, and industry-leading best practices exist to help any team build a more equitable workplace. Any of these could benefit your organization, but in most cases there needs to be an internal advocate who manages the process. What would it take for you to become that champion?

**Action #3: Recognize your bias in how you speak about leaders or portray them through imagery**. Can you choose a stock image that shows a different type of leader at the front of the room? Will you call out those documents or people who regularly refer to a CEO, doctor, or boss as "him"?

An inclusive world starts with each of us choosing to respect perspectives other than our own, treating everyone with respect, and choosing to stand up for others who need our support. More than anything else, this is what going beyond diversity truly means.





Rohit Bhargava helps inspire people to see what others miss, and to be more open-minded. He is the founder of the Non-Obvious Company and Ideapress Publishing. Rohit previously spent 15 years as a marketing strategist for Ogilvy and Leo Burnett, is the WSJ best-selling author of seven books, and is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University.

Jennifer Brown (she/her/hers) is an award-winning entrepreneur, speaker, diversity and inclusion consultant, and author. As the successful founder and CEO of Jennifer Brown Consulting, she is responsible for designing workplace strategies that have been implemented by some of the biggest companies and nonprofits in the world.

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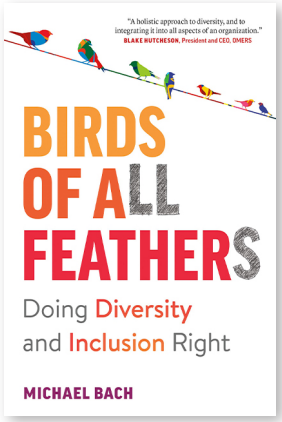
# Birds of All Feathers

Michael Bach

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Birds of All Feathers

## Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right




*by* **Michael Bach**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A book isn't going to end racism or inequity. But it can be a start.

This book is a timely call to action for employers, HR professionals, managers, and employees to address diversity and inclusion—because it's not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do.

In ***Birds of All Feathers: Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right,*** founder of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and CEO of CCDI COnsulting Michael Bach helps you develop a better understanding around the nuances of terms like diversity versus inclusion and equity versus equality, and shows how diversity and inclusion can drive innovation and creativity—critical to any business's survival in today's fickle marketplace. You'll learn how to craft a D&I policy that's effective and how to start the work of dismantling systemic racism and inequity by creating safe workspaces where people can bring their whole selves, find advancement, and succeed.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to discover your organization's "why".
- How to implement and sustain beneficial changes.
- How to measure success for your business.
- How diversity and inclusion can drive innovation and creativity.
- How to craft an effective D&I policy.

## Introduction

Diversity" and "inclusion" have become buzzwords. But what do these words mean and why do they matter? And why did you just pick up a book about them?

This book is meant to accomplish two things. First, it's meant to clearly articulate the WIIFM, or what's in it for me. What's in it for our countries? What's in it for employers? What's in it for individuals? And yes, there is something in it for each of us. Second, it's meant to be a how-to guide on D&I for employers.

This book is the culmination of a lifetime of observations. My hope is that people can learn from what I have lived and witnessed and, with a little nudge, start making decisions—using a diversity and inclusion lens—that are in the best interest of themselves, their organizations, and their country.

That isn't to say that individuals won't get something out of reading this book. You will definitely (hopefully, probably) glean some new information that will help you think differently about diversity and inclusion. Or, if nothing else, you'll have a good giggle.

## D&I Defined

In this chapter, I share with you my understanding of some of the more common terminology used, and specifically, the vocabulary I use throughout the book. Even if you know these words intimately, you may find a new perspective. And I present them in a somewhat specific order, because they build on one another. It's important that your knowledge grows from the beginning, not from the middle. As such, I've ordered the words accordingly to start you at the right place.

The words, phrases, and concepts defined in this chapter include: representation, diversity, inclusion, diversity and inclusion, human rights, equity, equality versus equity, human rights and equity, accessibility, accommodation, intersectionality, visible minorities, racialized people, people of color, handicapped versus person with a disability, SWAM, equity-seeking groups, LGBTQ2+, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, diversity fatigue, reverse discrimination, bona fide occupational requirement, and privilege.

## The Models of Diversity and Inclusion

There are two models of diversity and inclusion: the social justice model and the creativity and innovation model.

Social justice focuses on addressing societal injustices. The social justice model of diversity and inclusion requires all of us to take responsibility for the sins of our ancestors, and it also assumes we know the sins exist. It assumes we don't have our own set of biases that affect our decision-making processes. It also requires said straight, white, able-bodied men to give up power, willingly. The social justice model has not been effective in the past sixty-plus years because it requires the group in power—often, if not always, SWAMs—to have zero self-interest and to surrender their positions of power, simply because "it's the right thing to do."

Creativity and innovation focus on addressing challenges in society by leveraging the diversity of talent. The secret of the creativity and innovation model is that it addresses "issues of injustice" without calling it that. It appeals to the motivations of those in power (often money) to affect change that will be long-lasting and impactful on society as a whole. Looking at D&I through a lens of creativity and innovation helps ensure that the change you're working toward is directly connected to the success of your organization and that it ultimately will last!

## The Business Case

In the coming pages, I focus on three fundamental areas that will have the most impact on your business case: People, Customers, and Brand. There are two other important areas—compliance and supplier diversity.

Your business case (or whatever you choose to call it) addresses why your organization needs to focus on diversity and inclusion. Your business case should focus on three areas: people, customers, and brand. Make sure your business case speaks the language of your organization and simply and succinctly proves the case for D&I. Know the legislation in your city, province, state, and country, and—at a minimum—comply with it.

Your workforce should look like the community that you serve, not necessarily like Canada or the United States overall. If you operate in Toronto or Atlanta, the percentage of your workforce that are people of color should be over 50 percent, but if you operate in Moncton or Boise, it should be significantly less than the national average.

## The Right Way to Do Diversity

You certainly can do D&I the wrong way if you think that it will happen on its own, just because you believe it will; if you

believe your organization is a meritocracy where everyone is treated equally, but you've never actually examined whether that's true; if you don't apply an appropriate budget and resources to focus on changing your culture; and so on.

In this chapter, I'll outline the steps that every organization should follow if they want to be on the right track with their diversity and inclusion journey. You don't have to start at the beginning if you've been on a diversity and inclusion journey for some time, but if you think you're at step 3 and you never did step 1, guess where you need to start? The steps are in a particular order for a reason—to build something from the ground up. Remember, the house needs a good foundation.

Follow the six steps: make a business case, assess, strategize, execute, measure, repeat. To ensure successful change, it's imperative to follow the steps in order. Change management needs to be considered throughout.

## Inclusion Over Diversity (aka Talent Retention)

Inclusion comes before diversity. You have to know that your culture is inclusive before you deliberately hire different people. If you're new to this journey (and even if you're not), you have to ensure your culture is open and welcoming to the diversity that you're trying to attract.

Education is critical, and it can take a variety of forms. Communicate, communicate, communicate to ensure your entire organization buys into the D&I journey. Have a learning map. From the day a person starts, there should be mandatory D&I training driven by a D&I learning map that takes each person through a learning journey, from the fundamentals (what diversity and inclusion means and why it is important in your organization) to more complex topics like unconscious bias and intercultural competence.

## Attracting Difference

Every organization is looking for the holy grail of hiring, the perfect process to ensure acquiring the best talent. But, truth time: the perfect process simply doesn't exist. Every stage of the process sends a message. Ensuring that your process has mechanisms in place to address bias when it occurs—such as conducting panel interviews as opposed to one-on-one, and using a scoring rubric—is the best approach.

Look at your hiring process and do your best to remove as much of the potential bias as possible. Name-blind hiring isn't a solution to address bias. D&I training is. To attract difference, reach beyond your traditional process to post jobs in different places, do outreach to communities, use job fairs effectively, and spend money where it will count the most.

## Developing Your People

Talent development, talent advancement, succession planning—whatever you call it, the point is the same: What are you doing to develop your people so that they stay with you longer and advance in their careers? Developing your talent is not about being a nice employer. It's about being a smart employer. The longer a person stays with you, the more value you get from them.

Talent development needs to be deliberate and well-thought-out. Talk to your people and find out what they want, as opposed to what you think they want. Be deliberate and targeted to support the development of your people and the difference in your leadership.

## Measurement for Success

D&I work is all about change of some kind, and that change should be measured. Measuring diversity is slightly easier than measuring inclusion, because it involves more concrete numbers, which is far simpler and easier to understand than measuring the qualitative data on inclusion. Diversity is a quantitative measurement.

Measuring inclusion is a little more difficult because it's not as clear-cut as diversity. Inclusion can be open to interpretation, but you can still measure qualitatively.

You can and should measure diversity and inclusion, and there are many ways to do so. Measurement helps you understand whether or not your actions are having the intended impact. You need to measure regularly to understand your progress.

## The Key Ingredients

There are three key ingredients in the D&I space that need to be addressed; in no particular order, these include diversity councils, employee resource groups, and D&I practitioners.

Diversity councils are an underutilized resource that can have a significant impact. Employee resource groups can be a powerful extension of your organization if managed properly. D&I practitioners are the "doers" of D&I, and

you need doers to get things done.

## From the Leading Edge to the Bleeding Edge

In this chapter, I break down the responsibilities of a true chief diversity officer and why it's critical that employers move to create this position if they want to reach the elusive goal of inclusion.

Companies with a chief diversity officer who has appropriate accountability and authority are at the leading edge of D&I. A CDO touches so much more than people—marketing, product development, customers, and so on. Allocating CDOs an appropriate team, a budget, and a reporting structure with a direct or dotted line to the most senior person sets them up for success.

## Privilege

People talk about the Oppression Olympics as if it's mythical, but it isn't. It's real.

Privilege is not something that can be taken or received. It's assigned to you, whether you like it or not. There are a significant number of different types of privilege, and you don't have to be a white man to have privilege. The only solution is to use your privilege to the advantage of others who don't share the same privilege you have.

Get involved, even if it's not about you. You don't have to be Black to be part of the Black ERG, or a woman to be part of a women's program. Getting involved makes you an ally. Your help can go a long way toward getting things done.

## Overcoming Diversity Fatigue

Diversity fatigue is real, and it affects both the individual D&I practitioners and champions and the organization. It's about the exhaustion that comes from the mental or physical efforts related to diversity and inclusion work.

As individuals and as an organization, stop and celebrate your accomplishments so that you don't let the fatigue win. Every win is worth celebrating.

## What Gets in the Way?

Many things can and do get in the way of successful diversity and inclusion: lack of resources; lack of leadership buy-in; competing priorities; alien invasion (one of those doesn't really get in the way so much as destroy life on the planet). But even when all the pieces are in place, failure still happens where we should see success.

Self-interest is usually at the root of failure when D&I doesn't work. Individual, community, and organizational self-interest all influence D&I work. To be successful in D&I, self-interest needs to be put aside, and there must be a willingness to understand one another's needs in order for us all to move forward as one.

## Conclusion

We need to consider the impact of our actions on others. We don't live in isolation—at least, most of us don't. Even a person who lives completely in isolation could do something that might affect others and never be aware of it.

The only solution to self-interest is to think. Think long and hard about what you're trying to achieve and then determine if someone else might be hurt or benefited by your actions. You can guess the outcome I'd like you to choose.



**Michael Bach** is nationally and internationally recognized as a thought leader in the fields of diversity, equity and inclusion. He is the CEO of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, which he founded in 2012 to help educate Canadians on the value of diversity and inclusion. Bach has received repeated recognition for his work, including being named as one of the Women of Influence's Canadian Diversity Champions in 2011 and 2012, and receiving the 2011 Inspire Award as LGBTQ Person of the Year and the 2011 Out on Bay Street, Leaders to be Proud of LGBT Advocate Workplace Award.

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# Bravespace Workplace

Moe Carrick

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# Bravespace Workplace

## Making Your Company Fit for Human Life




*by* **Moe Carrick**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The relentless pressure on publicly-held companies to increase profits, quarter after quarter, creates untenable choices for leaders and often results in toxic work environments. Employees are demoralized, unengaged, stressed, anxious, scared, and dissatisfied. They work to get by, and they most certainly are not thriving.

***Bravespace Workplace: Making Your Company Fit for Human Life*** is a call to action and an instruction guide for business owners, entrepreneurs, CEOs, board members, HR personnel, leaders at every level, and employees to create workplaces that are brave enough to operate in ways that bring out the best in the people who work there.

Author Moe Carrick calls companies that engage their people, elevate the practice of leadership, and model healthy cultures as a practice of meeting their goals "Bravespace workplaces."

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How leaders can be real and authentically human at work
- Why and how most workplaces are unfit for human life
- How to create a workplace that is fit for human life
- What employers can do to ensure that employees thrive

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer

## People Make Companies Great

### Defining Great

Relentless focus on quarter-over-quarter, year-over-year growth has had consequences, including the scarring of our planet and its resources, the concentration of wealth in a select few and a crippling wage gap, and employees who seek more purpose and meaning at work.

Great organizations are employers that consciously and proactively invest time, energy, and resources to make their organizations Bravespace workplaces, where people can show up as they are, both worthy and flawed, and do great things together.

### AI, Machines, and Robots

Technological advances are speeding up, and some worry about whether human beings will keep up, but the brilliant Alan Turing proved mathematically decades ago that there are and always will be some things that humans can do that machines cannot. This raises three key questions: What work is unique to humans? What role does work place in the health of society? How can machines reinforce what humans do best?

Unique to humans is work that involves human connection—human contemplation, reflection, communication, and impact that is probably impossible for any machine to replicate. Machines can support what humans do best, giving people time to think, aid humans by doing the mind-numbing tasks that people hate, and allow us to connect more with other people across common platforms.

### On Profit, Size, and Sharing Wealth

Year-over-year profits are unsustainable, and profit is losing status as a motivator for workers. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poor, along with which come all the problems of people not thriving: poverty, violence, poor health, inequity, and more. Bravespace workplaces, which know how to share for the common good, will lead in the work world of tomorrow. To make your company fit for human life, leaders should look for ways to pay all workers fairly.

## Escaping a Toxic Workplace

### Toxic Is Bad!

For decades, people have spoken up about terrible behavior of work, such as sexual harassment, but they've been ignored and harmed further. From long-overdue pay raises to tyrant leaders who aren't held accountable for bad behavior, organizations frequently protect and defend their status quo, even when it makes them inhospitable for humans.

Workplaces face an onslaught of factors that threaten their ability to activate, enliven, and tenderly support the complex humans that we are. Here are the top five factors:

- 24/7 access and our devices
- Lack of inclusion
- Erosion of time to think
- Leaders who are bad for people
- Failure to tell the truth

What makes an organization fit for human life is the opposite of those five trends.

### Workplace = Bravespace: A New Definition

In Bravespace workplaces, the absolute best in the human beings who work there is cultivated, despite our imperfect and complicated human motivations, needs, and issues. People can face the risks, emotional exposure, uncertainty, and vulnerability that come with work, knowing that their courage is supported and invited. Leaders know people aren't machines and treat them accordingly.

It's not about making employees "happy." Employment must start with the needs of the organization—where there is no employer, there is no employee. But every organization needs to ensure that the people who work there thrive. What is important is that employees know that they're contributing to something bigger than themselves. We seek to feel seen, valued, and respected, and when we don't, we become disheartened, unmotivated, and numb.

There are seven needs that work should fulfill: to meet our basic requirements, to contribute, to be seen, to connect, to learn, to feel supported, and to make our lives work.

### Instructions for Human Beings

Most people come to work wanting to do a good job. Meeting the seven needs of employees ensures that they thrive and bring their best talents to work every day, which improves business results. Employees thriving is good for business. The only thing more expensive than an employee leaving is an employee who is miserable and stays. Relationships are the key to happiness at work, as in life.

## Creating a Healthier Workplace

### Who: The Human Essentials

It is all too common for otherwise competent leaders at

work to lack "heart skills"—self-awareness, social awareness, and emotional intelligence that would enable them to lead, inspire, partner, and create change.

There are four pillars to heart-based leadership:

- ***Emotion stirring.*** Emotion draws us toward a leader, gets our attention, and makes us listen.
- ***Authentic vulnerability.*** When leaders show their imperfections, we see them as real and human, and our trust grows.
- ***Compelling belief.*** A leader exists for those moments when the way is unclear, or the task seems insurmountable.
- ***Harmony between the words and the music.*** The words are what we say, and the music is the feeling we give others. Humans are skills at reading subtle, nonverbal communicative cues, and they know when someone is faking.

Our sense of what it means to be a leader evolved from the Northern European ancestry of the earliest European immigrants to North America, and it's sometimes called "white male culture," which values authoritarianism and decisiveness at work. Even women in leadership roles assimilate this favored culture.

But things are changing in the realm of leadership, and effective leaders will embrace leading with their hearts as well as their heads. Bravespace workplace leaders make the effort to model a tolerance for imperfection, and they see it as part of learning and innovating. Effective heart-based leaders spend time and effort cultivating relationships. They craft agreements that honor the unique nature of everyone who works for them, and they ensure that people feel seen. They speak what's true, even when it's hard, intimidating, emotional, or scary.

## Teams Who Care

There are three characteristics that make a good team: equal "airtime" for all team members, social sensitivity (being in tune with and responsive to others' moods and needs), and having more women (perhaps because women are socialized to value connectedness, empathy, trustworthiness, balance, etc.).

Teams often try to succeed as a team by doing things like bringing cupcakes on birthdays or kegs of beer on Fridays or by hosting events such as fire walking or team paintball. These activities don't usually deepen the relationships of team members in the heart-based way that healthy teams need. They often alienate introverts and they tend to lead to superficial connections at best.

Reflecting on the following questions will help your team develop their social capital and become an effective team:

- Is there trust in your work situation? Competition that pits employees against each other work against trust.
- Does your team engage in healthy conflict?
- How big is your team? Four to twelve members is best.
- How courageous are you and your teammates? We must have the courage to see and speak the truth, to create and hold forth a vision of the desired state, to persevere and hold the course, and to collaborate with and rely on others.

Here are the top five things you can do to create a Bravespace workplace that will move your group from ***barely getting by to achieving amazing results together***: listen first, know your part, be vulnerable and imperfect, have a plan, and be willing to go off plan.

## What: A Conscious Culture

Four factors invariably create an unhealthy work culture:

- Espousing one set of values while practicing another
- Tolerating employees who fail to practice the organization's stated values
- Having two cultures: one for customers and one for employees
- Assuming that company culture will take care of itself

Company culture is something that can be measured, learned, taught, and changed. It needs dedicated focus. Leaders of Bravespace workplaces invest their resources in the development of people practices that sustain healthy culture. Usually this means spending time and money on training, communication, management, and leadership development.

## Where/When: Purposeful Design

Human-centered design is important. It considers how a system, space, or product can be designed in a manner that facilitates human well-being and prosperity. Leaders of Bravespace workplaces take design thinking concepts and apply them directly to how work unfolds in four key categories:

### 1. People: How Are People Organized?

Frequently, problems between people at work stem from the

way that an organization is structured from top to bottom. Every employee must be able to answer to two questions: To whom am I accountable? What does "doing a job well" look like? Employee rating and ranking systems are not shown by evidence to improve performance. There should be more frequent, more compassionate, more honest, and more rigorous person-to-person conversations about how things are going.

### 2. Time: When Do Your People Work?

Flexible work hours are a potent currency. While the stress of competing obligations is increasing, our willingness to make personal sacrifices for work is decreasing. As workplaces realize this, norms, expectations, and practices are changing. Leaders of Bravespace workplaces need to figure out how people's work times affect the business.

### 3. Location: Where Do People Work?

Leaders of Bravespace workplaces approach physical space and ergonomics with a thoughtful mindset about what their employees want and need. They design ways for remote workers to meet and connect with other people at work occasionally.

### 4. Impact: How Does Your Organization Impact the Communities in Which It Lives?

We seek meaning from the work we do, but many of us haven't found it. We don't necessarily seek to save the world, but we want to feel seen, necessary, occupied, and compelled (the organization's products and mission are meaningful).

Even on bad days, work is better than the alternative. Work gives us a way to contribute and a purpose, offers relationships and reduces isolation, stimulates our brains, and connects to identity.

## Act Now!

To create a workplace that truly brings out the best in everyone who works there, here are the top ten behaviors to start with:

1. Adopt a people-centered mindset.
2. Bring flexibility to your approach.
3. Involve others.
4. See the benefit beyond profit.
5. Address leaders first. Great leaders inspire loyalty, foster esteem, and bring out the best in people.
6. Remember that life is work. Don't pretend there's a wall between the two.
7. Start with small changes.
8. Listen to understand. Talk to people in your organization at all levels.
9. Align head and heart.
10. Walk your talk. Your employees are watching.

In the Bravespace workplaces of tomorrow, work will be the place we go to activate, enliven, and tenderly support the complicated humans that we are so that we can bring all of ourselves to work every day. It will be a place where we create great things together, learn, connect, and contribute.



Being equal parts pragmatic and provocative, Moe Carrick engages readers and audiences on the so-called "soft stuff" that really matters: people, culture, leading, team health, work fit and business as a force for good.

As Principal and Founder of Moementum, Inc., a Certified BCorp and consulting firm dedicated to the vision of creating a world that works for everyone, Moe believes business can be a force for good. Her diverse client portfolio includes Prudential Financial, REI, The Nature Conservancy, TechSoft3D, Hydroflask, and Nintendo of America, among others.

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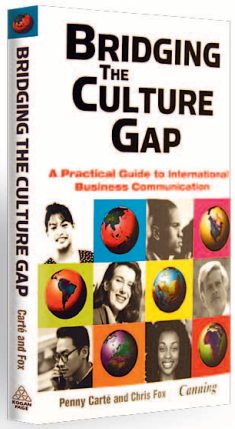
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# Bridging the Culture Gap

Penny Carte and Chris Fox

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: HANDS-ON MANAGEMENT




## A Practical Guide to International Business Communication

# BRIDGING THE CULTURE GAP

By Penny Carté and Chris Fox

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*There are those who will tell you that globalization is creating an environment in which companies can operate virtually anywhere in the world under identical conditions to those back home. This is a dangerous belief. It leads people to assume that there is one norm, one way of doing things, one way of looking at the world. As globalization gathers momentum, contact between businesspeople from other countries is becoming more frequent. The more national boundaries a company crosses, the greater the scope for misunderstanding and conflict. To succeed internationally, it is essential to break the barriers of culture, language and set patterns of thinking.*

*Most of the time, communications break down because there is a culture gap of which neither side is aware, or because compatriots back home at the main office won't allow their managers in the field to adapt corporate policy to suit local needs.*

Bridging the Culture Gap *is based on the real-life business situations of the authors' many international clients. Featuring many case studies, cultural preference scales and practical tips, this summary will help those of any nationality to become better communicators. Whether you are planning to give a presentation to a cross-cultural group or about to negotiate with an overseas client, the advice found in this summary will help you ensure that your cultural-awareness antennae are well tuned.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ How to deal sensitively with those from other cultures.
- ✓ How to mind your manners when they matter most.
- ✓ How to avoid the hidden dangers of international negotiations.
- ✓ How to smoothly work your way through the international moral maze.
- ✓ How to communicate with style.
- ✓ How to win the deal.

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# Bridging the Culture Gap

All of us carry around fixed images of other cultures. These stereotypes are often negative and nearly always the result of measuring what foreigners do or say against our own cultural norms.

For instance, a Swedish company had established very clear global purchasing guidelines: No more than 30 percent of any particular item could be supplied by one vendor, and quotes had to be obtained from at least three different suppliers.

Anders — the regional manager for Southeast Asia — was disturbed to note that, despite several reminders, the subsidiary in Vietnam did not appear to be following these guidelines. In fact, the range of suppliers it used seemed to be very limited, and most of them were Chinese.

The subsidiary's Chinese manager seemed very unconcerned when Anders raised this problem with him. "Well, of course most of our suppliers are Chinese," he said. "I only use vendors I'm related to."

## *Trust and Nepotism*

When Anders explained that this practice would have to stop because it was unethical and anticompetitive, the Chinese manager was genuinely puzzled: "But I can't see what the problem is," he said. "My family is much more loyal and reliable than people I don't know. I can call them at any time of day or night. And, of course, they give me much better discounts. Surely you don't want me to use suppliers I don't trust."

Who do you identify with here: Anders, who was convinced that nepotism was unequivocally wrong, or the Chinese manager who regarded giving contracts to his family as a perfectly normal, logical and acceptable thing to do? If you were Anders, what would you do next? What impact do you think your instinctive response would be likely to have on the Chinese manager?

There are clearly a number of cultural differences that could affect the outcome of this situation. But what are they? What lies behind them? These are the kinds of questions this summary asks and then helps to answer by using a series of cultural preference scales, designed to help you gradually build up a picture of how your own culture differs from others and why. ■

# Interpreting the Party Line

Customers, shareholders and the media soon lose faith and interest in a company that projects a confused or inconsistent image. This is why every business strives to present itself to the outside world as a united entity with a single set of beliefs. The trouble is, the bigger a company becomes and the more national borders it crosses, the harder it has to work to preserve the united front that is so vital to its continued prosperity.

## *The Central Norm*

For many multinational companies, developing everything centrally — such as the messages they want to broadcast and the brands they market — is the only answer. This central norm is then disseminated throughout the organization. This can work if those at headquarters are prepared to adapt the party line to suit local needs, and if their colleagues in the foreign subsidiaries are willing to keep an open mind. All too often, however, everyone assumes that his or her own attitudes and beliefs are universal, right and normal. It doesn't occur to most people that those from other cultures might see things from a different perspective.

It's only natural to regard your own view of the world as the right one, and to believe that anyone who doesn't share it is strange or unusual. The people at the main office jump

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**The authors:** Since 1988, Penny Carté has served as director of research and development for the international communications training consultancy Canning. She has run many courses for multinational companies and written a wide range of cross-cultural, business training materials.

Chris Fox joined Canning in 1999, specializing in running courses for managers in the pharmaceutical, financial and aerospace sectors. He travels regularly throughout the world, liaising with client companies and delivering courses. He has published papers and articles on political and cultural theory.

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**For additional information on the authors, go to: http://my.summary.com**

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## Interpreting the Party Line

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to the conclusion that the subsidiaries are being deliberately difficult or obstructive, and the people in the subsidiaries automatically assume that their foreign bosses simply don't care about the problems their directives are causing.

It's easy to jump to negative conclusions about other people's motives if you measure what they do and say against your own cultural norms. But not everyone looks at mission statements and corporate initiatives in the same way as you do, and your natural communication style could well seem brusque — or excessively indirect — to some of your foreign colleagues.

### *Mission Statements*

Mission statements, although honorable, are often framed in very abstract terms. They have to be. A company cannot make a concrete and meaningful statement of intent and values without losing flexibility. Flexibility is what businesses need to survive. They've got to be able to make decisions quickly, and act upon them right away.

| Theoretical | | | | | | Empirical | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I like using abstract concepts to solve problems. | | | | | | For me, concrete experience is more important than theory. | | | | |
| 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 |

American managers lean toward the theoretical end of the scale above. They take the abstract values expressed in a mission statement very seriously and are prepared to spend time discussing them in depth. They have no trouble translating these general theories into concrete, practical guidelines that they can relate to their daily work.

Others lean toward the empirical end of the scale. If you lean toward this end of the scale, you might find it hard to take the kind of abstract theorizing contained in a mission statement seriously. Northern European managers tend to discuss core values briefly and dismiss them as meaningless. What possible relevance could they have to their daily working lives?

### *Corporate Initiatives*

When you are working internationally, you have to make some effort to understand and adapt to the ways different cultures see things. If you don't, the company's attempts to project a consistent and harmonious external image will lead to considerable conflict and disharmony internally.

Implementing corporate initiatives is never easy. When one colleague is prepared to question his or her own assumptions and make an effort to put him- or herself in the other's position, the two colleagues now understand one another better than ever.

The French, Germans and Swiss would fall to the left of the scale on the right. They take a factual, balanced and logical view of any situation. If you want to get them on your side, make sure your argument is comprehensive and

| Analytical | | | | | | Intuitive | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What I value most is a logical, comprehensive and consistent argument. Even if I instinctively feel a proposal is right, I need to test every step in the argument before I can commit myself. | | | | | | What I value most are creative and intriguing ideas that appeal to the emotions. If I instinctively feel a proposal is right, I don't need to test every single step in the argument before I commit myself. | | | | |
| 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 |

consistent. Be positive, but support enthusiasm with solid facts and rational arguments. If you don't, they may well conclude that you're superficial, or even lazy.

Americans are impatient with time, willing to accept mistakes and happy to improvise. As a result, they would probably fall nearer the middle of this scale. When dealing with more intuitive cultures, resist the temptation to give them too many facts. Construct a logical argument, but keep it short and to the point. If you don't, they might think you are dull and unimaginative.

### *Working Rhythms*

In monochronic cultures (Anglo-Saxon America, Canada, Australia, Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), *people prefer to deal with one task at a time in a structured fashion.* Time is linear, sequential and can be cut up into blocks. People are judged by how well they can control their time. Those who can't are not to be trusted.

In polychronic cultures (Hispanic United States, Latin America, India, the Arab world and Italy), *people prefer to have several tasks running at the same time.* Time is viewed as more circular: It's their servant, not their master. To them, how you nurture relationships is more important than how you manage your time.

You might expect all monochronic cultures to get everything done as fast and efficiently as possible, and all polychronic cultures to prefer taking their time. Unfortunately, life isn't that simple. Though the monochronic Germans often expect their meetings to be well structured and fairly quick, they can be very slow in making decisions. With the more polychronic Spanish, meetings can be long and rambling, but decisions are often made very rapidly. The Japanese, who are well known for taking a long time to reach a decision, expect implementation to be lightning-quick once a decision has been made.

### *Communication Style*

It's a problem that confronts the corporate executive all too often: You arrive at the subsidiary, issue your instructions and then later discover that everyone has completely ignored them.

Low-context communicators believe *business relationships are complicated, and therefore, communication needs to be frank, explicit and direct.* They tend to express themselves in explicit, concrete, unequivocal terms. There's little cultural baggage or context attached to the words they

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## Interpreting the Party Line

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use, and you can usually take what they say at face value. If you are, for example, American, German, Scandinavian or Finnish, you will probably fall into this category. When you're doing business with other low-context communicators, you will probably find their communication style reassuringly straightforward and comprehensible.

High-context communicators, on the other hand, believe *business relationships are complicated, and therefore, communication needs to be diplomatic, implicit and indirect.* They expect you to be able to interpret what they mean from your knowledge of the cultural values that lie behind the words, what they're actually talking about at the time, their tone of voice and, of course, their eye and body language. Both the French and the Japanese would be considered high-context communicators even though their cultural contexts are different. The modern business world is complex, diverse and often stressful. There's no panacea that will magically cure all these communication problems. But if you show a bit of genuine empathy, you'll find that, at the very least, it can be an effective painkiller.

### *The Perception Gap*

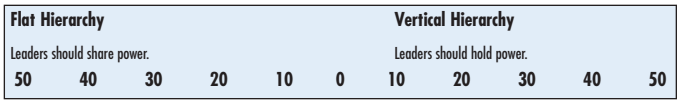
When you are doing business with different cultures, there will almost certainly be a gap between your perceptions and theirs. This does not need to stop you from presenting a united front. The key to success is to acknowledge that there is a gap and to make genuine attempts to bridge it. The most successful cross-cultural communicators are those who are instinctively able to push the right buttons. To follow their example, you need to:

- Keep an open mind.
- Try to put yourself in the other person's position.
- Ask carefully chosen open questions (those that start with who, what, when, why, where, how, etc.).
- Really listen to the answers.
- Probe for more information by asking closed questions (those that invite a Yes or No answer) to check that any deductions you've made are correct. ■

# Knowing Your Place

The multinational organization may need to present a united front to the outside world, but in your daily business life you will be dealing with people who work behind that front. In order for a dynamic company to move forward and grow, it needs internal diversity and competition. But these diverse individuals and competing groups have to be kept on track, synergies have to be achieved, consensus has to be reached and final decisions have to be taken. Which is why virtually every organization — no matter how small — has some kind of chain of command.

Most companies attempt to show how their hierarchy works by producing an organization chart. This will show who is nominally responsible for what, and who reports to whom. But how accurately does it reflect what happens on a day-to-day basis? Does it show what the balance of power really is, how far an individual's authority or responsibilities extend, or how much autonomy the people enjoy?




People from Scandinavia and Australia would probably fall to the far left of the scale above. In Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, company hierarchies are also relatively flat. Bosses tend to consult widely and subordinates are generally free to express their own views and challenge their boss' decisions. In flatter business cultures, running to the boss every time there is a problem is often seen as *bad form.*

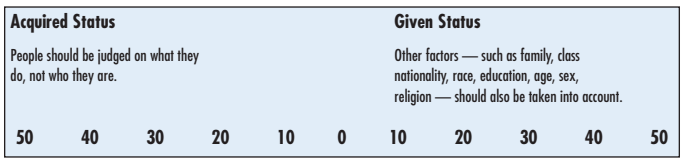
### *Vertical Hierarchy*

In France, Spain, Italy, Latin America, Southeast Asia, India, China, Africa and the Arab world, power in companies is held by a few people at the top. Managers are expected to tell people what to do. When the people with whom you are doing business come from one of these vertical cultures, you need to:

- Have clear lines of communication to senior management.
- Keep valuable information to yourself and only share it with those who can help you.
- Show great respect to the decision makers, while avoiding flattery. Don't get angry if your best ideas somehow become the brilliant solutions of the company president.
- Be firm and autocratic in your dealings with subordinates.

### *Monitoring Performance*

The idea that businesses should be run along meritocratic lines is becoming more and more common. So, at first sight, you may well place yourself to the left of the scale below. But is that how you really feel, or how you believe you ought to feel?




Spain, Southern Italy, South America, India, China, Japan, the Arab world and Africa would lean toward the right of this scale. In these cultures, how fast you work your way up the hierarchy doesn't just depend upon how well you perform. Other factors — family, class,

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## Knowing Your Place

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nationality, race, education, age, sex and religion — are also important. When dealing with people from these cultures, you should:

- Show respect for those older than you.
- Consider the age and length of service of your staff when assigning jobs.
- Be paternalistic with your subordinates.
- Dress appropriately and act demurely if you're a woman. ■

For additional information on how you can get people to play ball, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Knowing the Limits

A sales manager was sent by his company to an emerging market country to negotiate an important contract. On the first evening, his hosts took him out to dinner and kept refilling his glass with wine and liquor. The sales manager got very drunk. So much so, that he accepted an offer to spend the night with one of four beautiful women who had suddenly appeared on the scene. The next morning, his hosts presented him with the contract and asked him to sign it. "But we haven't negotiated the terms," he said.

"Yes we have," said his hosts. "The negotiation took place last night. Don't you remember?" When he still refused to sign, his hosts started to threaten him. Eventually, the sales manager left without signing. When he got home, he overcame his embarrassment and told his bosses exactly what had happened. He then phoned the prospective partners and arranged a meeting on neutral territory to negotiate the deal. He went to the next meeting with two colleagues and, this time, none of them drank anything stronger than mineral water.

### *Follow Your Conscience*

Wherever you work in the world, you will occasionally come across people who are doing things that, by almost any standard, are deeply wrong. When that happens, all you can do is follow your own conscience. Unless you are very unlucky, however, it is likely that most of the people you meet will be trying to do what their own culture regards as acceptable. It just seems wrong to you because you're looking at it from your own cultural standpoint.

When you're working internationally, navigating your way smoothly through the moral maze will often require more time, more thought and more flexibility than it does at home. So remember these golden rules:

- Don't overreact or pass hasty judgments.
- Keep an open mind.
- Ask yourself why you think what's happening is wrong and why the people you're dealing with draw the line in a different place.
- Re-examine the situation as objectively as possible.
- Look for ways of resolving the situation that will be acceptable to both parties' moral values and beliefs.
- Remain calm and constructive at all times.

Before you leap to any hasty conclusions about an international partner's moral probity, or lack of it, think carefully about your respective cultural assumptions. Once you know and understand your own limits and theirs, you should be able to work out how best to bridge the gap.

### *Rules, Regulations and Laws of the Land*

If you believe in fixed truth — there are clear rights and wrongs regardless of the circumstances — you will probably expect people to follow rules and procedures to the letter. North Americans, Australians and Northern Europeans lean this way. People from these cultures tend to attach great importance to written contracts, organization charts, detailed quality control manuals and the like. They admire honesty and directness, even if it hurts people's feelings. When doing business with them, you should:

- Pay full attention to the written clauses of any contract you are negotiating.
- Keep your bargaining range narrow.
- Be prepared for open criticism or direct rejection.
- Use arguments based on logic and fact.
- Be careful when giving presents or doing favors.

Conversely, people who live in countries where there is a relative-truth culture — what is right and wrong depends on the circumstances — may have to modify their highly pragmatic approach when dealing with those who live by fixed truth. If not, there's a danger it will undermine their business partners' confidence in their integrity. When dealing with people from relative-truth cultures, you need to:

- Focus on building the relationship before getting down to business.
- Keep your bargaining range wide.
- Be ready to renegotiate a contract should the situation change.
- Maintain continuity in relationships.
- Use emotional arguments which show the benefits to the person's group.
- Avoid being too direct in your opinions.
- Accept small gifts and favors.

### *Gifts, Favors and Bribes*

In cultures where business is personal, gift-giving and exchanging favors tend to be commonplace. The problem is, where do you draw the line between a gift and a bribe? How do you distinguish between reasonable business entertainment and thinly disguised corruption? Multinational

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## Knowing the Limits

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companies must give these questions careful thought.

Everyone responds positively to genuine human warmth and empathy. However different their cultural values may be, your international business associates are human beings with the same basic needs and emotions as you. Small acts of kindness that demonstrate empathy and concern can often do as much, if not more, for the relationship as expensive gifts or nights out on the town.

If you're from a "functional" culture (Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia), you may not feel the need to build a close personal relationship with everyone with whom you do business. You may feel surprised or even impatient if your business associates spend too much time on small talk or socializing.

But there are many "personal" cultures (the Arab world, Asia, Southern Europe, Africa, South America) where people won't do business with you until they know and trust you. With them, you need to:

- Allow plenty of time.
- Engage in small talk.
- Be prepared to socialize with colleagues and clients.
- Be prepared to exchange favors and small gifts. ■

# Knowing the Form

Good manners are all about showing warmth, consideration, deference and respect to others. But good manners go way beyond saying *please* and *thank you* or using the correct form of address. *Good form* is socially acceptable behavior. The trouble is, what you regard as good form may be considered bad form somewhere else, and vice versa.

There will always be some kind of gap between your social conventions and those of your international business partners. Finding out what the main differences are and making a conscious effort to honor local customs is relatively easy. Battling against your own subconscious can be much harder.

### *Greeting People*

Generally, it's up to the visitor to know and honor local customs. But that does not mean initiating the hugging and kissing if that prevails in certain cultures — especially if it makes you feel awkward and uncomfortable. You would only come across as clumsy or insincere. But you should be careful not to show surprise or embarrassment if you are hugged or kissed. More importantly, do not allow your own social conditioning to lead to false or negative judgments.

For instance, Europeans find it hard to trust people who don't look them in the eye when shaking hands. But in Japan and other Asian cultures, people who look you in the eye too directly and too long can appear aggressive and disrespectful.

Arabs, Africans, Indians, South Americans, Southern Italians and Greeks tend to be very tactile. With them, handshakes can go on forever, and they're likely to stand very close to you. In Eastern and Southeastern Asia, on the other hand, people tend to be far more physically distant. In Japan, physical contact between businesspeople in the office is almost nonexistent. Interestingly enough, however, when Japanese colleagues are socializing together in a bar after work, they seem to become more tactile, and it's not unusual to see them touching one another on the arm or patting someone on the back.

### *Making Small Talk*

Some cultures prefer to focus on business first and personal relationships later, while others feel the need to build a personal relationship before they can do business.

At the beginning of any meeting with someone from the Arab world, for example, people expect to spend plenty of time getting to know one another or cementing the relationship. The conversation can extend to all aspects of life. In Japan, too, the aim at early meetings will be to develop personal trust. You must resist the urge to force the pace.

In more functional cultures, on the other hand, people expect to start on the business agenda within minutes of sitting down. With Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians and Finns, small talk is often limited to a couple of sentences. Don't assume they're being deliberately cold or unwelcoming. They're probably just trying to be professional and businesslike.

### *Playing the Conversation Game*

Some cultures, such as the British and American, expect conversation to be interactive. To them, interrupting with the odd relevant comment or question shows interest. When people from these cultures are confronted with a business partner who sits and listens to them in absolute silence, it can make them feel uneasy. They may wonder if they have said something wrong, or even jump to the conclusion that the other person is cold or lacking in personality.

Other cultures, such as the Japanese and the Finns, wait their turn to speak. For them, conversation is often like a series of mini-monologues. They expect to have people listen carefully and not to interrupt. To do so would be considered ill-mannered, disrespectful or superficial.

For most Northern Europeans and North Americans, memoranda of understanding, contracts, written summaries and e-mailed offers carry more weight than what people say in a meeting. In dealing with them:

- Don't be offended if they take many notes.
- Don't be surprised if they get their lawyers involved early in the relationship.

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## Knowing the Form

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- Don't assume an agreement has been made until it has been confirmed in writing.

For cultures that have a strong oral tradition, such as those in the Arab world, the spoken word tends to be more important. When you're trying to make deals with them:

- Don't take too many written notes during the meeting.
- Leave the lawyers at home.
- Don't make oral promises that you're not prepared to keep. ■

For additional information on choosing what to say and how to say it, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Making Presentations

Imagine that you work for a large pharmaceutical company that is about to launch an antifungal cream. As product manager, it's your job to present the new cream and ways of selling it to each of the four regional sales teams in your country. Should you deliver exactly the same presentation to each of the four teams or try to adapt it each time?

Most people would see nothing wrong with delivering exactly the same presentation to each of the teams. Many would also assume that, in this situation, it would be perfectly acceptable to let the facts speak for themselves. After all, they argue, there's no need to agonize over what might appeal to these audiences. They all work for the same company and they're all salespeople, so they're bound to be interested in the product and how to sell it.

### *A Common Denominator*

It doesn't matter how relevant you think the subject matter is, you must still try to put it in a context to which the audience can relate. As every audience is different, you're going to have to change the context to suit each one. You cannot create a universal presentation what will be equally relevant and memorable to a series of different listeners. What interests and appeals to one group may well bore or irritate another.

What can you do if you don't know the people to whom you're presenting? If you don't know the members of your audience personally, ask yourself what you know about them as a group. For example, are they all engineers, do they all come from one country and are they the same age? You have to keep asking questions about them until you find some common denominator.

But what if the audience does different jobs, comes from different countries and is comprised of people of all different ages? It would be easy to think that the only common denominator then is the information you are to present. Not true. You're forgetting the most important thing they have in common. They are all human beings with certain needs and aims in common. It's just a question of finding which of their needs and aims you could most effectively appeal to in this particular presentation.

### *Know Your Audience*

What people expect from a presentation varies from culture to culture. Some people think the best presentations are thorough and detailed with plenty of supporting facts and documentation. Others will only listen to you if you're brief and selective. Some audiences are impressed by a logical structure; others by a creative one. Some presenters aim to inform; others want to persuade or entertain.

When you are having a conversation with someone, you can see or hear his or her reactions. Provided you are willing to try to put yourself in his or her position, you can adapt what you say and the way you say it as the conversation progresses. But when you sit down to prepare a presentation, the members of your audience aren't around. You have to put the whole thing together without any input or feedback from them.

Focusing on yourself and your own agenda is a major block to successful communication, in whatever context you're operating. If you want the members of your audience to really sit up and listen, you have to make sure that everything you say and every visual you show is interesting and relevant to them.

When you're presenting internationally, you have to make a conscious effort to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes. That does not mean you should try to change your natural style so radically that you feel uncomfortable.

### *Low-Key Audiences*

Putting your message across persuasively and positively is something that all presenters should aim to do. When presenting to a low-key audience that lets facts speak for themselves, such as one made up of the Swiss:

- Make sure you can support what you say with relevant details and facts.
- Respond to concerns realistically and factually.
- Don't put too much emphasis on your own successes and achievements.

When you come from a low-key culture and you are presenting to upbeat cultures that always try to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation, such as Americans:

- Try to find an upbeat central message that looks forward rather than back.
- Make an effort to sound positive and optimistic.

American and British audiences tend to respond best to presentations that are short and selective. When presenting to them, be concise and never go over an agreed-upon time limit. Conversely, when presenting to Italian, German, Scandinavian, Finnish and Japanese audiences, you must avoid being overly simplistic and you should work to sup-

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## Making Presentations

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port arguments with plenty of relevant facts and data.

Even if you are presenting to an audience that values facts and background information, it is still vital to be selective. Remember that the most dangerous subject for you as a presenter is the one that fascinates you — the one on which you're the world expert. Check your motives. Does the audience really need to know the point you are making?

Americans, Italians and the British expect presenters to interpret the facts for them. When presenting to them you should provide your opinions upfront and tell them directly what your recommendations are and why. In addition, you should present your case as persuasively as possible.

The Germans, Scandinavians, Finns and Japanese, on the other hand, expect you to let them draw their own conclusions. When presenting to them, avoid the hard sell.

Before you can adapt to your audience's expectations, you need to do two things:

**1. Analyze your own style and preferences as objectively as possible.**

**2. Resist the temptation to believe that you are right and the rest of the world is wrong.**

If you know yourself, keep an open mind and make every effort to know your audience, you can always find a way to bridge even the widest culture gap.

### *Getting Your Message Across*

Wherever audience members are from, your presentation will only be successful if they listen to what you're saying and remember the message you're trying to get across. These guidelines can help you achieve this objective:

- **Know your audience.** Who are they? How much do they already know about the subject? How do they feel about it (hostile, neutral or positive)? What will they gain from listening to you? What are they expecting?
- **Create a central message.** Try to express in one clear, punchy sentence what the presentation is about and what the audience will gain from listening to you.
- **Choose only the points that support your central message and are relevant to the audience.**
- **Always look for the common denominator.** People only see something when they have the right metaphor to perceive it.
- **Speak with impact by keeping sentences short, simple and active, avoiding long abstract nouns, using verbs your audience will understand and avoiding idiomatic expressions.**
- **Stress the important parts of the sentence.** Pause after each phrase and sentence. At every step, tell the members of your audience where they are, where they've been and where they're going. ■

## Making Deals

When a deal falls through, most negotiators automatically blame some practical issue: The client couldn't afford to pay for the quality we offer or we don't have the capacity to supply the volumes they want. Few people admit that they lost a contract because they did not handle the client or the negotiation in the right way. In the international arena, however, it's your negotiating style above all else that can make or break a deal.

The most fragile aspect in international partnerships is the relationship between the people involved. By maintaining a "soft on people, hard on points" approach, you should be able to nurture the relationship while still ensuring that you give no ground on the commercial issues.

If your partners have decided that negotiating is about fighting, that's fine. Fight over the points, but do everything you can to avoid making it personal. Few people in the world will warm to you if you irritate or offend them. ■

### SOUNDVIEW Recommended Reading List

**If you liked *Bridging the Culture Gap*, you'll also like:**

1. ***Working GlobeSmart*** **by Ernest Gundling.** Gundling explains how to predict and overcome the challenges of conducting global business by developing the right people skills.
2. ***Global Teams*** **by Michael Marquardt and Lisa Horvath.** The authors explain how to turn new international workers into a unified and productive work force.
3. ***Success for the New Global Manager*** **by Maxine Dalton, Chris Ernst, Jennifer Deal and Jean Leslie.** The authors show how managers can be successful when working across vast distances.
4. ***Survival Skills for Overseas Living*** **by L. Robert Kohls.** Kohls shows Americans the crucial concepts for thriving in unfamiliar cultures.
5. ***Expert Expatriate*** **by Melissa Brayer Hess and Patricia Linderman.** Hess and Linderman present a guidebook for those relocating in a foreign destination.

## Knowing Yourself

There will always be a culture gap of one kind or another between you and your international business partners. Most misunderstandings arise because those involved assumed that their own beliefs, attitudes and behavior were normal. In many cases, it didn't occur to them that those with whom they were dealing looked at the world from a completely different perspective. As a result, negative stereotypes were reinforced, motives were misinterpreted, goodwill was damaged and communications broke down altogether.

Knowing yourself is the first and most important step toward bridging the culture gap. The second is to acknowledge that the way you and your compatriots look at the world is not universal. The third is to find out as much as you can about what other cultures value and what lies behind their beliefs.

To find out who you are, there are five key issues on which to focus: relationships, communication, time, truth and the meaning of life. ■

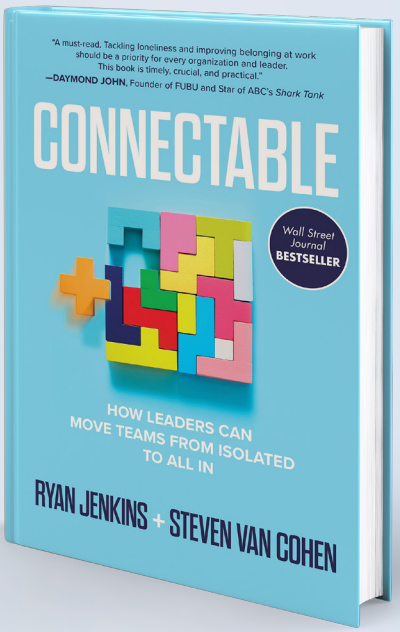
**For additional information on how to speak with impact, go to: http://my.summary.com**

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# Connectable

Ryan Jenkins and Steven Van Cohen

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Connectable

By Ryan Jenkins & Steven Van Cohen

Ryan Jenkins, CSP® (Certified Speaking Professional™), is an internationally-recognized keynote speaker and three-time published author.

Steven Van Cohen, MSOD (Master of Science in Organizational Development), is a global leadership consultant, executive coach, and two-time published author.

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# Awaken a Renewed Sense of Connection

Co authors Ryan Jenkins and Steven van Cohen are global leadership speakers and consultants who have helped several large companies prepare for the future of their work. Working alongside organizations like The Home Depot, Liberty Mutual Insurance, and Bruster's Ice Cream, they've helped leaders realize their greatest asset and leverage it for mutual benefit. That greatest asset is their people. Loneliness is universal. We all feel it at some point in our lives. However, in the last few years, loneliness has slowly seeped into the workplace, creating invisible and silent problems. In the last couple of years, Ryan and Steven surveyed over 2,000 people including 50 global leaders to do a deep dive into the role of loneliness in the workforce. Through this research, they've developed strategies and a framework to not only address loneliness, but to also counteract its effect on individuals and the teams they're on. ***Connectable*** gives us a balance of science, statistics, and stories to demonstrate the role of loneliness in individuals and the role of leaders in navigating that loneliness.

## The Loneliness Epidemic

Ryan and Steven define workplace loneliness as, "the distress caused by the perceived inadequacy of a quality connection to teammates, leaders, the organization, and work itself." Each year, as we grow our technologies and ways of work, we lose a sense of connection. This is the same connection that makes us feel better equipped to do our jobs well and with enthusiasm.

A prime example is the ATM. When invented, it was marketed as the only 24 hour bank. You could go to it at any time. You could withdraw the money you need and deposit your checks from work. And best of all, you could skip the wait in a line to do any of your banking needs. ATMs have collectively saved people billions of hours with their convenience. However, there is a cost associated with this ease: social connection. If we're no longer waiting in lines, we're no longer making chit chat. We're no longer communicating with other people. We're no longer connecting like we used to.

Today, over 60% of American adults report that they feel lonely. And when team members show up to work lonely, they feel less

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committed to the work they need to do, and they feel less appreciated for the work they actually accomplish. They bottle it up, let it fester, and spread it to others. Loneliness is contagious. The more one person pulls away, the more the whole team pushes, too. Before you know it, you have a team full of lonely people who have dropped their commitment to work and are on the fast track to burnout.

In our culture, it's the norm to feel like you have two separate selves: your work self and your nonwork self: further encouragement to keep that loneliness bottled up and save it for after work periods. Even when you're expected to be accessible at all hours of the day (thanks to our new way of working).

The bottom line: Less engagement, less productivity, and lower retention levels. It forces people to behave the opposite of what we expect them to while at work. Loneliness is the thing that is holding teams back from their full potential. It's time to cut it loose so your team can function on the level they are fully capable of. It starts with leaders. The people who both model the action to take and care about the relationships they are building. It's up to leaders to rescue their workers from loneliness. Not through treatment, but through connection.

## The Less Loneliness Framework

After conducting hundreds of interviews authors Ryan and Steven came up with a framework that works with organizations, no matter what industry they're in. It's served Fortune 500 companies and small businesses with less than 10 people. Because loneliness is universal, they wanted a framework that would be just as effective when put into play.

Step 1: Look at Loneliness

Some signs of loneliness are obvious and visible. Others are extremely hidden. As leaders, we need to get the best vantage point to look at the full landscape of loneliness on our teams. The question isn't if the people on our teams are lonely. The question is: how are they lonely? How are they being seen? How are they not being seen? The stigma around this feeling is slowly going away. More people are willing to talk about it. Even more so would be willing if you, their leader, would initiate the conversation and ask: "Where are my people not connecting? How could I help increase that connection?"

However, before you consider someone else making a change, you must consider how loneliness also affects you. Are you in tune with the people around you? How are you connecting with others? A self assessment will help you understand the effects on your team…as individuals and as a whole. Then, assess your team. Look at their loneliness levels. How approachable are they? Get to know the individuals, what their goals are, what they enjoy doing. Having a stronger understanding of the personalities on your team can help you recognize when someone is feeling disconnected and lonely.

The authors detail a list of 10 common loneliness identifiers to help you look at loneliness on your team. They are as followed:

- Sloppy Work
- Lack of Learning and Development
- Change in Routine
- Stops Offering Input
- Skips or Resents Meetings
- Only Talks Work
- Limited Interaction with Coworkers
- An Apathetic Attitude
- Unkempt Appearance
- Excessive Working

The next step to the framework is to invest in the one thing that will "cure" loneliness: connection.

Step 2: Invest in connection

Leaders are the key to all of this. They are shepherds at work. They are the ones who tend to their employees' needs and guide them to a better future. They're "invested in their flock because the flock is tied to their financial and social livelihood." The one thing that flock needs most of all is connection. This part of the framework is broken down into three different types of connection leaders should invest in: Safe, personal, and team connections.

First and foremost, authors Steven and Ryan say at the heart of everything, humans want one thing: to be safe. And in order to be safe, people need to be fed and protected. They need to feel that they're growing into their potential, and they need to be valued. Leaders need to provide psychological safety to their team members in order to provide a place where they feel they can speak up and contribute to their working environment.

The key to psychological safety is active listening, something all leaders need to understand the individuals on their team on a deeper level. Ryan and Steven suggest we all purposefully turn away from our smartphones and devices to practice active listening. But our connections are a two-way street, and leaders also need to practice ways to be relatable as a person, and not just the figurehead at work. The three ways others can relate to you as a person (not just a professional) are:

- Tell your story. They can be about discomfort or doubts or delightful anecdotes. But they must be authentic. The authors say, "People listen autobiographically to storytellers. So when you tell a personal story, others are listening through the lens of their own life.
- Ask to hear a story. People want to be seen and heard. Make it practice to ask open ended questions to hear their stories and relate back to them.
- Selectively share. Long ago are the days where professionals left their emotions at the door. It's okay to share them

> . . . team connections fight against loneliness and create a better drive and purpose for work."

at work with information you're comfortable sharing. You don't have to go into details, but acknowledge and naming that feeling is an easy way to be relatable.

It's your job to invest in the connections of your team, because team connections fight against loneliness and create a better drive and purpose for work.

Step 3: Narrow the focus

One of the strongest ways to lessen loneliness is to get your team to narrow their focus on purpose, clear direction, and growth. A common and shared purpose creates camaraderie at work. As authors Steven and Ryan say, "Nothing squashes loneliness quite like contributing to a worthwhile goal and feeling a part of something bigger than oneself."

Purpose gives meaning. A shared purpose brings togetherness. Getting your team engaged in the wider impact of their work is one of the most impactful things you can do as a leader. This is because when employees see the impact, they perform better and demonstrate behaviors that are above and beyond the minimum requirement for their job.

Once you find the purpose, it's time to narrow down to clarity. Engage in your team to understand their daily tasks and reasoning for them. This creates an understanding of direction - what those tasks accomplish and where each team member sees themselves applying their expertise.

The last piece to narrow down on is learning. "Learning starves loneliness." If your mind is actively working, there's no room to be lonely. Learning gives hope. It gives us a sense that the future can be better. It provides reassurance that there's value in what each individual can contribute. And when your team sees that you, a leader, is constantly learning, it provides reassurance that you are also improving yourself. Lastly, the authors mention that learning is a social tool within itself. Whenever you learn something new, you have a natural tendency to want to share what you learned. If you learn an instrument, you want to share music with a listening audience. If you learn a new joke, you want to share it to make someone laugh. Learning brings us together.

The key to this, Steven and Ryan say, is "As a leader, you go first. You have to model what learning looks like. Grant permission to your team to explore more by sharing with your team a book you're reading, a video you found fascinating, a podcast that reframed your perspective, or a conference you're excited to attend." By modeling it, you encourage your team to do their own learning and sharing.

Step 4: Kindle the momentum

At eight hours a day five days a week, most of us spend more time at work and with our teammates than with our own families. We work for the security of a paycheck and a future or legacy. But we also crave security of something else entirely: social connection with our team members. If you've gone this far into the framework, you've done the easy part. You've started. Now comes the part that's more difficult: amplifying the connections and sustaining them to continue to lessen loneliness in your team. This takes consistency in the following:

- Re-looking: Make sure you have a structure in place that will continue connection with everyone on the team.
- Re-Investing: Make use of the moments, big and small. Search for the milestones to celebrate and make them meaningful to your team.
- Re-Narrowing: Acknowledge your team's progress and celebrate with them. Encourage them to ask the three questions: What are we doing? Why are we doing this? And how does each individual fit in?

## LINK to fight loneliness

As we continue to create items and technology for the sake of ease, we're pulling away from social connections, creating more loneliness for ourselves. Technology isn't going anywhere, and no one is going to suggest that we get rid of the things that make tasks easier. So, we need to make a conscious effort to rehumanize our work environments.

**L**ook at loneliness

**I**nvest in connection

**N**arrow the focus

**K**indle the momentum

As a leader, you have the power and responsibility to be the driving force to link with your team and create deeper connections with the people you work with. Ultimately, this will improve productivity to work, encouraging your people to not only go above and beyond, but to do so with enthusiasm. And enthusiastic employees are employees who stick around. Continue to improve themselves, improve their learning, and improve the future of business.

But we can only do that if we intentionally work to kick loneliness.

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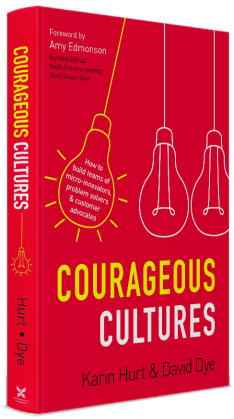
# Courageous Cultures

Karin Hurt and David Dye

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# Courageous Cultures

## How to Build Teams of Microinnovators, Problem Solvers, & Customer Advocates




*by* **Karin Hurt & David Dye**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Employees have ideas and want to be heard. Leadership wants to hear them. Too often, however, employees and leaders both feel that no one cares about making things better. The disconnect typically only widens over time, with both sides becoming more firmly entrenched in their viewpoints.

In ***Courageous Cultures,*** authors Karin Hurt and David Dye argue that in our world of rapid change, a Courageous Culture is your competitive advantage. Why? Because a Courageous Culture ensures that your company is "sticky" for both customers and employees.

The authors explain that becoming a Courageous Culture means building teams of Microinnovators, Problem Solvers, and Customer Advocates working together. They explain these roles, along with practical tools to uncover, leverage, and scale the best ideas from every level of your organization. ***Courageous Cultures*** provides a road map to build a high-performance, high-engagement culture around sharing ideas, solving problems, and rewarding contributions from all levels.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What defines a Courageous Culture and how to build it.
- The main reasons employees often choose "safe silence."
- How Clarity and Curiosity work together in a Courageous Culture.
- To transfer principles into the best practices that work for your organization.

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## What Is a Courageous Culture?

Your success depends on quickly incorporating the best ideas from across your business, on understanding what's not working and how to make it better. But what if you never hear what's working well and what's broken?

For many companies, it's not senior leaders who fear making big go-no-go choices that stifle progress. Rather, it's the exponential effect of thousands of small opportunities missed because people didn't speak up when they saw something stupid or didn't share their idea because it might not be well received. The best practices languish, unshared and unspoken. Why?

Because people are often discouraged for saying the wrong thing and not rewarded for saying the right thing—so they say nothing. The consequences can be dire: Customers leave, problems multiply like the heads of the Hydra, and employees lose heart.

The tragic truth is, most of the time, leaders think they're creating an open environment that encourages employees to speak up and are surprised when they learn that employees are holding back. Too often, both employees and leaders feel that no one cares about making things better.

### Welcome to the World of Courageous Cultures

Instead of safe silence and frustrated leaders, what if you had a Courageous Culture? Seth Godin defines culture as "People like us do things like this." A Courageous Culture is a place where "people like us" speak up. We share ideas. We solve problems. The default is to contribute. It's a culture where silence isn't safe and effort is everything.

Courageous Cultures go way beyond employee engagement. People are energized. They bring their whole selves to their work. Innovation isn't limited to the senior leadership team or R&D. Everyone innovates, every day.

When you build a Courageous Culture, you'll see teams of Microinnovators, Problem Solvers, and Customer Advocates working together to make things better.

A Microinnovator is the employee who consistently seeks out small but powerful ways to improve the business. She consistently wonders, "How can I make this easier, better, or faster?" Then she speaks up and shares what she's learned.

A Problem Solver is the employee who cares about what's not working and wants to make it better. Problem Solvers care about the business, treat it as their own, and focus on solutions.

A Customer Advocate is the employee who sees through your customers' eyes and speaks up on their behalf. Customer Advocates actively look for ways to improve customers' experience and minimize customer frustrations.

In our world of rapid change, a Courageous Culture is your competitive advantage. Such cultures include Trader Joe's, a grocer with the highest revenue per square foot and throngs of brand advocates, where continual improvement is fundamental and everyone does what it takes to serve the customer. And WellSpan Health, which is clear about its mission of health through exceptional care for all and which remains creatively curious about the best way to achieve it. And businesses like Nestlé, which creates a Courageous Culture through its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Let's now learn the road map to build a culture of microinnovation, problem solving, and customer advocacy.

## How Courage Works—According to Research

Any discussion about courage at work quickly leads to Amy Edmondson. Edmondson is the Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management at the Harvard Business School and author of ***The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth***.

She describes how courage at work shows up when someone speaks up, challenges an idea, shares a different perspective, or reveals a mistake. Every one of these behaviors takes courage because, as Edmondson says, people default to "avoiding failure"—the loss of status, being labeled, or being viewed with disfavor that can result from speaking up. Until you build a Courageous Culture, "people at work are vulnerable to a kind of implicit logic in which safe is simply better than sorry."

But why is safe silence the default over consistent contribution? Here are five reasons:

1. People don't think leadership wants their ideas.
2. No one asks.
3. They lack confidence to share.
4. They lack the skills to share effectively.

For most people, innovation takes energy and courage—the courage to be vulnerable, to risk rejection from their peers, or to invite uncertainty.

5. People don't think anything will happen, so they don't bother.

### What Counts as Courage?

Executives, managers, and frontline employees in Courageous Cultures programs were asked, "What's the most courageous act you ever did at work?" Most of their stories are not Courage with a capital C—the front-page news stories of whistle-blowing and confronting massive ethical breeches with career-threatening consequences.

They are stories of courage with a lowercase c—choices to take a small, uncomfortable risk for the good of the business, team, or customer. What are the small-c courageous acts that lay the foundation for Courageous Cultures?

**Show a bit of vulnerability**. Vulnerability builds trust. Have the courage to let people see a bit more of who you really are and to admit when you're wrong or don't have all the answers.

**Manage performance**. Have the courage to provide consistent performance feedback and address performance issues directly. When you do this early and often, the chances of you having to do the really tough stuff—like fire the guy—reduce significantly.

**Advocate for your team**. If you can't influence others, your team will wonder why they need you.

**Experiment**. Another huge reason employees say their boss lacks courage is their boss's unwillingness to experiment with new ideas or approaches. If "It ain't broke, don't fix it" is your favorite mantra, learning the art of a well-run pilot program can go a long way in increasing your courage while reducing your stress.

**Make timely decisions**. No one wants to work for a waffler. Have the courage to make decisions and stick to them. If you struggle with this, get your team to help you.

**Share credit**. A primary reason people are reluctant to share ideas is because they won't get the credit. A surefire way to stunt the growth of a creative culture is to steal the credit. When in doubt, credit the team.

## Overcoming Courage Crushers, Common Mistakes, and Other Barriers to Courageous Culture

Jane, a committed nurse, shared the exhausting list of daily stupidity she faced from a bullying, narcissistic doctor—just to get her job done. She felt like every day was a courageous battle to advocate for her patients' needs. She stated, for example, that the "doctor was trying to do an experimental procedure I knew could hurt a child (and was also against the parent's consent), so I blocked the door." She said that the administration knew of his antics but looked the other way because he was renowned in his field.

Jane eventually left for another role where her passion and commitment were appreciated. That department lost a remarkable nurse.

You can't possibly build a Courageous Culture if you tolerate even one guy like that—word spreads fast. Your Janes will go elsewhere.

For most people, innovation takes energy and courage—the courage to be vulnerable, to risk rejection from their peers, or to invite uncertainty. Your people can make that effort only a limited number of times before they're done. The more courage they use to address injustice, toxic leadership, needless politics, or poor decision-making, the less energy they'll have to spend on what really matters.

You won't get any of the courage you need to serve your customers or build your business if it takes a heroic effort just to fight against an existing caustic culture.

### Shaming, Blaming, and Intimidation

Three of the most toxic behaviors tolerated (and even rewarded) are shaming, blaming, and intimidation. It's the chief operating officer who projects a list of all her senior leaders in stack-ranked order on the screen at the company off-site gathering and then works her way through the list from the bottom up, sarcastically criticizing them in front of their peers and handing them a microphone to respond, as all their peers laugh nervously while silently praying they'll be spared next time.

Or the vice president who berates his direct reports for a strategic choice "they made" that didn't pan out, even though the VP was the one who made the final call despite the team's concerns and objections.

Shame, blame, and intimidation have no place in a Courageous Culture. Don't let one or two bullies undermine your Courageous Culture strategy. Instead, consider discussing these questions with your team:

- Why do you want a Courageous Culture?
- What specific outcomes are you looking to achieve?
- How will you know you are successful?
- What processes do you have in place to prevent (and make it easy to report) bullying and harassment?
- What do you do when a high performer regularly abuses or harasses other people?
- What behaviors will you have a zero tolerance for in your organization?

## Navigate the Narrative

We all tell ourselves stories about what's happening, who we are, and what other people think about us. To Navigate the Narrative means that you pay attention to the stories you tell yourself, the stories your teams tell themselves, and consciously tap into the stories that reinforce your values, culture, and commitments.

Don't underestimate the role your personal courage plays in building a Courageous Culture for your team. Khalil Smith, head of the diversity and inclusion practice at the NeuroLeadership Institute, and his colleagues say it this way: "When voice becomes a priority for leaders, with the right habits and systems, it can become a non-heroic act for everyone to speak up, rippling out across all levels of the organization."

That "non-heroic act" translates to "culture"—people like us, doing things like this. Your leadership is the first step; you are the first person "doing things like this."

To Navigate the Narrative means you identify the stories in which you are the best version of yourself or learned positive lessons, consciously choose to remember them, and use them to inform your choices today. It becomes easier to be that best version of yourself the next time. As you do, your commitment to your values grows stronger than your fear.

### Create a Courage Map

Start your Courageous Culture journey by Navigating the Narrative with a Courage Map that helps you tap into your courage and give yourself the foundation you need to lead a cultural transformation.

To build your Courage Map, make a broad timeline of your career, thinking back to your early roles as well as more recent ones. Now think about the most courageous acts you did in these roles and lessons learned along the way. Once you've identified a minimum of three moments of courage, for each courageous act ask yourself the following questions:

What motivated me to be courageous in this circumstance? What did I expect to happen? What actually happened as a result? How do I feel about this incident? What values did it reveal as important to me?

As a leader today, where would it be helpful to show up more like this or with these values?

Look for the themes. What do you notice about yourself in these stories? What makes you proud? What is the essence of these stories that you hope to carry forward into your future stories? What lessons do you have to share with your team?

Invite your direct report team to complete the exercise and schedule some time to discuss as a team. Have each person pick one story to share. What themes emerge? What do you notice about the underlying values of these choices? What are the key lessons from these stories you can leverage as you begin your work to build a more Courageous Culture?

## Create Clarity

At a leadership panel at an executive off-site conference, George, a financial services operations director, shared this story:

"I served in Afghanistan. One day we were driving through the desert in two Humvees. I was a passenger in the lead vehicle, and the other was close behind. I noticed that our driver was driving very fast, and it didn't feel right. I was getting more and more nervous. I've been trained. I knew how dangerous this was. But I didn't want to be seen as a back-seat driver, so I kept the feedback to myself. Finally, I took out my GPS and tracked our speed. We were going 75 miles an hour on those damaged streets! It was too fast for the conditions, but I still didn't say anything. Then, my buddy looked back and we realized that the second Humvee was no longer behind us."

"We turned back, and sure enough it had flipped. We lost a man that day. I'm haunted by the fact that I could have saved his life if I had just spoken up."

"The stuff we're talking about today is real. The concern you're sitting on might not be life or death, but it matters. We need to care enough to tell one another the truth—and we don't always do that. We have to figure out how to do this well. Today is an important start. I look forward to hearing your ideas."

That's Clarity. Hopefully you don't have a story like George's. But you do have stories that matter, and your team needs to hear them.

> Clarity contributes three critical elements to a Courageous Culture: safety, confidence, and direction.

Clarity is focus, alignment, and doing what works. Clarity means that everyone in the organization has a shared understanding of what success looks like. Clarity ensures that your brand promise is kept in every interaction. People get where you are headed and why.

Clarity contributes three critical elements to a Courageous Culture: safety, confidence, and direction. Clarity helps people speak up because they know what success looks like, what's required of them, and how they can contribute. Clarity produces confidence that you can take a good idea and make it happen. Finally, Clarity gives people a direction to focus their thinking, problem solving, and creativity.

Innovation starts with information. If you want your team to solve more problems or to bring more ideas, they need Clarity about where you're headed and what matters most. They need to know the one to three big strategic priorities where their ideas would make the most difference and which kinds of best practices are most important to share.

When you build a Courageous Culture, you integrate Clarity and Curiosity. In the dance between the two, each characteristic takes the spotlight, but they're always holding hands. Let's now discuss Curiosity.

## Cultivate Curiosity

Cultivate Curiosity means to intentionally seek out ideas, engagement, and solutions. In organizations with a strong Curiosity culture, executives ensure that infrastructure and training encourage microinnovation, sharing ideas, and advocating for customers. Leaders at every level ask courageous questions to uncover new ideas, and employees consistently look for ways to make things better—and then share their discoveries.

Cultivating Curiosity isn't simply a matter of asking more questions. That helps, but it's not just that you ask. In Courageous Cultures, leaders ask regularly and skillfully. Three qualities distinguish how leaders ask questions in a Courageous Culture:

**Intentional**. Cultivating Curiosity starts with intention: you must ask—a lot. Your leaders have to ask more than might seem reasonable. This kind of asking goes way beyond an open-door policy. In fact, most open-door policies are a passive leadership cop-out.

John Dore, senior executive program director at the London Business School, explains that permission isn't enough. "Don't permit innovation, expect it." To overcome these hesitations, ask with intention and build systems that make sharing the norm.

**Vulnerable**. Cultivating Curiosity requires leaders to approach their work with confidence and humility. If you're not vulnerable enough to admit that you can grow, that the current situation can improve, or that there might be a better way, you'll never get the ideas you need.

**Action focused**. To Cultivate Curiosity, people need to know that you will act on what you learn. Action takes many forms. It might be that you implement the idea, that the feedback informs your decision, that you take it all in and then respond with next steps, or maybe it's simply releasing the team to take action on their ideas.

### Best Practices to Find the Best Ideas

Questions that are intentional, vulnerable, and focused on action reflect a theme: the questions themselves are courageous. Courageous questions are your number-one way to Cultivate Curiosity.

A courageous question differs from a generic "How can we be better?" question in three ways. When you ask a courageous question, you get specific by focusing on a specific activity, behavior, or outcome. You also are humble. You are implicitly saying, "I know I'm not perfect. I know I can improve." Finally, you don't respond—yet. These questions require the asker to listen without defensiveness.

Examples of courageous questions include the following:

- What is the problem we have that no one talks about?
- What do we do that really annoys our customers?
- What is the greatest obstacle to your productivity?
- What must I do better as a leader if we are to be successful?
- What's sabotaging our success?

## Respond With Regard

How you and leaders at every level respond to ideas and feedback will either build momentum or crush your culture before it gets started. This step is called Respond with Regard. Responding with regard means you receive ideas and react in ways that respect the other person, build momentum, improve your employees' strategic thinking, and generate more useful ideas.

Let's discuss practical ways to Respond with Regard and build a flow of ideas that are increasingly strategic, relevant, and useful.

Recently, David Dye made a "contribution"—he donated blood through the Red Cross. Four weeks after donating, he received the following email:

"Thank you for giving blood with the American Red Cross on May 23. Your blood donation was sent to The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, to help a patient in need. Your donation is on its way to change lives! Every day, patients receive blood for a variety of conditions, including life-threatening illnesses, blood disorders, and traumas. Your blood donations are critical to helping save patients' lives. Schedule your next donation today!"

The message was followed by a large red button to schedule his next donation. This is a fantastic example of how to Respond with Regard. There were three elements that you can include in your responses: gratitude, process, and invitation. They thanked him, told him how his contribution was making a difference, and invited him to do it again. The same approach works for leaders when team members contribute ideas.

**Gratitude**. If you want more solutions, start with thank you. When people take the time to think about how things could be better, let them know you appreciate it. Don't celebrate only the ideas that work; celebrate the act of sharing thoughtful ideas and solutions. You'll get more solutions, and some of those will work.

**Process**. Next, share the process. Let them know what happened with their idea and the relevant time frame. You may not have an elegant automated response system like the Red Cross, but it only takes a moment to circle back and close the loop with team members. If it will take six months before you consider these ideas because of other strategic priorities, say so and explain the other priorities.

**Invitation**. Finally, invite them to do it again—to think, problem solve, and advocate for your customer. The Red Cross invited David with a large red button to schedule his next contribution. Your invitation to contribute again can take many forms. If their ideas need work, give them the additional information they need and ask them to recraft it. If their ideas were tried in the past and didn't work, tell them what you learned from that attempt and ask them to consider how to overcome those problems. Even if you can't use the ideas at all, a sincere "I'd love to hear your thoughts about how we can achieve our goal this year" will keep the ideas flowing.

## Practice the Principle

When you Practice the Principle, you commit to finding the core idea within best practices and help your teams to localize best practices for their unique circumstances.

To Practice the Principle, executives clarify core values and principles, support their leadership teams to review and try out new ideas that align with those principles, and work strategically to improve them. Managers work with their teams to learn from new approaches and identify the principles within their best practices. Employees try new ideas and look for ways to build on them or make them more relevant to their circumstances.

A principle is a concept that works universally. For instance, treating your customer with respect is a principle of customer service. But the practice of respect can look very

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different from culture to culture, city to city, and between industries.

For example, cooking a homemade meal for your team is a practice. For most people, that practice isn't transferrable. But the principle of personally investing and connecting to your team is transferrable—every trained leader can do that. You don't scale practices; you scale principles.

### How to Find the Principles in Best Practices

When your top performing team seems to have discovered the secret to transform their productivity, customer relationships, or sales, it may be tempting to immediately make everyone in the organization do the same thing. But even if it looks good on paper, your leadership team is on board, and it worked well in the IT war room, field test the change first. This is one of those times it really does work to go slow to go fast.

The following steps will help you and your leaders identify why a best practice works and how to make it work in other contexts.

**Ask why it works**. You can find the principle within a best practice by asking, "Why did this work?" Sometimes you'll have to ask why several times before you get to the essence of what really happened or the fundamental reasons for success.

**Test the principle**. Once you've found the principle in the best practice, you're ready to test that principle and see if it works the way you and your team think it does. Try it in a couple of different settings, with different people. For example, a manufacturing client empowers their teams with 3D printers to experiment with designing and testing new parts to improve their products, which has led to powerful microinnovations they can scale.

**Listen closely**. This is perhaps the most important part of testing a principle. As you test the principle and roll it out, really listen to what your people tell you. Check in with stakeholders, partners, and customers. Respond to feedback with solutions, not selling.

**Ask how it can be better**. As you continue to test and roll out the principle, ask questions that will help refine the principle: How can we address challenges that come up and make the change serve its purpose? What's working well and how do we leverage it? What enhancements do we need? Where should we head next? All these questions help refine the principle—and they also build morale by including employees in your change efforts. At the heart of a Courageous Culture is the idea that great organizations build change together.

## Galvanize the Genius

In the Courageous Cultures Cycle, it isn't enough to do the work in the Curiosity phase without looping back to Clarity to Galvanize the Genius.

First, galvanize means to "excite someone into action"—and that's certainly what you and your team want to happen with all the genius ideas you've discovered. Galvanize has a second relevant meaning as well: It's the process where iron or steel is treated with a protective layer of zinc in order to prevent rust and corrosion.

In Courageous Cultures, corrosion looks like that slide back to old behaviors or safe silence. None of that. It's time to Galvanize the Genius: to excite your team to action and prevent the slow decline of the culture you've all worked so hard to build.

### How to Galvanize the Genius

When leaders struggle to maintain new cultural norms, there are usually three areas that cause trouble. Problems in one or more of these areas make it difficult for people to commit to new behaviors and undermine their willingness to share new ideas.

But when you and your leaders master these three elements, you can rapidly respond to changing circumstances, quickly adapt new principles, and react to customer needs before your competition has started to look for a solution. The three elements to galvanize your genius are Know, Flow, and Show.

**Know**. Know means to clearly articulate what success looks like and the fundamental behaviors that make it

happen. Has this ever happened to you? You get everyone focused on doing what's right for the customer—and a few well-meaning folks, trying to do the right thing, lose sight of the bigger picture.

Even talented, motivated people understand the same ideas differently. And unless your leadership team and managers know how the strategic goals translate into daily behaviors, you'll stay stuck.

In Courageous Cultures, knowing doesn't mean *you* know everything—your job is to make sure that the most important things are known. As you get curious and identify new principles and best practices, can your leaders clearly articulate what success looks like and the behaviors that will make it happen?

**Flow**. Flow is your ability to translate vision into behaviors and ensure all employees understand what they're doing, why they're doing it, and how their work fits into the big picture. Flow means that everyone is aligned with strategic goals, understands what matters most, and knows what to do to succeed. To achieve that level of Clarity, executives communicate strategic priorities and behaviors that bring success.

Managers model these success behaviors, translate organizational goals into department and team goals, and equip their teams to succeed. Employees demonstrate success behaviors and ensure they understand the why behind the work. When you successfully flow Clarity to every corner of your organization, innovation, problem solving, and customer advocacy—not to mention accountability and breakthrough results—become much easier.

**Show**. Show means that you measure and inspect outcomes and behaviors at every level of the business. You and your team are certain where the desired behaviors are happening and where they break down—both through quantitative analysis and direct observation. You ensure that managers are reinforcing behaviors through celebration and accountability, and employees are doing what they've committed to do.

Demonstrating results isn't just a matter of ensuring that everything is going according to plan. People, at every level, benefit from clear feedback and the confidence that they're heading in the right direction.

Courage is often portrayed as a lonely act—taking a stand when no one else will; being the first to speak truth to power; being the only one to do what they said couldn't be done.

At times on this journey you will feel incredibly lonely. When you do, don't wear that as a badge of honor—instead, find the others. They're out there. They're doing powerful and important work.

Your first tracks on this journey will likely be the most difficult, as well as the most rewarding. As you find the others, those lonely footprints will begin to form into a well-laid path of courage and hope for others to follow. That's the power of a Courageous Culture.

## IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***The Critical Few: Energize Your Company's Culture by Choosing What Really Matters*** by Jon R. Katzenbach, Gretchen Anderson, James Thomas
- ***Contagious Cultures: Show Up, Set the Tone, and Intentionally Create an Organization That Thrives*** by Anese Cavanaugh



Karin Hurt is founder and CEO of Let's Grow Leaders, an international training company known for its innovative and practical approaches to leadership development. A former Verizon Wireless executive, she has more than two decades of experience in sales, customer service, and human resources. She was recently named to *Inc.'s* list of 100 Great Leadership Speakers.

David Dye, president of Let's Grow Leaders, works with leaders to achieve transformational results without sacrificing their humanity. As a former executive and elected official, he inspires audiences with practical leadership inspiration you can use right away.

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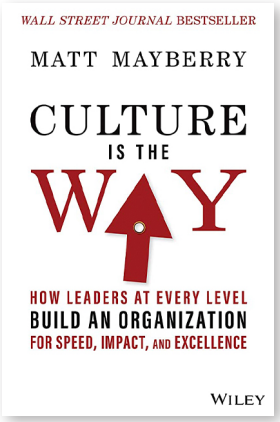
# Culture Is the Way

Matt Mayberry

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# Culture Is the Way

## How Leaders at Every Level Build an Organization for Speed, Impact, and Excellence




*by* **Matt Mayberry**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many of you may not have given much thought to improving the world through better leadership and creating better workplace cultures. For the past few years, author, consultant, keynote speaker, and former NFL player Matt Mayberry has become convinced that this stance is beginning to shift. Organizations can and do have a positive effect on the world around them. Leadership and managers at every level can make a significant contribution to making the world a better place.

In ***Culture Is the Way: How Leaders at Every Level Build an Organization for Speed, Impact, and Excellence***, leaders will learn how to build organizational cultures that will boldly lead them into the future. With each step forward, we can transform not only business performance but also the world around us and the communities we serve.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Five elements of a positive culture
- The five roadblocks to cultural excellence
- The five steps to building a world-class culture
- How to implement a culture implementation playbook

## Is Culture Powerful? Ask a Football Coach

Author Matt Mayberry learned so many valuable lessons from playing the game of football, beginning as a little kid all the way through to the NFL, which benefited his life in so many ways. Over time, he realized that the same characteristics that distinguish the best football teams are also required to succeed in business. Adopting some of the key learnings from the game of football and implementing certain aspects of them in a business can be transformative to the company culture.

Great coaches understand the power of culture better than anyone. Business leaders who learn to take the same perspective on culture as some of the greatest sports coaches will drive their companies to attract top talent, play a significant role in making the world a better place, and positively shape every aspect of their employees' lives.

Three key lessons from great sport coaches that business leaders can apply as we move forward on a culture-building journey include:

1. Develop a burning desire to improve culture.
2. Generate and bring positive energy daily.
3. Don't just *manage* your people, *coach* your people.

Culture is the one thing that all leaders and their organizations have at their disposal to build and strengthen their organizational foundation to counteract crises, protect themselves from future threats, and win big.

Like the great coaches, an actionable playbook will help leaders implement their day-to-day operations to not only build healthier and better-performing organizations but also drive business impact to heights they never imagined.

## Five Elements of a Positive Culture

Culture is the lifeblood of organizational excellence. The core. The energy. The genetic code. It is front-and-center for leaders who want to improve performance and strategic alignment. It is an organization's heart and soul.

Even low-performing companies that never prioritize culture and have toxic workplaces have culture. You either have a *culture by default* or a *culture by design* that has been intentionally built with as much rigor as the sales and operational strategy.

There are many aspects of culture that can significantly improve performance and outcomes. These five elements are integral to why culture is so important and cannot be ignored if you want to lead your team and organization to the next level.

**1. Employee energy, excitement, and value:** This is one of the more powerful forces of culture that is rarely discussed and frankly, difficult to quantify. Employees can and will be enthusiastic about leaders and managers who invest the time and effort to build a healthier and better culture by involving them in meetings, planning, and strategy sessions.

The employees want to know they are valued. When this is communicated and consistently implemented by leaders, the amount of energy and enthusiasm generated can be extraordinary.

**2. Alignment and togetherness:** If each division within an organization operates differently from one another, before long internal silos can easily develop. Naturally, different department leaders have different responsibilities and goals, but at the end of the day, you are all on the same team, working toward a common objective as a unified organization.

Great leaders and teams recognize this, and culture is the only factor that drives the execution of organizational alignment.

**3. Clear expectations:** If your culture is never defined, there are no clear expectations of what is required and expected of every team member to help the organization win. This leads to performance and morale issues.

A defined and positive workplace culture aids in mitigating and preventing these costly issues. In healthy cultures, there is clarity on the company's core purpose and priorities, and employees receive consistent feedback.

**4. Accelerate execution:** Culture is not separate from execution. Your strategy does not carry itself out on its own. That is the job and sole responsibility of the culture you build and manage. Strategy is critical to winning, but don't overlook culture's role. They collaborate concurrently to speed up execution and enhance impact.

**5. Talent attraction and development:** When you create a great culture that brings out the best in everyone, challenges others positively, and consistently drives winning behaviors in the marketplace, word spreads quickly.

Be ruthlessly clear about who you are as an organization, where you want to go, and the action plan for achieving those goals.

Everyone wants to work for a company that makes them feel like they are a part of something special and that they can contribute to the overall mission. There is a reason why the best football teams and world-class enterprises not only attract the best talent, but also mold and develop the talent they already have, which adds to the bottom line exponentially.

## How to Avoid the Culture Dilemma Trap

There are many shiny objects that present themselves in every organization, and leaders are quick to believe that attacking or embracing the next shiny object with decisive action is the surest path to growth. They often overlook the very simple things that can propel them to success. This is the culture dilemma trap that sabotages most culture-building efforts.

Shiny objects consist of more than just action items and operating procedures. Certain mindsets and beliefs can also take the form of shiny objects. Examples include new and exhilarating technology tools, a running list of initiatives generated from employee survey results, an offsite leadership retreat, or thinking everything is fine as long as the company is profitable.

The number of decisions a leader must make every minute of the day can be overwhelming at times, particularly for those who are new to management. The first step in overcoming the "shiny object syndrome" is realizing that it attacks from all directions. However, awareness is only half the battle. Let's look at some ways we can take it a step further so that culture-building efforts don't get sabotaged and lose their intended impact.

**1. Don't underestimate culture.** This may appear too simple and obvious, but most attempts to build, change, or improve culture fall short because leaders underestimate culture from the start. Your culture will suffer as a result if you believe that culture is just a word or that there are twenty other more important imperatives.

**2. For everything you add, be willing to subtract something.** The "shiny object syndrome" constantly throws grand ideas in front of you, so you are quick to jump to the next cool project and completely lose focus on culture. Leadership teams become overburdened and performance suffers as a result. For each addition you make, whether it is a new meeting on the calendar, a new policy, or an initiative, consider what you can eliminate.

**3. Be ruthlessly clear about your priorities.** Leaders can be exceptionally intelligent individuals, but below-average decision-makers due to a lack of organizational clarity regarding their priorities. Be ruthlessly clear about who you are as an organization, where you want to go, and the action plan for achieving those goals.

## The Five Roadblocks to Cultural Excellence

People are resistant to change. Even if it's as simple as switching to a new refrigerator that will end up saving them money on their energy bills while also providing sleek and convenient features, they still find it difficult.

Consider this in terms of business. Simply because a certain structure and method of doing things have worked in your organization for years does not guarantee that those same strategies will continue to work in 2023 and beyond. Why? Because we live in a continuously evolving and progressing world.

Netflix approached Blockbuster in 2000 and asked if they wanted to purchase Netflix for $50 million. Blockbuster passed, believing their business model was superior to that of the budding Netflix company, who fulfilled video rentals through the mail at the time. Instead of purchasing Netflix or changing their business models and developing new programs to include streaming and sending videos through the postal system, Blockbuster continued to do what they had always done. They filed for bankruptcy in 2010 and Netflix had built a $25 billion annual revenue stream from its subscribers in just 12 years.

When you hear the Netflix-Blockbuster example, you might think it was more of an innovation or complacent issue with Blockbuster than a culture failure. Not so. Culture serves

as the internal compass for an organization's fundamental beliefs, how the organization behaves daily, and its level of market performance. A lack of innovation and ineffective leadership were unintended consequences of their existing organizational culture.

Depending on the current state or size of your organization, as well as the industry it operates in, the challenges it will face will vary from company to company. However, there are a handful of persistent roadblocks that prevent organizations from achieving cultural excellence.

### Roadblock #1: Lukewarm Leadership Buy-In

Lukewarm leadership buy-in is without a doubt the greatest roadblock of them all, especially in the beginning stages of building culture when driving excitement and momentum is an absolute imperative.

Most senior leadership teams consist of accomplished leaders with a wealth of experience, and the last thing they want to do is shift their leadership style or change how they have done things for the past ten or twenty years. This mentality is a huge barrier in the initial stages of building culture, but also in the execution of all other organizational change efforts.

The message that is sent to the entire organization comes directly from the leadership. Many leaders have great intentions, but wildly underestimate their level of influence and how often others look to them on how to think and behave in a given situation.

The best and most effective leaders fully understand that it is their duty and responsibility not only to lead the way, but also to serve as a role model for the desired behaviors that they want to instill throughout an organization.

### Roadblock #2: All Slogans and No Action

The second roadblock that can prevent the achievement of cultural excellence is when culture is viewed as nothing more than some meaningless slogans.

If you believe that building a great culture comes down to hanging posters with your mottos and core values on them or simply including more perks, you run the risk of promoting fluff that lacks real substance.

Words don't build culture or culture change by themselves. It takes action. True cultural change starts when behavioral change at scale begins to take root. And not just changing behaviors from time to time or for a few months at a time. It must be a long-term process with repeated changes in behaviors that create a new cultural paradigm and become the new norm. Doing something *repeatedly*, to the point where it becomes ingrained into what an organization does daily and becomes common practice, is where cultural excellence lies.

### Roadblock #3: Temptation of Instant Gratification

Nothing satisfies us as humans more than instant gratification. Before we do or commit to anything, we often ask ourselves or others how long it will take to reap the benefits or experience the results. When it comes to building a powerful and winning organizational culture, the temptation of instant gratification lurks around every corner, ready to derail you.

Building a great culture takes time and a tremendous amount of energy, which are often far more than leaders can imagine. Not only will it take longer and require more energy than expected, the results may not be immediate. \

This roadblock is what destroys morale and kills momentum gained up to that point. When time passes and the energy you expend outweighs what you receive in return, comfortable habits of the past take over. Building a great workplace culture requires a delicate balance of tenacity and extraordinary patience.

### Roadblock #4: Distortion and Distraction

Once you decide, as a business leader, that you are going to heavily invest in building a better culture, a million ideas and initiatives download into your brain. And it doesn't stop there.

Leaders and managers of all levels will put together action plans to present to the rest of the organization. But once the plan is finished, leaders start to second guess themselves and doubt their ability to successfully execute everything on the list. Anxiety takes over and the warning bells start ringing!

Leaders begin to disconnect and distract themselves. Everything becomes so overwhelming that you procrastinate and put it off. Dysfunction creeps in. You must use caution when rushing to adopt and implement an idea that you read about, thinking that it will have the exact same effect on your organization. There is a never-ending stream of great ideas and advice in books and articles everywhere you turn. Thinking that you can achieve similar results by adopting a best practice another company had great success with is a very dangerous game to play.

It all comes down to how well leaders model the way forward, practice what they preach daily, set clear cultural expectations for everyone to abide by, and blaze the trail forward.

### Roadblock #5: Lack of Cascading Change

The dictionary definition of *cascade* is "a process whereby something, typically information or knowledge, is successively passed on." Depending on the size of the organization, the difficulty of cascading change will vary.

But there is no doubt about it. Building a great culture and changing old organizational habits that no longer serve a company's best interests are extremely difficult work on their own. It is a monumental task to then cascade that change across an entire organization, hoping that everyone will not only buy into the change, but also be a voice of reason.

The real challenge in achieving cultural excellence and bringing an entire organization together to move in the same direction is undoing previously learned behaviors and ways of being. Not only that, but then developing and relentlessly implementing a strategic game plan for how communication will be shared, who will say what and when, and presenting a concise breakdown of how the culture will be integrated at scale. Consistent action must be taken. Building a world-class culture is a never-ending job.

## The Five Steps to Building a World-Class Culture

The five steps for building and sustaining a world-class culture were formulated after years of experimenting, copious research, and merging of key learnings from the football field.

### Step One: Define Your Culture

If you ask a group of people who work for the same company, "What is the culture of your company?," most likely, each respondent will have a different answer. In thriving and world-class enterprises, everyone knows what the culture is, what it stands for, and what's expected of them within that organization.

### Step Two: Discovery Through Collaboration and Inspiration

The discovery phase focuses on a collaborative and inspirational approach that engages the entire organization in the culture building process. Senior leaders will collaborate and partner with all people managers in the organization, soliciting specific feedback along the way to encourage and highlight valuable employee input.

### Step Three: Launch, Cascade, and Embed

It is detrimental to the organization as a whole if the culture does not trickle down from the top and permeate all departments. Leaders must make it a priority to disseminate it across the entire organization. This stage is all about strategically launching and relentlessly implementing it across the rest of the company, as well as embedding it across all functions.

### Step Four: Drive Long-Term Impact

It is one thing to create a momentary buzz about your culture. It is quite another to create a culture that embodies the core DNA of your organization and has a lasting impact. This stage aids in reducing the likelihood that your culture will only have a short-term impact and helps you develop a strategy for creating a sustainable culture that consistently delivers for your organization.

### Step Five: Leaders Must Blaze the Trail

This final stage of the process is a deciding factor in whether an organization succeeds or fails in its pursuit of creating a world-class culture. It all comes down to how well leaders model the way forward, practice what they preach daily, set clear cultural expectations for everyone to abide by, and blaze the trail forward. What leaders do on a regular basis, and how they behave, send a strong message to the organization. Employees are watching and are acutely aware of what is being communicated through leaders' actions.

## Culture Implementation Playbook

You will need a well-prepared playbook to effectively introduce the culture change in your organization during the implementation phase of the journey. This playbook ensures a successful culture launch.

**1. Ensure management team alignment:** First focus on ensuring management team alignment. Senior leaders and all people managers who will play a major role in launching and implementing the culture must be completely on board. Make sure everyone understands the end goal and who will be doing what and when.

**2. Determine your official launch date:** Next, decide on your official launch date. If at all possible, the date should be one that everyone in the organization can attend, in person or via livestream. If operations are going to be put on hold for a while, it is almost certain that every division and function in the company will need to help with this.

**3. Craft your communication strategy:** Create your communication strategy and the overarching message you want to send to your organization and announce it in the kickoff meeting. Do not overlook this part. It's critical that this message be genuine and authentic rather than heavily scripted. Infuse as much energy as possible into explaining the deeper meaning of your culture and how you arrived at this point. Welcome feedback and ask for suggestions.

**4. Plan how you will embed and cascade the launch:** Depending on the size of the organization, this could take weeks or even months. Every company leader and manager should not only have team meetings to spread the message, but they should revisit it during one-on-one meetings and performance reviews shortly after the launch.

**5. Create your Behavioral Manifesto:** This is a concise document that converts your core values into clear daily behaviors. Make sure it's intended for the entire company and that it can be applied and translated to any role or responsibility. Managers can then relay it to the various divisions within the company.

**6. Take inventory on a regular basis:** Keep track of what's working well and what might need to be tweaked, and then actively listen and adjust as needed. There will be a few action items that have had an exponentially greater impact than everything else. Find out what these actions are and continue to perform them. Ask for feedback and begin every team meeting with a pulse check.

**7. Share the plan:** Share the playbook so everyone knows exactly what to expect in the future. There will be more commitment from employees and a true sense that this is a team effort if every step in the journey forward is fully transparent.

**8. A word to the wise for frontline managers:** Don't underestimate your ability to influence change as a frontline manager. The ability to create and build a better culture is decided just as much by how well you model the culture as it is by senior leaders.

## Be Fanatical About Sustained Impact

Fanatical is defined in this book in a way that may be similar to other definitions you'll find: as having and being driven by an extreme and often unquestioning enthusiasm, devotion, obsession, or zeal for something. And for you, as a leader, that something needs to be culture. Being fanatical is an absolute must if you want to create a high-performing and thriving culture that will last.

The Five-Step Fanatical Framework can help you get started on being fanatical about driving sustainability and embedding your culture as the heart of the business. When these five steps are used regularly by everyone in

**1. Fanatical continuous attention, development, nurturing:** Building culture isn't something you do periodically. It's a continuous pursuit to achieve a winning culture that supports and enhances business performance.

**2. Fanatical consistency and alignment:** There must be a consistent message and this consistency is not only what is communicated but is also demonstrated in the organization's decision-making and daily actions.

**3. Fanatical focus on the vital few:** Attempting to do everything at once while constantly adding more to the plate is not a sustainable action plan. Identify the vital few areas for improvement that will strengthen your culture while also improving organizational performance.

**4. Fanatical follow-through:** Starting a tactic or tweaking an existing process or structure is a good place to start, but it is ultimately meaningless unless it is followed through on relentlessly. The risk of becoming a "start and stop" fad as opposed to a way of being is high without tenacious and fanatical commitment.

**5. Fanatical about making the business case:** Leaders must present a convincing argument for how developing a

sustainable culture will enhance business performance and how it is necessary for a long-term impact. If the correlation between how the culture will benefit the business and the customer you serve is not made, the sustainability and long-term impact of cultural success will be jeopardized.

Building an extraordinary, sustainable culture takes time, effort, and energy. It doesn't happen overnight, and it may not happen in six months or a year. The more challenging the journey, the more special and fulfilling it will be when you reach your destination. *Do more. Become more. Set the standard. Make a difference.* Culture is the way.



Matt Mayberry is an internationally acclaimed keynote speaker and one of the world's foremost thought leaders on leadership development and culture. His insights on leadership, culture, and business performance have appeared in publications such as Forbes, Fortune, Business Insider, Entrepreneur, NBC, ABC, Fox Business, and ESPN, to name but a few. Before becoming a sought-after keynote speaker and management consultant, Matt was a linebacker for his hometown team, the Chicago Bears. Due to an injury, Matt's career was cut short, but he learned invaluable lessons on leadership, culture, teamwork, and peak performance.

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Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender, and Kirk Stromberg

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FILE: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT




By Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender and Kirk Stromberg

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# Building Corporate Culture in the Connected Workplace

# CULTURE.COM

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone seems to be racing to transform themselves into e-business enterprises. Corporations are doing it. So are nonprofit organizations. Even government agencies are trying it. The biggest stumbling block most companies face is that their corporate cultures don't match up with how people are required to work in the new economy. In this summary you will get a road map for building and changing your company culture so it will help rather than hinder your company's transformation.

In this summary you will learn to face common challenges such as:

- ✓ **Making the Jump to Warp Speed.** Everything moves fast and furious in the Internet world. You will see why moving to warp speed requires you to learn to tolerate risk and make quick decisions.
- ✓ **Building a Corporate Culture in a Virtual Organization.** This summary will show you how to maintain a corporate culture when employees don't work in the office. Included in this section: seven steps for successfully transmitting your corporate culture to a new remote worker.
- ✓ **Living With Parallel Cultures.** As you transition to e-business — by setting up separate Internet-driven divisions or companies that run parallel to the bricks-and-mortar activities of the organization — you will have to live with the resulting parallel company cultures.
- ✓ **Managing a New Breed of Teams.** In e-business, teams form, get the job done and disband. You will learn how to manage these teams.
- ✓ **Communicating Openly and Managing Knowledge.** Learn why in the .com world no one controls information; it belongs to everyone. Discover the best way to manage the knowledge that's crucial to a successful e-business.
- ✓ **Building Corporate IQ.** Learning is crucial. See why so many leading companies are changing the way they train workers.

This summary highlights the issues involved in building a corporate culture that fits the Internet age — an essential step for the future success of your company.

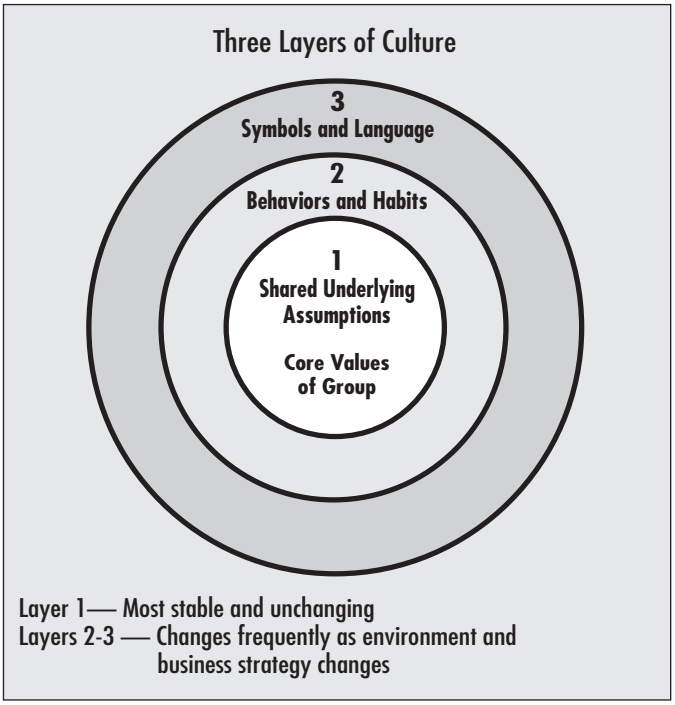
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# Your Corporate Culture in a Clicks-and-Mortar World

The rules of the game are changing. We are living in a .com world. We are experiencing the biggest shift in the way the world functions since the Industrial Revolution. While so far the focus has been on how to deliver goods and services in the new networked environment, comparatively little attention has been paid to the changes that are occurring to corporate cultures.

No doubt your company is changing the way it does business in order to compete in the new economy. Corporate culture, usually defined as "the way we do things around here," can make or break your strategy. If your company strategy does not match your corporate culture, the culture will win every time.

To change corporate culture, you must first understand it. Corporate culture exists in three layers. At the center are the core values of the group, which are the underlying assumptions the group shares. The next layer holds the behaviors and habits that have developed and which reflect the core values and assumptions. At the outer layer are the symbols and language members of the culture use to communicate with each other.




### *The Deepest Layer of Culture*

The underlying assumptions and core values are the hub of the wheel for everything else about the culture.

Examples of underlying organizational assumptions include whether the group believes society should be organized around the community or the individual and whether it is acceptable to do several things at a time instead of finishing one task and only then moving on to the next. Generally, underlying assumptions are unspoken.

Core values, on the other hand, are conscious and discussed or written about in the organization. Examples include statements like "Customers come first," "Individual initiative is the source of success" and "Keep your promises. Your word is your honor." Keep in mind that as your company transitions to a .com organization, the core values may change to reflect the new realities.

### *Behaviors and Habits*

The behaviors and habits of people working for your company make up the middle layer of culture. These are the company norms and include everything from formal policies to the informal tactics employees use to get things done. Formal policies may include everything from dictating behaviors like always answering the phone in three rings to requiring that workers never bypass their supervisor when seeking permission. Informal habits include only socializing with people at your hierarchical level or never disagreeing with the boss in public.

The behaviors and habits that make up the middle

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**The authors:** Peg Neuhauser has worked for more than 18 years as a speaker and organizational consultant, specializing in organizational culture, communication and conflict management. Ray Bender is a speaker and consultant specializing in alliances, leadership and organization change. Kirk Stromberg is a consultant specializing in organization and individual change.

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## Your Corporate Culture in a Clicks-and-Mortar World

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layer of culture are learned in the first few weeks on the job. Newcomers watch how veteran workers operate and quickly learn the ground rules.

### *Symbols and Language*

Symbols and language are the most visible and simplest level of culture. These include your company's logos, colors, dress codes and office layouts. Together, these create the company "look." Consider Amazon.com. The company started in a rented garage with desks made of wooden doors, two-by-fours and angle brackets. Desks like the first ones are still used throughout the company. They have become a symbol of the way things are done at Amazon.com.

### *What Do You Change and What Do You Keep?*

If your company is to meet the challenges of a changing world, it must be prepared to change everything about itself except its basic beliefs. Since the core layer of culture tends to be the most stable, build upon it as you change the rest in your transition to the e-business world. Change the behaviors, symbols and language, but not the core.

For example, if your company currently requires five sign-offs before a team can implement a decision, cut back to one or two approvals. That way, you are able to adapt to the faster pace of e-business without changing your company's core belief in accountability and control.

Bear in mind that change is disruptive and upsetting to employees. People get attached to "the way we do things around here." The reality is that most people will gripe, complain and resist their way through the entire process. Don't expect to keep everyone happy while the company changes; it just won't happen. If you are confident you are focusing on keeping the core while instituting a better business strategy for the reality of the new e-business world, then everything else about the culture is negotiable, even if it will be a rough journey.

Once you determine what to change and what to keep, you need to communicate the changes often enough that they become part of the culture. That means that one or two glitzy events announcing the new company will not work. Old habits die hard. You need to point employees in the new direction through small, everyday actions. Whether it is allowing workers to speak up at a meeting without retribution, or rewarding a team that delivered results in half the usual time, be sure to highlight each change. ■

## What Is Corporate Culture?

The best definitions of corporate culture are simple. They include:

- **the way we do things around here — the IBM or HP way,**
- **the personality of the organization,**
- **what people do when no one is watching.**

# Making the Jump to Warp Speed

Today, businesses must operate in "Net time." Some suggest that in the new e-economy, business is transacted ten times faster than before. Changes that took ten years to make now have to happen in one year. For example, Cisco Systems consummates acquisition agreements in days or weeks instead of the months and years it used to take. Chase Manhattan designed, built, tested and launched its Web site, ChaseShop, in a mere 18 weeks. Lexmark International slashed its production cycles for printers by 90 percent. Unless you move fast, your traditional business model will be overrun by a .com startup company, a phenomena known as getting amazoned. Speed is crucial in the e-business world.

The term "launch and learn" best describes the way companies are getting new products to market on Internet time. Rather than design, build, test and perfect products before launching, companies are often launching products before they are fully developed. If you wait until the product is perfect, someone else will have beat you to market. Even established giants are using this approach. For example, Proctor and Gamble used to take five years to launch a new product. When they introduced Swiffer, a dust sweeper with disposable electrostatically charged cloths designed to attract dirt and dust, it did so after only 18 months of development.

### *How to Produce Both Speed and Quality*

For now, many consumers seem to accept that new products will have a few bugs. In the long run, though, companies that want to succeed will have to figure out how to deliver quality **and** speed. Unless a product or business model is very new and really unique, customers are not likely to tolerate 80 percent quality forever.

The first step is to identify which products need to be 100 percent ready and which can get away with 80 percent readiness. Train your people to make judgment

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## Making the Jump to Warp Speed

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calls about when 80 percent is acceptable and when only 100 percent will do. Ask what customers expect of the company. Is it a flawless product or a new product they will help refine? If you decide 80 percent is acceptable, make sure you have the infrastructure in place to respond quickly to customer comments and suggestions.

Improve both speed and quality by practicing quicker prototyping. Start the process by compressing the requirements analysis. For example, if you are developing software, identify as quickly as possible the top 20 or 30 requirements for the system, and then stop. Then take two or three weeks to develop a client prototype. Let them play with it, and get their reaction. Does it suit their needs or does it need tweaking? By involving the client at this crucial stage, the client is more likely to accept the finished product, saving valuable development time.

### *Creating a Culture that Supports Risk Taking*

In companies where it is acceptable to take years to develop a product, everyone involved in the product is greatly insulated from risk. That's because each decision along the way is approved, modified and revamped. But in the e-business era, the pace doesn't allow that luxury. It's no longer possible to take the safer, slower route. To thrive, companies and the individuals in them must be willing and able to take risks.

In risk-encouraging cultures, people are rewarded for taking risk. It has to happen at every level within your company, not just among an elite group. To make risk taking one of your dominant traits, you must:

**✓ Encourage it by providing monetary and recognition awards for risk taking.**

**✓ Reward risk takers whether they succeed or fail, but reward successes more highly.**

**✓ Loosen the controls over decision-making so people can make more decisions on their own.**

**✓ Let teams do their jobs without bureaucratic interference.**

**✓ Hire proven risk takers and let them lead.**

### *Making Decisions at Warp Speed*

Decision-making goes hand in hand with risk taking. To increase risk taking you must make it easier for your employees to make decisions. You must free them to move fast. To force faster decision-making, begin to cut the number of meetings or approvals needed to reach a decision. Remember, people tend to fill any amount of time allotted for a task. To speed the process, cut the allotted time.

As you make the changes necessary to speed decision-making, remember that it will not be easy. Loosening controls and allowing more freedom without bureaucratic oversight is one of the most difficult changes leaders working in traditional companies make. Upper management needs to ensure teams are staying with their strategic focus, but not interfere with the details of how the team is carrying out its mission. ■

## How to Organize a High-Speed Project

If you want to try your hand at completing a project in "Net time," organize the project like this:

- Pick an important, high-profile project, and meet with team leaders to negotiate a finish date one-fourth to one-half the usual time it takes to finish similar projects.
- Give the project a name everyone likes.
- Have the CEO or other key leaders become part of the team. Their participation reinforces that management is working as hard as everyone else involved in the project.
- Make sure leaders can handle constructive criticism and accept it with humor and appreciation.
- Create publicity within the company about the project. Tell lots of stories about the heroics they are engaged in.
- Be prepared for problems and challenges along the way, but do not change the deadline. Let the team know up front there will be problems along the way, but that the deadline will not change.
- Draft team members who are enthusiastic about the project and want to participate.

## Peter Drucker on Warp Speed

Peter Drucker advises companies that want to speed up decision-making, increase risk taking and focus on the right priorities to do the following:

**Adopt a policy of organized abandonment.** That is, forget about maintaining yesterday; focus instead on moving in new directions. Abandon a dying, resource-eating element of your business if it is fully written off, has just a few good years left or is causing new markets to be neglected.

**Adopt two budgets.** The first tracks expenditures for maintaining present business. In bad times, cut the budget. In good times, keep it constant. The second budget is for the future, to be used to develop new and promising businesses. Never cut this budget.

# Building a Corporate Culture in a Virtual Organization

In the virtual organization, employees don't all work in corporate offices. Instead, employees work out of their home offices, or on the road. Some are full-time regular employees while others are contract workers.

The incentives for creating a virtual organization are great. For example, the savings in real estate costs alone when workers no longer need to come to the office can be enormous. Another powerful incentive is that in today's tight labor market, freeing workers from the corporate office is a powerful recruiting tool.

A real challenge facing the virtual organizations in which these workers toil is creating a corporate culture. After all, if workers are at home or on the road, they have a limited amount of interaction with others in the organization. If ten percent or more of your employees are remote workers, there will be an impact on corporate culture. Some workers liken their situation to bowling alone. Bowling, like traditional work, has a social dimension. Bowling alone lacks this dimension. The feeling of being isolated from the organization can disconnect the worker from the organization's culture.

To help link remote workers to your organization's culture, be sure they spend the first few weeks at corporate offices so they can soak in the culture. Let them get to know others they will be working with remotely. Invite employees who are excellent role models for the culture to participate in orientation. Be sure the stories that transmit so much of corporate culture are recounted, either in person or through a video or audio recording.

You must also have department meetings bringing together all the employees so they create personal relationships. Publish newsletters, have company outings and holiday parties, invest in video conferencing technology and remind everyone that virtual workers are part of the organization.

### *Seven Steps to Transmitting Culture*

There are seven steps to successfully transmitting your corporate culture to a new remote worker. These are:

**Selecting.** Select workers who will be able to handle the isolation distance workers face. If the applicant tells you she is used to being the life of the party, working at home probably isn't a good idea. It is also a good idea to let applicants know that they can transfer to an onsite position if working remotely doesn't pan out. You also need to screen as carefully as you can for traits that already match your corporate culture. Start with a fit and work from there.

**Conditioning.** Virtual workers need to be conditioned to the way things are done in the company. For those coming from traditional backgrounds, it may be difficult. In the e-business environment, it is common for co-workers to be openly critical of others' work and for low-ranking employees to make presentations for the top brass. In other words, there is a strong emphasis on sharing information and criticism throughout the organization. Virtual workers have to make a real effort to exchange information with colleagues.

**Training.** Don't neglect training. It is essential that virtual workers have the technological, work process, communication and collaboration skills needed to do the job remotely.

**Measuring and Rewarding.** Be sure that you come up with a way to measure the work being performed remotely and reward it appropriately. A key consideration is that accomplishments must be quantified. Managers accustomed to reading visual cues such as enthusiasm or number of hours in the office will need to focus instead on results. For example, sales figures and customer survey results take center stage in the evaluation process.

**Shared Values.** To integrate remote workers, find ways to share company values. This can be as simple as a company newsletter or history.

**Legends and Folklore.** Share the stories that make your company special. For example, every Nike worker learns about how the first Nike shoe sole was created using a waffle iron. Draft the best storytellers from the company to orient new workers. Develop a catch phrase that captures what the company is all about. For example, Nike's catch phrase is "Just Do It!"

**Role Models.** Role models are an important part of the socialization process. For example, if your organization values customer service highly, identify role models who excel at customer service. ■

# Living With Parallel Cultures During the Transition to E-Business

Soon, there will be no difference between traditional ways of doing business and e-business. Companies will adapt to the new environment or will fail. Meanwhile, organizations have to find a way to make the transition. Some companies may choose to set up separate Internet divisions or companies that run parallel with the rest of the organization; others will want to make a complete transition to an Internet culture.

Still others will combine the two approaches, moving some divisions entirely into the Internet age while oper-

*(continued on page 6)*

## Living With Parallel Cultures During the Transition to E-Business

*(continued from page 5)*

ating separate divisions or companies in other segments of their business.

There is more than one way to make the transition; which one you choose depends on your company's needs. If you believe your old culture is too slow to change and hostile to the new business strategy, use the parallel approach. On the other hand, if your business strategy calls for all products, services and processes to be e-enterprises as rapidly as possible, choose the integrated approach.

Seeing how others are making the transition may help you decide on which approach is best for your company. Take Sears and Whirlpool, two companies involved in the sale of similar products who have taken sharply different paths to e-business.

Sears created a new Internet division and located it at the Sears campus in Illinois. The division employs 50 people in a casual office atmosphere. The Internet operation sells mainly appliances and tools and will soon be adding garden tools. Sears doesn't plan to have the division go public, but instead hopes to grow it as e-commerce takes off.

Whirlpool, on the other hand, created an entirely new company, Brandwise. The new company is located in New York's Silicon Alley rather than near Whirlpool headquarters. Brandwise will carry more than Whirlpool appliances. In fact, Sears is selling appliances through the site as well as through Sears.com.




## Jack Welch and destroyyourbusiness.com

General Electric CEO Jack Welch recently announced that GE was going to integrate all functions to take advantage of the Internet. He calls his strategy "destroyyourbusiness.com." He announced that every division will become an e-business operation and will discontinue old business lines to replace them with Internet-driven products and processes. GE will in effect cannibalize its older operations to make the transition.

### *Six Criteria to Consider*

There are six criteria you need to consider when deciding whether to follow an integrated or parallel strategy during the transition. These are:

**1. Is your dominant corporate culture likely to be hostile to a dot.com culture?** If your corporate culture is likely to kill any e-commerce initiative, create a separate company. Locate it far from your main headquarters.

**2. Do you need a separate e-business operation to recruit the right people?** Start-ups attract talent who look and act differently from more conservative workers. A separate entity may be necessary to attract the .com type.

**3. Are you changing business-to-business processes or business-to-consumer activities?** If you're integrating the Internet into all internal and business-to-business processes, integration is the way to go. But if you're aiming for the online consumer market, set up a separate .com unless you are already serving those consumers in a physical store. If you are, you may create confusion and frustration when customers think both entities are the same and expect integration between clicks-and-mortar operations.

**4. Do you have the resources to create separate parallel operations?** If there isn't enough money for a new company, you have no choice but to change the entire operation, one step at a time.

**5. How clear and unifying is your leadership vision and strategy?** If you choose to integrate all operations into an e-business enterprise, everyone has to understand that there will be changes, some of them less than pleasant. Get personally involved.

**6. Do you have many new employees?** If there are lots of new workers, transitioning the entire company won't be as difficult with many *new* workers than with a large number of workers resistant to changes to the culture. ■

# A New Breed of Teams In a .Com Culture

Work inside an e-business is project work. People are organized into fast-moving teams brought together to accomplish a specific goal. They deliver results and disband. Workers may be on as many as seven or eight teams at the same time, all of them temporary. Each team lasts as long as it takes to deliver the goal. In short, the old organizational chart has no place in the e-business world.

It helps to think of teams as Lego pieces that can be put together, taken apart and then reconstructed into an entirely different structure. .Com teams differ from ordinary teams in that they appear obsessed with their goal, are creative and have an unconventional style, are informal and democratic, don't pay much attention to team members' feelings or personalities and let go easily when the job is done.

Obviously, you will need to recruit team members who can function in the .com team environment. Pick unconventional, irreverent talent, give them space to create their own environment, give them the resources to get the job done and build in high profile rewards for accomplishing goals.

### *Protecting Team Members From Burnout*

Working on a team can be exciting, but the intensity can also create burnout. One source of burnout is a letdown feeling that many people experience when a project is finished. The best remedy is to build in some "cruise" time after the completion of a project. Make it one of the rewards for a job well done. It also helps to explain to employees that a letdown feeling is a normal emotion that will pass after a break or with the beginning of the next project. ■

# Communication Belongs to Everyone in a .Com Culture

In the e-business world, everyone has access to information. For all practical purposes, the corporation can no longer control the flow of information or its timing. It can, however, communicate cheaply and instantly with everyone in the organization, wherever they are located. So, of course, can employees who have been known to set up unofficial web sites airing complaints about the company.

Your company must learn to listen for and respond to cyberspace name-calling, cope with e-mail overload, let workers pull information they need rather than having it pushed on them and move from a philosophy of hoarding information to one of sharing it.

### *The End of In-House Competition*

A culture based on internal competition and rugged individualism won't work in the .com word. Hoarding information; paying more attention to beating your rival than performing tasks well; treating others with mistrust, suspicion and scorn; and spying on others within the organization are all signs that your workplace is too competitive. Unless you do something about it, the "winners" will begin to feel invincible and grow arrogant while the weaker give up entirely.

To succeed, you must move the culture from internal cut-throat competition to a collaborative model. In case of long-running rivalry, attempt to mediate the conflict. If that fails, terminate the culprits and explain to the rest why you did it. Termination sends a powerful message about what will and won't be tolerated.

Screen new applicants for collaborative skills. One good test is to ask what the applicant would do in a situation where a possible solution can be reached through collaboration rather than conflict. Train people in the use of collaborative negotiation skills so they learn how to create win-win solutions to conflicts. ■

# Knowledge Management Is Managing People's Brain Power

Knowledge and information drive the economy. That knowledge and information must be managed. In the e-business world, knowledge management is managing people's brain power and the company's collective memory.

Effective knowledge management requires both high-tech and high-touch solutions. The high-tech side includes databases, storage and other systems that collect and organize the information your company encounters. On the high-touch side, managing knowledge requires you to share information. Sharing is critical in the .com world.

The most powerful way to get workers to share knowledge is to tell stories about successful sharing. Stories work better than lectures or pleas because people connect with them. ■

## Sharing Knowledge at PARC

At the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), researchers share information about projects they are working on and invite comments and feedback through the use of whiteboards. The boards are placed throughout the facility. Researchers jot down project notes and ideas, and invite passers-by to comment and collaborate. The method is a sure way to get a diversity of approaches to a problem.

## The New Corporate IQ and Getting Smarter

In the .com world, your company must be smart, have smart workers and learn faster than your competition. The collective brainpower of your organization is its corporate IQ. It is a key determinant of success.

Corporate IQ is not measured by adding the IQ of each worker then dividing by the number of workers. That's because corporate IQ as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Think of corporate IQ as the aggregate of the data, information, knowledge and mastery of tools needed to run the organization and compete. It includes:

**✓ Knowing what you know and where that knowledge is.**

**✓ Knowing how to use the information to make decisions.**

**✓ Knowing what the current decision-making processes are.**

**✓ Identifying the direction of the organization and how that relates to its mission, goals and strategy.**

**✓ Recognizing in which networks the business operates and how to use them effectively.**

### *You Don't Know What You Don't Know*

One of the most difficult tasks is identifying what you and your organization don't know. After all, you don't know what you don't know. The companies that learn to confront the unknown without fear will succeed. Your company must be prepared to create a learning culture.

In today's world, everyone is responsible for learning. To that end, make learning part of every employee's job description and performance appraisal. Provide resources and time for learning. Use in-house publications and informal conversations to highlight stories about workers who did something in their work as a result of learning. ■

## No More Sheep-Dip Learning

The days of hauling everyone into a classroom for training will soon be gone. The sheep-dip approach to learning simply doesn't work anymore. Instead, companies are using:

- **Mobile learning stations.**
- **Mentors and on-the-job training.**
- **Virtual and e-learning, in which education is delivered via satellite and over the Internet.**
- **Online universities promising top-of-the-line education for professionals who need education to improve their job performance and human capital.**
- **Corporate universities.**

## The Cultural Challenge Of Mergers and Acquisitions

Companies decide to buy rather than build to expand capacity or meet new market opportunities. The biggest risk to acquiring companies is that the cultures of the two companies don't mix. The truth is that the odds are against pulling off a successful merger or acquisition. As soon as a merger is announced, employees face psychological reactions that include ambiguity, weakened trust levels and a focus on self-preservation.

There are only three options for the acquiring company: keep the cultures separate; dominate the old culture with the new; or blend the two cultures, keeping the best of both. ■

## Ten Final Tips On Building a Corporate Culture for the Connected Workplace

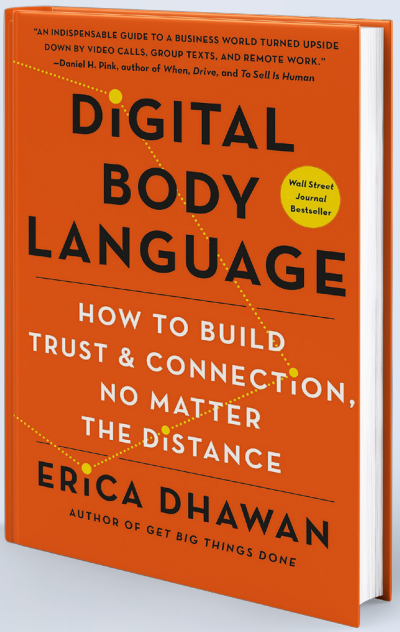
- **Recruit for Cultural Fit.** It is easier to hire people who fit your culture than to change their way of looking at the world.
- **Speed Up Your Culture.** Pick a high-priority project and set a firm but short deadline for completing the project.
- **Remember You Get Only One Point for Every Action Modeling the Culture Change You Want to See.** Many actions are much more valuable than one speech.
- **Lead More and Manage Less.** Set the direction and let your team navigate the way.
- **Pick Credible Role Models.** Be sure there is general agreement among management on the choice.
- **Protect .Com Teams from the Corporate Immune System.** Let them keep a low profile to avoid being attacked by corporate white blood cells.
- **Increase the Collective IQ of Your Company.** Let workers learn from mistakes and try again. Trial and error increases the learning process and raises corporate IQ.
- **Enhance Your Company's Knowledge Management System.**
- **Plan to Integrate Parallel Cultures.** Temporary groups form strong cultures, but must be reintegrated into the company.
- **Clarify Each Party's Commitment Level in Alliances.** Be sure both partners understand the basics of the agreement.

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# Digital Body Language

Erica Dhawan

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Digital Body Language

By Erica Dhawan

Erica Dhawan is a globally recognized leadership expert and keynote speaker helping organizations and leaders innovate faster and further, together. Erica has spoken, worldwide, to organizations and enterprises that range from the World Economic Forum to U.S. and global Fortune 500 companies, associations, sports teams and government institutions. Named as one of the top management experts around the world by GlobalGurus, she is the founder and CEO of Cotential - a company that has helped leaders and teams leverage 21st century collaboration skills globally. Her writings have appeared in dozens of publications, including Fast Company and Harvard Business Review.

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# Fostering Connection, No Matter the Distance

After co-authoring her first book, *Get Big Things Done: The Power of Connectional Intelligence*, Erica Dhawan went on a mission to help CEOs and organizations solve the challenges of managing across global, multigenerational, matrixed, and virtual teams. On her travels, the same questions kept coming up, "How do I keep teams connected to each other and to people on other teams? How do I help people of different ages and working styles who rarely meet in person communicate effectively? Why does it seem infinitely harder to foster trust, engagement, and the confidence to take risks? And finally, why do my own communications so often seem to miss the mark, producing unintended and anxiety-filled consequences?"

Over time Erica discovered she could solve their communication problems by teaching them a skill she calls digital body language. Over the years, she has taught this vital skill to people worldwide, such as coaches, doctors, lawyers, and board members, and now wants to share it with whoever wants to learn, grow and succeed, through her latest book of the same name. By the end of ***Digital Body Language,*** Erica's mission is to "help you get closer to anyone– intellectually, emotionally, personally, professionally– and make you stand out as a trusted, straightforward leader, no matter the distance."

## Digital Elements of Style

To succeed in the business world, one should always look for ways to move forward rather than standing still. If you don't move with the times, you will end up lost in the forest while others have built a cabin and moved onto bricks. Today roughly 70 percent of all communications among teams are virtual. If you don't know how to efficiently transfer your physical body language and communication styles onto the screen, your career could be in for a rough ride.

To truly grasp digital body language and begin to implement it, you must first learn what it is and the many forms it can take.

"It's a little like a French-English dictionary, but in this case, my mission is to translate in-person body language to such things as punctuation, video call first impressions, abbreviations, signa-

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tures, and the time it takes to press Send."

Take a look at an example from the book, showing what those translations may look like:

Traditional Body Language involves: a head tilted to one side, signaling that another person is listening attentively.

Digital Body Language involves: "liking" a text. Praising another person's input in an email. Making a detailed comment verbally or in the chatbox during a video call when someone expresses an idea, instead of saying, "I agree."

The wrong word, the lack of them, or even the wrong emoji can make a person misunderstood online and send the person on the other side of the screen, reeling into anxiety and paranoia and killing their productivity at work.

Erica gives a great example,

"They had been going out for three years when the fight, conducted exclusively via text message, occurred. The fight lasted for hours, back and forth, until at one point, frustrated and weary, Laura tapped out, 'So r we thru? I guess so,' Dave replied.

Laura was devastated. She called in sick to work the next day and spent the next 24 hours mourning the loss of her relationship by meeting friends, looking through old photos, and crying. The next night, Dave appeared on her doorstep. Laura, puffy-eyed, answered the door. "Did you forget about the dinner we planned a few days ago?" he said. "You said we were through," Laura said. "I meant we were through arguing," Dave said, "not through as in you and me." Laura went through awful emotions, but it also affected her job and the company she worked for.

Miscommunication can cause confusion, delays, lack of productivity, and more in a business. Taking an extra five minutes to go over the latest email leaving your inbox can prevent hours of an employee wondering what you wanted them to do if you're upset at them, or worse, if they are about to get fired. Take the time to think about what you're saying, whom you're saying it to and if you have given all the information that they will require to do a good and efficient job.

Writing the wrong thing, using too many exclamation marks, or a bad email signature can cause problems and confusion in the workplace. However, one big problem Erica discovered in the workplace was nothing to do with words at all; it was the dreaded Signs of Silence.

With technology today allowing us to communicate with people so rapidly, it can leave us anxious and worried when we don't get an instantaneous response after sending an email, DM, or Slack message. Why didn't they get back to me? Do they not like me anymore? Was that project I sent that bad? I'll show them!

Take a look at this simple example of how delayed response time can play with someone's mind:

"Imagine you just called a co-worker on a different team with the words 'Dinner soon?' Two days later, no response. But your co-worker has found the time to post a new picture of his corgi on Facebook and Instagram. Instead of following up with a new email, you "like" his social media corgi photo, hoping your little red heart will guilt him into responding to your first email. A week goes by before he responds with 'Sorry for the delay!!!!' When you finally meet, it turns out that he really was just overwhelmed with stressors (training a corgi puppy takes work) and didn't have the emotional bandwidth for a dinner meeting."

A relatively new term, "Ghosting," describes where a person avoids a message, sometimes simply needing a break from that specific person. For example, have you ever avoided opening Whatsapp revealing that you have read a message; instead, you pull down your notification list to look at the sneak preview? In a workplace, avoiding colleagues and leaving them in limbo can harm the business. A company needs to put rules in place. Setting rules on response times and what mediums work best can go a long way to increase productivity and a calmer environment.

Check out some of the ways Erica Dhawan suggests to avoid Digital Ghosting:

If you are waiting for a response:

Don't jump to conclusions. Unless it's critical that you get a reply ASAP, remember that people may have a lot on their plates.

If you follow up twice with no response, switch to a different medium.

If you need to get back to someone:

If you can answer in 60 seconds or less, respond immediately.

If it's urgent, respond immediately or let the sender know you are working on it. Make an appointment with yourself on your calendar to answer.

For matters lacking urgency, don't stress. Block out time to follow up later at your convenience.

## The Four Laws of Digital Body Language

Erica Dhawan dives deep into the Four Laws of Digital Body Language. She teaches us how we can use digital body language to show appreciation (Value Visibly), find alignment (Communicate Carefully) to redefine teamwork for a digital era (Collaborate Confidently). By putting these pillars together to form teams characterized by psychological safety (Trust Totally)."

One very useful law is Value Visibly:

Valuing Visibly teaches us that you cannot always assume everything is alright, especially when you are not there in person to judge their physical cues. You need now more than ever to be proactive about explicitly showing you understand what the person wants and value their participation.

> There are many ways that gender, generation, and cultural background can affect how we perceive digital body language cues."

In one example, Erica Dhawan talks about when she was living in New York City while her colleague she calls "Jim" was in Dallas. Erica had just started her own consulting business, and Jim was beginning his post-college career. She chose well, and he was a fantastic, eager employee who didn't need much oversight. Erica got on with her business at full speed, throwing tasks over to the colleague; everything was going so well! At least that's what she thought. After six weeks, she had a check-in with Jim over the phone:

Me: So, how do you think it's going? Because I think it's going really well!

Jim: No, it's not.

Me: No, it's not? Wait, what?

Jim: No, it's not going well and I'm thinking of quitting. Today.

Me: Today? Wait, sorry, what?

Jim: Look, I have my master's degree, and I don't want to do only admin work. I thought I would be handed a lot more marketing. Like we discussed in our original interview? And we barely talk about what you're working on and the larger picture of the business.

"His Sounds good emails didn't signal, "I will take this on happily." They were code for "I will do this begrudgingly, but I really want to talk about my learning goals too." My "Thx" emails, intended to communicate "I really appreciate your hard work," were interpreted by Jim as dismissive. I thought I was being explicit, but in the end, Jim felt both underappreciated and disrespected."

Erica also was too casual with her business relationship with Jim, showing up late to their weekly calls and angering him with her "sry running late" emails. She would answer other phone calls during their meetings without explaining why affecting their ability to pick up where they left off once she'd ended that call. Lastly, she would send sloppy emails, only answering some of Jim's questions.

Although awkward, Erica was glad for that experience. It reminded her how important it was to Value Visibly, to show full respect to people in our personal and professional lives. After that conversation, Erica ended her meetings on time with Jim, saving them both wasted time. They both scheduled regular video check-ins to go overwork and make sure Jim felt supported and valued.

## Digital Body Language Across Difference

There are many ways that gender, generation, and cultural background can affect how we perceive digital body language cues.

In a world where emojis are fast becoming the norm in an email, IM, or message on slack, people often fail to comprehend that an emoji to you might mean something very different to a person on the other side of the planet. In China, the waving hand signals "goodbye to a relationship" and not "hello." In Japan, the "happy" emoji confuses people, who associate frequent smiling with unintelligent people. In Middle Eastern countries, the emoji of conjoined palms is a religious symbol, compared to Japan, where it simply means "Thank You." Make sure before using emojis that you take a moment to understand how the recipient might interpret them. Failure to do so could cause confusion and even loss of business.

Experts divide the world into "high-context" and "low-context" cultures. In high-context cultures, they communicate implicitly and rely heavily on nonverbal cues. (Countries in the Mediterranean, Central Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia fall into this category.) By contrast, explicit verbal communication is a mark of low-context cultures, including most English-speaking Western cultures, including the United States and the United Kingdom.

***Digital Body Language: How to Build Trust and Connection, No Matter the Distanc***e by Erica Dhawan is insightful and informative and a pleasant read. From the beginning, Erica allows us a look into her life and how she mastered the skill of Digital Body Language. Like many of us, she has fallen over several hurdles in her life, which she is more than happy to talk about. This humility plays a big part in bringing this book to life and helping the reader feel at ease knowing they are with someone who has had the same experiences.

The book is littered with brilliant examples explaining what something is, what went wrong, and how you can fix it, should it ever come your way. But the author doesn't stop there. Throughout the book, you are tasked with assessing how you or your company are performing at the moment, meaning, hopefully, before you have finished this book, you are already on your way to improving your digital body language skills. This book is a tool that everyone should have in their box.

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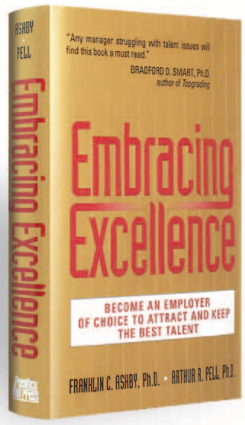
# Embracing Excellence

Franklin C. Ashby, Ph.D. and Arthur R. Pell, Ph.D.

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### Become an Employer of Choice to Attract and Keep the Best Talent

# EMBRACING EXCELLENCE

## *THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF*

*Whether the economy is growing or slowing down, the demand for "A" players never ceases. Not only do other companies compete to hire them, they try to lure them away from you.*

*Why would a top-level performer choose one company over another even when the competition offers a "better deal"? The surprising answer lies in the corporate culture. "A" players are attracted to and stay with companies whose corporate culture is one that embraces excellence and is committed to values, vision, creativity, trust and respect.*

*In this summary, you will learn how to create such an environment and attract the "A" players you want and need.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ **Why corporate culture is the key to employee retention.** Workers won't stay if your culture is one of domination, autocracy and inflexibility.

✓ **What qualities define a great corporate culture.** People want to work for companies with fair compensation systems, that encourage and appreciate quality work, and that value growth and development.

✓ **How to find, recruit and hire great people.** Whether hiring from the outside or promoting from within, the key is to match people with jobs that suit their training, experience and personality.

✓ **Why pay is only part of the equation.** Studies show pay, if satisfactory, is low on the list of reasons people look for other jobs.

✓ **How to get new employees onboard successfully.** New workers need to be mentored, oriented and trained early on.

✓ **Why good people leave and how you can stop them.** Integrate "A" players into the culture and look for clues to dissatisfaction, and you can often prevent defection.

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# Qualities and Characteristics Of a Great Corporate Culture

Keeping good people is hard. Gone are the days when workers spent their career with one company. Employees are constantly exploring new options. Turnover and loss of key employees has compelled companies to do something. They have increased salaries and offered bonuses, but it's not enough.

What does matter is the organizational culture of the company. All companies have a culture — a corporate way of life. Companies that are dominating, autocratic and inflexible have the highest turnover rates regardless of pay. Corporate cultures built on participation, cooperation and communication keep good people.

### *How Well Do You Use Your Talent?*

Organizations that focus on the use of the best talents of their employees have a much lower turnover rate than those whose emphasis is primarily on productivity.

How can you change the corporate culture so that your company shifts from a productivity-obsessed organization to one that is more creative, problem-solving, dynamic and exciting? Success requires more than the full commitment of top management. You must create a climate that stimulates people to challenge current practices and to develop and implement new ideas.

The organizational culture, as perceived by the employees, dictates how they think about their jobs, perform their functions and plan for the future. If workers are convinced the company is truly concerned about quality, they will make every effort to produce quality work. But if workers think the company's talk about quality is just lip service, the "quality" program will be ignored. Actions speak louder than words.

### *Ten Features of a Great Company Culture*

A great company culture will include the following ten features:

**1. An almost missionary zeal.** Examples include Microsoft and Wal-Mart, where enthusiasm and excitement permeate the culture.

**2. A sense of pride, sincerity and cooperation.** Examples include Nordstrom and Home Depot, both known for providing customer satisfaction.

## Putting Customs on Trial

There's an old Chinese story about a general who assumed command and discovered a sentinel posted at a seemingly unnecessary spot. The sentinel told the general there had always been a sentinel at that spot. It turned out that 200 years ago an empress had posted a sentinel at her rose garden. The empress and the rose garden were history, but the sentinel was still there. Do you have similar customs followed by the organization because that's the way it's always been done?

Every policy and practice should be put on trial for its life. Periodically ask, "Does this practice serve a purpose?" If not, get rid of it. Don't waste time guarding extinct gardens.

**3. An attitude of constructive discontent.** These companies never stop looking for ways to improve things. They are never entirely satisfied.

**4. A value-based mind-set and management style.** Companies such as Merck, which has given away valuable drugs to poor countries, do so because not doing so would mean the company no longer stood by its value to preserve and improve human life.

**5. An emphasis on creativity and innovation.** Companies must budget for innovation.

**6. A focus on building role models, not just leaders.** Perhaps the best example of this idea in practice is the CEO of Malden Mills, Aaron Feuerstein. When Malden Mills burned down, he kept workers on the payroll while he rebuilt the plant. It cost him millions, but saved the

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**The authors:** Franklin C. Ashby, Ph.D. and Arthur R. Pell, Ph.D. are chairman and senior vice president, respectively, of The Leadership Capital Group, LLC.

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For more information on the authors, go to:
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## Qualities and Characteristics Of a Great Corporate Culture

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small town in which his factory was the main employer.

**7. A sense of high expectations and professional standards.** Corporate cultures like the one at Hewlett-Packard imbue the workplace with a culture of excellence. The result is innovative new ideas and superior products.

**8. A fair, commensurate compensation and incentive program.** Companies like Wal-Mart and Microsoft let workers share in profits.

**9. A habit of celebrating successes.** Companies that show appreciation for success inspire more of the same.

**10. Adhering to the golden rule.** Companies that do unto others as you would have them do unto you succeed. ■

For more information on what workers and managers hate about each other, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Diagnosing Your Corporate Culture

Before an organizational culture can be changed, it must be assessed. Too many managers deceive themselves about their organization. They know the figures: sales volume, market share, production, payroll and all the tangible statistics. But they delude themselves on such vital information as employee attitude and morale, the skill level of their people, their willingness to cooperate and extend themselves, and the commitment of staff at all levels to company goals.

It's human nature for people to see what they want to see. People tend to ignore what doesn't agree with their perceptions.

As a result, many senior executives have no idea that their perceptions of themselves and their companies aren't shared by the rank-and-file. Workers aren't likely to express negative feelings about the boss or their company for fear. They keep their feelings to themselves, where they fester. And managers misread worker compliance as total agreement with company policy. To managers, this agreement is reality. If culture change is to take place, the first step is to identify what employee perceptions are and how they developed.

### *Implementing the Organizational MRI*

Doctors use a diagnostic tool called Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to look deep inside the body. The same concept can be applied to let managers look deep inside their businesses, to learn about the perceptions of employees, to determine how such perceptions affect performance, to analyze subtle details, and to observe reactions, attitudes and viewpoints normally not visible. This process is the Organizational MRI, or O-MRI, which will become an instrument to uncover the culture-related problems and challenges in your business. The O-MRI looks for the reason a problem exists. Its goal is to peel layer after layer away until the underlying reasons are uncovered. An analyst using the technique will continue to ask, "Why" when confronted with the existence of a problem until the questioning reveals the real reason.

Whoever conducts your company's O-MRI (usually a consultant) must earn the trust of workers. Consultants are outsiders, but employees often perceive them as the voice, eyes and mouth of management.

To earn trust, it helps to develop rapport with partici-

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## Six Terrific Techniques To Obtain Reliable Information

The six techniques that follow encourage candor and provide free flow of significant and accurate information from employees:

**1. Get them away from the company environment.** When people are relaxed, they are more likely to share ideas and true feelings.

**2. Organize focus groups.** Focus groups have been used for years in marketing and sales, and are now being used internally. By bringing together a representative sample of workers and exploring their feelings about an issue or problem, a company can learn quite a bit about their attitudes and desires.

**3. Conduct confidential employee surveys.** A professionally designed and administered employee survey can reveal much about what's wrong and what's right about your organization.

**4. Conduct individual employee interviews.** Consultants sometimes prefer to conduct individual interviews using the same question format for every interviewee. An experienced interviewer can get basic information and probe deeper as answers open up areas for exploration.

**5. Conduct 360-degree assessments of key managers.** Multi-level assessments have become popular tools used to identify how bosses, peers, subordinates and outsiders view management. These are 360-degree assessments.

**6. Schedule a multi-level retreat.** Invite all levels of the organization to a retreat in a relaxed atmosphere and give participants an opportunity to express ideas and ask questions.

## Diagnosing Your Corporate Culture

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pants. The consultant may start with a couple of short workshops to break the ice. He or she may try to identify informal leaders and cultivate them. They represent the best chance to establish credibility with the rest of the employees.

### *The Process*

The O-MRI is based on an in-depth confident employee survey, usually prepared by a professional survey organization. Once the results are tabulated, the consultants prepare a report that outlines the major problem areas identified. The survey results and the report are presented and discussed by various groups, including peer focus groups (who further develop and give examples of the problems identified in the survey) and key informal leaders. Solutions are explored by people from the company brought together in multi-level retreats. Finally, the consultant will prepare a report outlining what the O-MRI diagnosed and what the treatment plan should be. ■

## How One Company Conducted an O-MRI

When the Excelsior Paper Box Company initiated their O-MRI, CEO Douglas Stewart sent a letter to each employee describing briefly why the program was being conducted and why everyone should participate. The consultant was introduced in brief departmental meetings. Everyone was assured the process would be confidential.

Before the survey was distributed, articles in the company newsletter and bulletins described the purpose and methods to be used. A letter from a senior executive accompanied the actual surveys. The return rate was 67% by the deadline, and more trickled in for the next few weeks. Responses were tabulated, and a report prepared by the consultants which included a summary of the key points and recommendations for implementation of any changes suggested by the data. The survey revealed four major problem areas. These were:

- A pervasive sense of insecurity, distrust, fear and resentment
- The existence of poor internal communication
- The existence of inequities in compensation and
- A complaint that there was too much internal politics in the organization

The company then created peer-based focus groups to minimize "us vs. them" inhibitions since the survey revealed a clear sense of distrust. Their comments on the survey conclusions were tabulated and categorized. The consultant then identified seven informal leaders and interviewed them away from the premises. The interviews provided specific examples of the sort of problems the survey and focus groups had revealed. The consultants discovered that there was a great deal of distrust of upper management at both the rank-and-file level and the lower levels of management.

Next came a 360-degree assessment of all middle and senior management people, since the analysis had revealed that there was significant mistrust of these managers. A comprehensive questionnaire was designed to be completed by the four levels of people that each manager typically interacted with. These included the superior that the manager reported to and at least one higher ranking manager, the manager's peer group, the manager's subordinates, and in some cases vendors and customers the manager regularly interacted with.

Finally, multi-level retreats were held to discuss changes needed to the corporate culture. A report was then prepared by the consultant. In this case, it revealed that the major problem was the authoritarian style of management and the lack of effective communication throughout the company. The final report included recommendations for change and strategies for instituting them. ■

## The Four Worst Techniques To Obtain Reliable Information

**1. The Town Meeting.** Company town meetings generally don't amount to more than gripe sessions at which the most vocal dominate.

**2. Meetings lead by managers.** When the boss conducts the meeting, employees are intimidated.

**3. Poorly designed problem-solving teams.** Team activity must be carefully planned and participants trained in problem-solving. Just throwing people together who have never worked with each other won't work. Each tends to be primarily concerned about his or her department or career.

**4. Employees interviewed by company managers.** Unless workers view the interviewer as fair and impartial, they won't provide useful information.

## How to Find Great People

It's not easy to find good people, and it's not cheap. Yet there's no better way to keep employees than to pick the ones who will thrive in your organization. That's why recruiting and retention are crucial processes. Hire right, and you hire for the long term.

Before you hire a new employee, make sure you determine the characteristics the perfect A-player would

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## How to Find Great People

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have. First, analyze the job to create a job description that describes what the job really is, and a job specification that describes what characteristics the person holding the job needs to successfully perform the job.

The job specification should include the following:

- **Education and skills:** Does the job require college or other advanced education or schooling in a special skill?
- **Work experience:** How much experience is necessary?
- **Physical stamina:** Does the job require heavy lifting or hard physical labor?
- **Intelligence:** Does the job require the ability to solve complex problems or deep thinking?
- **Communication skill and personality:** Does the job require superior communications skills, the ability to deal with high levels of stress, or an outgoing personality?

### *Screening Candidates*

One of the most challenging parts of the selection process is screening candidates. When screening résumés, here are a few things to be on the lookout for:

- **Education fraud.** Be sure claimed degrees were really earned.
- **Progress.** Good candidates generally have a history of progressively greater responsibility and pay.
- **Stability.** Candidates who frequently switch jobs may not stay long with your company either. But be sure that there isn't a good reason for the long list of jobs, such as a business downturn.

### *The Interview Process*

In the interview, use open-ended questions as much as you can. These lend themselves to more than yes or no answers and yield more valuable information. For example, ask a candidate how he or she spends an average day at work rather than what the job duties are. Also ask candidates about their weaknesses. For example, you could ask a candidate to describe a negative aspect of his last evaluation. Ask about future education and career plans also.

Another important part of the interview is selling your organization. Present your company and the job in a positive and enthusiastic manner, but don't exaggerate or mislead. That will only add to turnover. Answer questions honestly, but be cautious about candidates who only ask about benefits and perks, and not much about the job itself. Their priority may be in what they can get out of the job rather than what they can bring to the company.

## Ten Common Interview Mistakes

1. **The interview was haphazard.** Interviewers who don't have a clear plan and jump everywhere don't create a good impression and may miss key questions.
2. **The interview was for the wrong job.** If you are hiring for more than one position, be sure your questions are geared for the right one.
3. **The applicant dominated the job.** A good interviewer maintains control and doesn't let the candidate take over.
4. **You played God.** Don't act condescending. You don't want to turn off a good candidate.
5. **You telegraphed the "right" answers.** Don't suggest answers to questions.
6. **You talked too much.** Let the applicant speak; an interview is a two-way conversation.
7. **You played district attorney.** Don't cross-examine the candidate.
8. **Don't play psychologist.** Just because you had Psych 101 doesn't qualify you to analyze the candidate. Stick to things relevant to the job.
9. **Don't fall in love.** Don't let one aspect of the candidate's experience create a halo effect.
10. **You didn't probe for details.** Don't accept every answer at face value.

### *Making the Decision*

The interviews are over and it's time to make a decision. Be aware of pitfalls in judging people. For example, do you only hire people who went to your college or who look a certain way? We all tend to subconsciously favor people whose backgrounds are like our own. But a work force of people who are all alike isn't a healthy one. Such groups tend to be resistant to new ideas.

Usually, you have several good candidates from whom to pick. Comparing them must be done systematically. Watch out for the tendency to favor the most recent candidate, or being carried away with a candidate's expertise in one area of the job. Don't let a candidate's interest in the job be the sole deciding factor either. You are far better off comparing the top candidates side by side using a final selection spreadsheet.

### *Making the Offer*

Once the selection has been made, it's time to make the offer. A good candidate might object to the terms of the offer. You must be ready to face the objections and overcome them. Sometimes that may mean you offer more money or additional benefits, but it may also mean

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## How to Find Great People

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you move on to another candidate.

In addition, when you make your offer, tell the candidate that her employer will probably make a counter-offer. Ask her to consider, however, why the current employer hadn't offered her the terms of the counteroffer before, or point out that she will probably be treated as if she were disloyal for looking elsewhere. By countering the counter-offer before it comes, you will significantly reduce the number of applicants who accept them. ■

# Balance Compensation and Intangible Benefits

But companies do have to offer a compensation plan that at least matches what companies competing for the same type of employees pay. But determining what those equivalents are is becoming more difficult as new kinds of compensation plans are showing up.

The trend is away from seniority or rank as the determinant of pay, and toward performance as the basis. With inflation under control, large cost of living adjustments are a thing of the past. Pay for performance plans are replacing regular increments, and those whose performance is average or marginal may receive no regular increases. Lump-sum merit bonuses are also on the increase. These on- time payments don't increase base pay. Other compensation schemes include offering profit-sharing and stock options.

In a tight labor market, there is a temptation to offer good candidates more than ever before. Do this after careful consideration of the impact higher salaries will have on those not already working for your company. The effect may be that current workers who are making less look for better offers and leave, causing the company's labor shortage to continue. Those who don't leave may fester with resentment.

### *The Power of Intangible Benefits*

Money is important, but it isn't the only thing motivating workers. Money rarely leads the list when it comes to what people want from a job. If salary and benefits are fair, most people value intangible benefits more.

For example, in a 2000 survey by Bottom Line Business, employees ranked salary and benefits 11 out of 18 on a list of factors for staying in their current jobs. The top ten reasons were:

- **Career growth and learning**
- **Exciting and challenging work**
- **Meaningful work and the opportunity to make a difference**
- **Great co-workers**
- **Being part of a team**
- **A good boss**
- **Being recognized for a job well done**
- **Having fun on the job**
- **Autonomy and a sense of control over their own work and**
- **Flexibility in work hours and dress code**

The bottom line is that a fair and adequate salary is a satisfier on the job, and not necessarily a motivator. For many, more money doesn't motivate; they are satisfied at a certain level. For them, you have to find other motivators to spur increased efforts. ■

## Some Common Perks Today

Perks are additional extras that some employers provide to keep and motivate workers. They could give workers the cash equivalent, but that doesn't have the psychological impact that the following extras do:

- ✓ **Company cars**
- ✓ **Memberships in professional organizations**
- ✓ **Subscriptions to journals**
- ✓ **Memberships in social clubs**
- ✓ **Reduced price lunch at work**
- ✓ **Coffee**
- ✓ **Child care on site**
- ✓ **Transportation**
- ✓ **Tuition reimbursement and scholarships**
- ✓ **Flextime**

**For more unusual perks offered by employers, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# The Best Candidates May Be Found Inside Your Company

One way to attract and retain "A" players is to have an active program of internal transfers and promotions. Filing vacancies from within has many advantages. For example, an internal hire knows the company culture, rules and idiosyncrasies. And you know far more about current employees than you will ever know about an outside hire. Plus, offering opportunities internally boosts morale and serves as a performance incentive.

Given the advantages of internal promotions and transfer, are there times you will have to go outside? Of

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### The Best Candidates May Be Found Inside Your Company

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course. For example, a job may require skills not found in your company. You may miss out on gaining a fresh view from the outside, and you may be tempted to promote someone less than well qualified just because he or she is a known quantity. Therefore, you should mix internal and external hiring.

#### *Finding Internal Candidates*

Finding internal candidates isn't always easy. You can start by looking at personnel files and identifying people who hold positions below their education or skill levels. For example, has an employee taken advantage of your tuition reimbursement policy and earned a degree? If so, consider her for an opening requiring that degree.

Periodically survey workers to find out what new skills they have acquired. Create an internal job bank that lists all special skills and talents held by current workers. Post all jobs internally.

You can also establish an internal "career path" program. Identify high-potential workers and then offer them an opportunity to participate in the company's career path program. Candidates become part of a formal program of encouragement and training and get advice on what kind of further education to pursue. ■

## Getting New Employees Off on the Right Foot

At last, your new employee reports to work. What happens next may determine whether that person becomes a loyal, dedicated and enthusiastic staff member or a half-hearted worker.

Let's look at it from the new worker's viewpoint. He or she is looking for a reality check. Will the new job live up to expectations? Recent studies have shown that 55 percent of new hires fail or voluntarily leave their jobs within two years due to a failure to properly introduce and assimilate them into the new culture. In fact, the first ten days are often critical to success or failure.

Orientation is a start, but not enough. The typical orientation session involves a tour of the facilities, a video presentation, a history of the company, and the introduction of rules and regulations. What's needed is a new approach called "onboarding."

#### *Onboarding*

Onboarding is a comprehensive plan to shepherd the new employees through the first several months. Onboarding plans should include:

### Seven Successful Onboarding Practices

1. **Assign a coach or mentor to the new person right from the start.**
2. **Arrange for some early success.**
3. **Identify and concentrate on a handful of key strategic objectives.**
4. **Develop a job description with performance standards.**
5. **Allow new employees ample time to learn, study and plan before assuming major responsibilities.**
6. **Overcome resentment of bypassed employees.**
7. **Provide unwavering support.**

- A clear sense of purpose describing why orienting the new employee is important for the company and the worker;
- An assessment of the environment, including honest statements about any negative aspects of the job;
- Identification of the "critical few objectives," or CFOs, that the new worker must master quickly if he or she is to succeed. This may include identifying both short-term and long-term goals and timetables for achieving them;
- Identification and assignment of a mentor who will help the new hire assimilate.

#### *Training Well*

Training has become an essential part of management. Companies offer orientation, leadership development and sexual harassment training, to name a few. Properly developed training programs can have a dramatic effect on business and represent a great return on investment and is a major factor in retention of "A" players.

A good training program has four steps. These are:

**1. The attitude conditioning of the learners.** Learners must be receptive to training. Their minds must be open and they must have a clear picture of what they will learn, understand how they will benefit, and get excited about participation.

**2. Presentation and demonstration of content.** Real learning begins when the participants are drawn into the process to debate, discuss and even disagree.

**3. Practice.** Learners may practice new skills between sessions and report back on their experience.

**4. Follow-up and reinforcement.** Learners should be brought back regularly to reinforce what was learned. ■

# Why Good People Leave

There are few things more draining for an organization than the steady, systematic loss of highly effective and productive people. There's nothing new about people trying to improve their lot. Many outstanding people use periodic job changes as a key part of their career management strategy. However, when evidence of dissatisfaction among top workers seems to be a recurring theme, something has to be done.

## *A Variety of Reasons*

People leave jobs for a reason. These include:

- loss of faith in management;
- feeling unappreciated, bored or unchallenged;
- frustration with excessive politics;
- more money;
- feeling used or exploited;
- concern about the future of the firm;
- the departure of a close friend;
- a more flexible benefits package.

Some leave because they can't live with what they consider unsatisfactory company practices such as unreasonable working hours, unpleasant working environment or the lack of state of the art equipment.

## *Addressing Work-Life Issues*

Today, some workers leave for reasons best referred to as work-life issues. If this is the case with your company, you may want to consider implementing some programs.

For example, through the use of technology, workers can be spared much unnecessary travel. Others may benefit from being allowed to telecommute, so long as you provide adequate guidance, keep workers in the loop, and otherwise monitor performance. Other options include job-sharing.

Yet another option is to allow an "A" player who wants to spread his wings to continue on as a freelancer or contractor.

## *How to Keep Employees Loyal*

Today, employee loyalty is at an all-time low. The downsizing that pervaded the economy in the 1980s and 1990s has increased the decline in loyalty, and mergers and acquisitions have diluted the identification employees felt with their companies. It should come as no surprise, then, that nothing is more valuable to an organization than capable employees with a strong sense of loyalty to the firm.

There are nine keys to loyalty:

**1. The behavior and reputation of management is a key factor as to whether workers stay or go.**

**2. A clear, well-conceived mission and vision keeps employees focused and connected.**

**3. Recognizing and rewarding exceptional performance encourages the same.**

**4. The reputation of the firm attracts many to a particular firm and bonds them.**

**5. A focus on building pride encourages longevity.**

**6. A sense of long-term viability provides stability and encourages loyalty.**

**7. Opportunity for growth and training encourages commitment.**

**8. Opportunity for promotion helps keep career-minded employees around.**

**9. A commitment to driving out fear and minimizing politics will ensure workers don't leave out of a sense of self-preservation.**

## *Leadership Is Key to Retention*

Leadership is a key factor in retention. Don't assume that you know everything there is to know about leadership. You don't. And sticking to the old way of leading may be encouraging workers to leave. You can't count on controlling through power anymore. Today, a leader leads by persuasion and motivation.

***Sticking to the old way of leading may be encouraging workers to leave. You can't count on controlling through power anymore.***

Because a worker's immediate supervisor is vital to satisfaction with his or her job, leaders must learn how to lead today's work force. Great leaders have enthusiastic followers and focus on getting things done. They rely on a fixed, unwavering set of convictions as their guiding light, and act on those convictions. Since they demonstrate trust, conviction and loyalty, they also inspire it.

## *Discover Why a Worker Leaves*

When a worker leaves, you need to find out why. The stated reason typically isn't the real reason. What you need to find out is what sparked the job search in the first place. Was it dissatisfaction with a supervisor? Lack of advancement opportunity? Disenchantment with working conditions?

You will want to ask departing workers questions like what they liked most and least about their jobs, how satisfactory the compensation system is, and whether the exiting worker made the kind of progress he or she would have liked to make while working for the company. Consider a follow-up inquiry six months down the line. ■

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# Female Firebrands

Mikaela Kiner

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Female Firebrands

## Stories and Techniques to Ignite Change, Take Control, and Succeed in the Workplace




*by* **Mikaela Kiner**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Today, with Time's Up, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and LGBTQIA+ empowerment, there's pressure to change the way we relate at work and to build healthy, inclusive cultures that are better for everyone. There's much that women, as managers and leaders, are still trying to decipher. How do we create modern workplaces where everyone can thrive? How can people with demands and interests outside of work grow their careers?

***Female Firebrands*** discusses these issues and suggests ways to address them. It is based on nearly 30 hours of interviews with thirteen successful, mission-driven women and ten dynamic younger women.

Mikaela Kiner, an HR expert, wrote the book because she knows countless women who want and deserve to choose family and take care of their team, their clients, and themselves but are unsure if it's truly possible. She subscribes to Ruth Bader Ginsburg's philosophy: "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The role that privilege plays in the workplace.
- How men worried about #MeToo can gauge how they treat women.
- The negative effects of women's own internalized sexism.
- Pregnancy discrimination's toll on women and companies.

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

Mikaela Kiner worked in HR in big companies, including as VP Human Resources. She found herself questioning companies whose work hours and reward structures were designed, long ago, by and for men. She wasn't invited to executive dinners or drinks with the guys and was told to refrain from asking questions in meetings. She saw male peers and executives repeatedly let off the hook for missing meetings, yelling, and name calling, yet she was shut down when she tried to participate and do her job. Over the years, she received feedback from managers, including women, that was unclear and often unconstructive and contradictory.

Women in the workplace are often in a double bind. Leadership wants women to command the room without being commanding and to be more assertive—but the moment they are, they fire them.

**As you read the book, you will:**

- Develop tools and techniques to stand up and speak up on behalf of yourself and others when it's both difficult and necessary;
- Get better at recognizing "little indignities" you don't have to tolerate;
- Learn what it means to be an informed, empowered advocate for women;
- Increase awareness of your own blind spots and biases so you can learn from them; and
- Recognize the role of privilege at work and how it can be used for positive change.

## Privilege in the Workplace

Talking authentically about diversity requires us to ask hard questions and have uncomfortable conversations. Conversations about privilege are situational and highly complex because no one fits into just one box when it comes to race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and so on.

What matters is being aware of your privilege and recognizing how unmitigated privilege contributes to holding others back. Those with privilege have a responsibility to recognize the advantages it provides and use it not only for their own good but also to boost and join force with others who don't share the same privileges.

Women are dramatically underrepresented at S&P 500 companies and in executive boardrooms. Most Americans define leadership using stereotypically white, male attributes because sports, government, and workplaces in our countries were built by and for white men. This imbalance means women and others in marginalized groups do not have equal power.

### Male Privilege

Men can be true advocates and allies of women. But unrecognized male privilege continues to hinder the progress, confidence, and wellness of many capable, talented, and hardworking women. Savvy companies are learning to make their spaces more welcoming and productive for all kinds of people, while simultaneously educating their workforce about how to break unconscious bias and increase belonging.

### Wage Equity

Women are still paid less than men for performing the same job, and the gap is even wider for Black and Hispanic women than for white women. When employers rely less on relationship factors like who you know in power and more on hard data, workers are measured in terms of their value to the organization, which helps address the pay gap. A company that proactively encourages the advancement of women of all races can make a measurable difference in the number of women who are promoted.

### Office Housework and Other Little Indignities

All too often it is assumed that female employees should make the coffee, order snacks, do the dishes, and plan social events, all of which take up time they could use working on more critical, high-impact, high-visibility projects.

People comment on a woman's looks and clothes before her quality of work. And there's a double standard—women are called "aggressive" when they're being assertive. They're accused of talking too much when they're not talking as much as men. It's typically harder for women to get the floor, and when they do, they're often interrupted.

### How Does Male Privilege Impact Women?

It is generally assumed in high-pressure corporate settings that a woman will likely underperform. Because of the scrutiny women are under, they internalize messages that they're not good enough and those beliefs subconsciously become part of their nature.

When women do break the glass ceiling, it's often because no man wants to face the immensity of the job that's being

vacated. And women of color don't have the privilege of smashing a glass ceiling—they face a concrete ceiling. And it's not due to lack of ambition.

### White Privilege

Many women of color don't feel heard or represented by modern-day feminism. We will never be able to build safe, equitable, and productive workspaces and communities without bridging this racial divide.

Those in the majority need to educate themselves about what's offensive, invite people of color to be blunt with them, and build a thicker skin in order to receive feedback without being defensive.

Privilege means there are people you are not likely to see—either you don't physically see them, or you can't imagine them in leadership roles. It's crucial to ask yourself if there are stereotypes and implicit biases you've internalized that have caused you to miss the possibility, creativity, and ingenuity of those around you.

We all have opportunities to take concrete steps, big and small, to take personal responsibility for creating workplaces that are safe, welcoming, and inclusive for everyone. Identify your unconscious biases. Seek out diversity training for yourself and introduce it at your organization if you can. Reject stereotypes.

There are many ways to open doors for women at work. A couple of them: Pay them equally, even if they ask for less or made less in the past. Give them the floor and reinforce their points.

## #MeToo

People all over the world are demanding awareness and action against predatory behavior. The #MeToo movement is changing the way we conduct ourselves at work. Companies are adopting and reinforcing zero tolerance, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination policies.

Some men have decided to just avoid working with women as much as possible because of fear of getting in trouble. But the line that defines appropriate behavior is clear. Men, ask yourself, "Would I say this in front of my spouse, daughter, mother, or a customer? Would I want this show up in the press or on Twitter?"

Those who have power are often held to different standards. They get to define what's morally correct, fair, and acceptable, and they can use control tactics. Recognizing and preventing these abuses of power are being integrated as essential topics in diversity, equity, inclusion, and workplace safety initiatives.

Women have always been vulnerable when they speak out, since they risk not only ostracism, but the likelihood that they won't be believed. Today women are learning to join forces. When they unify their response to #MeToo behaviors, they won't be as easily dismissed or ignored.

### Who's the Victim Here?

Men who are accused of assault and discrimination are often given more sympathy than their victims. The survivors, not the perpetrators, are the ones who are threatened, blacklisted, and driven away from their jobs.

A possible unintended consequence of the #MeToo movement is that men will avoid one-on-one meetings with women and exclude women from key events such as dinner meetings and travel opportunities. This kind of thinking can lead to huge setbacks for women. And unless men also choose not to meet privately with other men, this separate and unequal treatment for women may well constitute discrimination.

### The Role of HR in the Wake of #MeToo

One person alone—the HR leader—is not enough to change company culture and decision-making. HR needs to take allegations seriously and create a safe place for complainants to come forward, with support from the executive team. All senior leaders must be held equally accountable and be part of the solution. If the leadership team is a sexist boys' club, HR hardly has the power to change the culture. Boards, advisors, and venture firms can play more active roles by ensuring that everyone, including HR, has a safe, confidential way to report concerns.

## Send the Elevator Back Down!

Women can be unnecessarily competitive with one another, for no reason, when it serves no purpose. But women need to work together if we want to dispel the myth that there's room for only one woman at the table. We should compete, of course, but without personal judgment, shaming, and stereotyping, and while putting at least as much if not more energy into helping all women rise.

We cannot ignore our own internalized sexism and allow it to hold other women back. Women unconsciously integrate

society's beliefs—that women are not as strong, competent, and capable as men—and those messages show up in how women judge other women.

### Women Are Still Being Stereotyped

Social conditioning is a problem. It defines how women are supposed to look, feel, and contribute to the world. We have to keep examining what we've been taught, what beliefs we've internalized, and how we can change outdated norms. These messages set up a competitive environment that girls can't help but internalize from day one. That environment was rooted in the reality of an earlier time—when women were dependent on men for their livelihood and had few or no rights to education, voting, or high-paying jobs.

### Women at Work: Competition or Sisterhood?

It's hard to develop strong bonds and collaborate if we are not clear on our biases. Many white women are still in the dark about their advantages and biases. White women have a privilege (race) and also experience oppression as women versus white men, who are dominant. White women should ask for and welcome feedback from women of color. Do not defend or try to explain your intentions, which burdens women of color.

## #MomToo

Parental discrimination is another battle we have to face in the workplace. Most of the women interviewed avoided or left corporate environments because the companies where they worked didn't offer the fairness and flexibility they needed.

The facts about working moms are eye-opening. They are much less likely to be offered a job and, when they are, are offered much less money. And consider: the United States is the only country in the developed world that does not mandate employer-paid leave for new parents.

Pregnancy discrimination is real, and it's illegal. Because of discrimination, many pregnant women leave companies or drop out of the workforce. Once back on the job, moms face a mental and physical toll. Parental discrimination has detrimental effects both on organizations and on working moms. The impact even spreads to women who don't have children and aren't planning to, simply because one day they too might become mothers.

While it's true for most women that becoming a working mom is hard work and requires a new kind of balance and flexibility, that is no reason to exclude moms from the workforce or limit their opportunities.

## Conclusion

With a rich combination of women's stories explained by societal context and backed by data, ***Female Firebrands*** invites you to take a realistic look at what it means to be a woman in the workplace so you can do what you need to do to thrive.



Mikaela Kiner is an executive coach and the CEO of Reverb, helping companies create healthy, inclusive cultures that engage and inspire employees. She's been quoted in Fast Company, The Wall Street Journal, and The Harvard Business Review. Her firm works with companies like Microsoft, HBO, and Wizards of the Coast. She and her family live in Seattle, Washington.

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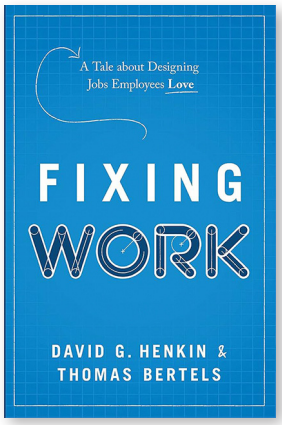
# Fixing Work

David Henkin, Thomas Bertels

Executive Book Summaries®

# Fixing Work

## A Tale About Designing Jobs Employees Love




*by* **David G. Henkin and Thomas Bertels**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Low levels of employee engagement, high turnover, low productivity, and unclear accountabilities are symptoms that tell us this: in many organizations, work is fundamentally broken. At the heart of this is a failure to design work for humans.

Written in the style of a novel, the book ***Fixing Work: A Tale About Designing Jobs Employees Love*** reveals the secrets of designing work in a more meaningful, productive, and fulfilling way. The pages within tell us how to craft better jobs, empower your team to bring their best, and ultimately strengthen the organization as a whole.

Authors David G. Henkin and Thomas Bertels want readers to understand why treating employees like machines kills engagement, creativity, and accountability. By inserting meaningful strategies throughout the tale of our protagonist Jerry's success, Henkin and Bertels show us exactly how to create an employee and customer experience that consistently takes your business to new heights.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why work today is broken and must be fixed.
- The strategies to hire top-notch talent.
- How to make work productive, fulfilling, and meaningful.
- How to create the best customer experiences.

## Introduction

Time and again, research has shown us that everyone wants meaningful work, autonomy, and feedback. Unfortunately, only a few companies have incorporated these insights into the actual design of work to create intrinsically motivating, self-fulfilling jobs.

The vast majority of companies today are stuck in an industrial, assembly-line-era mindset, in which a narrow focus on cost results in highly fragmented workflows and steep, often excessively multilayered hierarchies.

There is a better way. We wrote this book to provide people managers at all levels with a realistic example and practical road map for how to simultaneously improve employee engagement and motivation, organizational effectiveness and productivity, and customer experience and satisfaction.

The story takes place in one company and one industry, but its concepts apply to every company in any industry. We hope you enjoy the journey, gain and apply useful ideas, and reap the many benefits of fixing work.

## Rise and Shine

By the time Jerry pulls into the parking lot of his company, Consolidated Insurance (a midsize insurance company that sells employee benefits programs), he's already running late for the weekly status conference call with the sales leadership program. Cons (the company's humorous, if awkward nickname) provides clients with dental, disability, vision, and now also life insurance benefits.

Bellamy, the sales VP asks for an update on the status of client enrollment, to which Jerry diplomatically responds, "We're looking into it, but we're short-staffed, and we need IT to..." Bellamy cuts him off, "Jerry, I don't care which dog ate your homework. I request that for our call next week, you tell us where we stand and how will address these issues."

As he turns back to his desk, he sees Julia, the best hire he ever made. Julia greets him with her resignation letter. With Julia leaving, he now has three open positions and a backlog of 270 cases.

## Business as Unusual

The next day, Jerry finds out there is a major interface problem with their product and the team has to manually rework all 80 cases. He grimaces. This is becoming overwhelming. The only ideas that would relieve the pressure in the short run would create even bigger problems in the long run.

## Empty Cans Rattle

Jerry was a decent student throughout his academic career. He mostly steered clear of trouble. His middle school teacher once told him, "Empty cans rattle the loudest. Don't bother blathering all about: say things of value!" That message stuck with Jerry.

Their backlog of cases continues to grow steadily. So, Jerry finally decides to come clean. He knows that Bellamy does not like surprises. Just when he picks up the phone, Tatum, a member of his team reveals that he has fixed the IT issue, and the computer will work everything out by tomorrow afternoon.

Jerry finally drops a voice mail to Bellamy, clearly and politely asking for a bit more time, and sharing ideas on how both could approach the situation.

## Unexpected Encounter

Jerry runs into Mike Cuthbert, the ultra-successful serial entrepreneur who also studied at Georgia Tech around the same time Jerry finished his degree. At some point during the conversation, Cuthbert says, "Well, good pay is fine, Jerry, but in this day and age, maybe you need to think about the jobs you offer as a product itself. How competitive is the product? How well designed is it to meet the needs of the consumer? The employee, in this case."

## The Hard Way

Jerry meets Cuthbert again at the Irish pub. Once the beers are ordered, Jerry takes a breath and launches into the problem at hand, "Okay. I'm dealing with a difficult situation at work. We have more work than we can handle, and the team is stressed. To make matters worse, we just had a start performer leave, and there are so many areas to improve. And maybe on top of it all, I can't seem to get my management to engage or help much!"

Cuthbert responds, "You can only do a good job if there is a good job to be done. For a job to qualify as "good," meaning intrinsically motivating, it needs to meet three criteria. The first one is that you have autonomy – you are able to make decisions and use your own judgment for how

You can only do a good job
if there is a good job to be done.

and when to do the work. The second one is knowledge of results – a fancy term for feedback. The third one is that you experience the work to be meaningful."

## Show Me the Numbers

Jerry drowns amid the sea of urgencies at work but taking inventory of the work in his department nevertheless should be done right away.

At the weekly meeting he scheduled with Julia's team, Jerry asks everyone to walk him through what they all do in a typical week. He makes a list of tasks everyone usually does and asks them to give an estimate of how much time they spend doing each of these tasks.

After working on the numbers, he realizes that his team spends a lot of time on things that have nothing to do with moving the case forward, such as the sales forecast. This helps them replace time-consuming tasks with real work.

## Scraping the Barrel

None of the candidates Jerry interviews seem to be excited about the job. Cuthbert was right when he said, "These jobs, as they are presently designed and structured, are hard to sell."

Jerry has 3 open positions to fill immediately. He realizes the candidates he interviewed are looking for something more meaningful than just a steady paycheck. He decides to make an offer to Meredith and Walter anyway.

## Hot Potatoes

After weeks of procrastination, Jerry finally decides to give performance reviews. He ends up collecting honest feedback from Ryan, Lee, Hannah, and Eric about every problem they've faced and realizes how everyone really hates their job.

To resolve this, he decides to form an exploratory team to really take a hard, no-holds-barred look at how his team does things – everything from workflows to task management – to see if it's possible to design a better way of doing things.

Jerry notices that his department spends less than half its time doing the actual casework and asks his assistant to set up a meeting to review the numbers.

## The Gift

Jerry meets Cuthbert for coffee the next morning. He tells Cuthbert his team only spends 45% of their time on core work.

Cuthbert asks, "You get reports too, right? Which ones do you use the most?" "The weekly priority list," Jerry says, "each person spends up to 15 minutes on these each day."

"So, that's give or take a thousand hours," Cuthbert calculates and tells Jerry to get rid of these reports to free up time. "But what about the core work?" Jerry asks. "Use your first team meeting to get everybody aligned on the current state. Create a swim lane chart that shows who does what," Cuthbert clarifies.

Cuthbert also talks about the concept of the "definition of done," an agreement among the design team as to what "done" looks like. He asks Jerry to, "define work in a way that once you're done, your employees would fully agree with these statements."

Jerry and his team begin to minimize all time-sucking tasks.

Later that day, they find out that they missed an important deadline for their new client Northpoint due to another IT hiccup. He tries to sort this out with Elrod, the IT guy, but Elrod isn't exactly helpful.

## Breaking the Mold

"Plenty of back and forth between the teams," "We're working in the dark half the time," and "There's more handoffs since not everyone knows the life system," are a

few recurring complaints Jerry hears from his team.

To this, he poses a bold, hypothetical question, "What if everybody in this group was able to do the whole process? That way there wouldn't be any handoffs?" When everyone objects due to a massive increase in the workload it would create, Jerry comes up with an idea, "We stop doing sales reports. Based on the capacity analysis we pulled together, that should free up a chunk of time. No more reports for Sales. It's not in our mandate anyway, and it doesn't affect our clients' outcomes."

This gets everyone on board! He decides to communicate this decision with Bellamy and remembers the advice of Grace Hopper, a brilliant computer programmer, mathematician, and outstanding pioneer of her day, "If you get a good idea, and it's a contribution, I want you to go ahead and do it. It is much easier to apologize than it is to get permission."

## Wind in the Sail

Having communicated this with Bellamy, Jerry continues, "We have been thinking a bit about how we can change how we work so that we can be more efficient. One of the ideas we have is to create small teams of three people (I call it the pod) that 'own' a case from start to finish. We've got good people to pilot it, and I think we should give it a try!"

To this Bellamy says, "Nice sales job, Jerry. Let's try this approach with Northpoint. If it works, I'll discuss this with one of my guys. But what do I get out of it?" Jerry responds, "Faster and better – and with greater accuracy! Our faster speed and quality will hopefully mean happier clients."

## Going Far

For the first time in weeks, Jerry arrives at the office in good spirits, feeling elevated by the support he received from Bellamy the day before.

He communicates his strategy of 3 people handling a case from start to end and says, "To get clients to provide the information we need – which is a major challenge – I've asked Bellamy whether we can talk to clients directly instead of having to go through the account manager and the broker, and he agreed."

While the backlog is still in the 300s, and it will naturally be a while for the team to get up and running, everyone still seems to be doing good. The team starts working on Northpoint.

## New Beginnings

Peter from Northpoint is pleased and positive and he even agrees to connect Jerry and the pilot team directly to their benefits teams, his boss, and the VP of human resources. When Elrod denies opening access to Northpoint, Bellamy even swoops in and says, "It is mission critical for that access to be in place ASAP."

## Lessons Learned

During his next meeting with Cuthbert, Jerry discusses his progress and mentions, "We're still two headcounts short. And until I fill that supervisor position, we won't be able to do much more."

Cuthbert looks up, "Well, you should do away with the supervisor role." This leaves Jerry confused. After all, there must be somebody to manage the team. Cuthbert continues, "Supervisory feedback is only the third-best way to help employees know how well they're performing. The second best way is feedback from customers. Now that you have access to the customer, why not let customers provide the feedback? And instead of having a supervisor, why not invest in more training and coaching?"

## Bullets Flying

The go-live date for Northpoint has finally arrived. But Jerry bumps into a problem related to a new software his team installs in their systems. But he calmly makes his point and ensures Northpoint goes live without a hitch. His team even fixes a hitch created by Northpoint. When the mission is a success, Jerry thinks back and recalls: improved productivity, satisfied customers, and engaged employees. Yes, it was possible to achieve all three.

## All In

Jerry and his team find out that Elrod is working on a proposal (Project Sunrise) to combine all transaction teams including Jerry's department into a large central team and give the job to cheaper resources. To counter this, Jerry decides, "We need to show that our team is much more effective than the old approach. So, we better start collecting some data and some customer feedback. Well, customer, broker, sales, everyone and everything helps. We need some strong advocates."

Despite Elrod making a strong case about his proposal at the meeting, Bellamy ends up backing Jerry up for this meeting.

## Show Me the Money

Project Sunrise, however, is still on the table because Gordon and Richard are all about numbers. They just missed the revenue target. The stock is not doing great, so if Gordon can take $7 million from someplace, he will take it. He won't care where it came from.

On the bright side, Roheela, a talented potential hire Jerry interviewed accepts their offer and joins the team.

Another meeting for Project Sunrise is scheduled for Friday. Jerry meets Cameron, his boss, and Ava, the head of customer service to discuss ways to resolve the Project Sunrise problem. "Well, I'm not sure how to translate it into dollars, but the changes we're implementing are making a real difference. We are seeing cases being completed in less than two weeks. We even took out the supervisors which can help make a great argument for savings."

The session ends up being super productive and Jerry feels more confident attending the Project Sunrise meeting. Jerry even gets on a call with Cuthbert to get his insights. Cuthbert says, "Well, freeing up the supervisors will definitely save you money. And don't forget about the turnover. Didn't you say turnover in the call center was over 100%? What's more, if you make the work intrinsically motivating, turnover becomes a nonissue. Let's assume your friend Customer Service takes at least six weeks, so with eighty people that translates into ten extra heads. I think you have a great argument here. Best of luck!

During the meeting, Jerry naturally uses all his preparations to win his case and Project Sunrise actually comes to a halt!

## Paths Forward

A little party never hurt anybody, Jerry thinks, as he finishes up preparations for the barbecue he's hosting. He has invited his entire team, plus Cameron and Ava to celebrate what they have achieved so far. Gordon offers Jerry Cameron's role after Cameron submits his resignation.

Before Jerry could accept the offer, he made sure Gordon agreed with one condition – that he could continue the work design journey. Gordon assured him that the main reason he was selected for the promotion was their hope that Jerry would work the same magic for the rest of Client Services.

## Conclusion

"…I need you to do your magic across the entire company," Gordon finishes, offering Jerry the position of the CEO.

Nobody becomes a CEO unless they are a good salesperson first, Jerry thinks. He also realizes that in this new role, he would have to get his peers to buy in to his ideas. Influence without authority. Great!

But then again, an opportunity to change an entire company as head of transformation? That could be fun!





**David Henkin** is an accomplished executive and entrepreneur. The author of several books, he has taught in a top-rated university business school program while also serving as a consultant and executive coach for corporate and nonprofit leaders. **Thomas Bertels** is the president and founder of Purpose Works, a management consulting firm on a mission to make work more productive, valuable, meaningful, and impactful. He has 25 years of experience working with companies ranging from Fortune 10 firms to start-ups to improve organizational effectiveness and transform how work gets done.

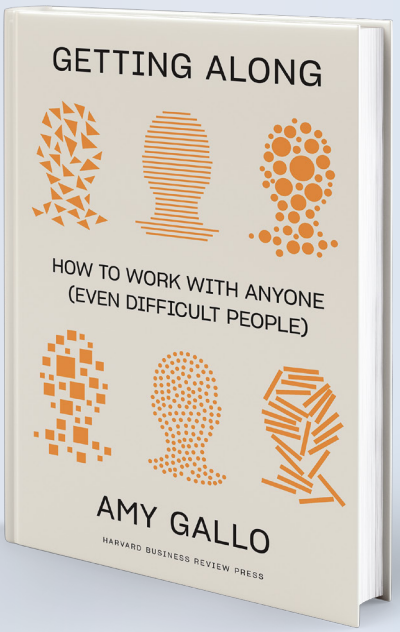
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# Getting Along

Amy Gallo

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Getting Along

**How to Work with Anyone (Even Difficult People)**

*By Amy Gallo*

**Amy Gallo** is a contributing editor at Harvard Business Review. She is the author of the HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict and a cohost of HBR's Women at Work podcast. Her articles have been collected in dozens of books on emotional intelligence, giving and receiving feedback, time management, and leadership. As a sought-after speaker and facilitator, Gallo has helped thousands of leaders deal with conflict more effectively and navigate complicated workplace dynamics. She is a graduate of Yale University and holds a master's from Brown University.

# Navigating Your Toughest Relationships at Work

Most people who have been working for even a small number of years have had the experience of working with people they would prefer not to. Sometimes this is simply because of a difference of personality or style while other times it is because a co-worker exhibits toxic behaviors. In her book, ***Getting Along: How to Work with Anyone (Even with Difficult People),*** author Amy Gallo seeks to help the reader associate difficult coworkers with eight archetypes. She then gives readers an understanding of each archetype, considerations to mull over as to the role the reader may be playing in the situation, and some dos and don'ts for helping improve relations with difficult people. She ends the book by giving guidelines and tips for how readers can care for their own physical and mental well-being in the midst of a difficult work environment.

Gallo begins her book with a discussion of why work relationships matter. She says that some of our most intense relationships can come from the workplace because of the sheer number of hours the average person spends at work. She then goes on to mention studies that claim the happier our work relationships are, the more engaged and productive we can be.

Difficult relationships can tax workers emotionally. Most people have not been explicitly taught how to deal with difficult people, and yet they expect themselves to be able to do so easily nevertheless. Difficult relationships can make people question who they are as people. Not only that, but Gallo explains how even small amounts of stress can affect decision-making. These relationships are consequential. One study found that 70% of the difference between the highest and lowest performing teams can be attributed to the quality of the relationships of the team members.

Gallo believes that most difficult colleagues can be sorted into one of the eight archetypes, but while these archetypes are important for helping to create strategies for improvement, the real benefit is when a person can develop hope that the relationship with their colleague can change and that there is even a possibility that they have misread the situation in part or in whole. Improving toxic work relationships is an important goal as Gallo explains that uncivil behavior in an organization can actually spread both within the work environment and outside of it.

The first archetype Gallo discusses is the insecure boss. While

some self-doubt can be helpful, it becomes problematic when it leads those in positions of authority to micromanage, criticize, and constantly seek reassurance. Insecurity is problematic at higher levels of management because insecure people in positions of authority tend to act more aggressively. Unfortunately these types of leaders often come down hard on others and resist listening to the feedback of others. Gallo asks readers to consider if an insecure boss is actually insecure or if another trait could be causing their behavior. She also asks readers to consider if they could be contributing to the problem. When trying to understand a boss's behavior, she suggests continually asking "why" until the employee can get a clearer understanding of why the boss is acting in the manner they are. Suggestions she has for people in this work environment are to first consider the pressures the supervisors face as this can improve empathy and understanding. She then suggests helping the supervisor succeed and communicating in terms of "we" as much as possible to gain the trust of the supervisor. She also suggests giving frequent compliments, but these compliments must be sincere in order to be believed. She then suggests helping the supervisor feel in control. This is because insecurity can actually increase micromanaging. Finally, she suggests employees keep a confidence folder where they keep a record of compliments and praise they have been given. This can help an employee stave off any dips in confidence that can occur as the result of working for an insecure manager.

The second archetype discussed is the pessimist. These are people who are all too happy to point out why a certain project or idea will not work. Pessimists not only believe bad things are inevitable, but they also believe they have little control over the outcomes. Gallo explains that multiple factors could be driving pessimistic behavior. These include anxiety, a desire for power, and resentment. Pessimism has a number of costs, and this type of outlook can also be contagious. To consider the reader's role in a pessimist's behavior, Gallo suggests considering what the sources of pessimism are, if the concerns are legitimate, and if they are problematic. To help alleviate the negative effects of pessimism, Gallo suggests reframing the pessimism as a gift that can help the organization determine risks. Along the same lines, she suggests possibly giving the pessimist the role of devil's advocate. Other tactics involve helping pessimists to challenge their assumptions, helping the pessimists understand why their behaviors help and when they hurt, and leaning into positivity while avoiding polarizing. Polarizing is when a person accidentally makes a pessimist dig in their heels because the other position is being pushed too hard.

The third archetype Gallo explores is the victim. She considers this to be a particular branch of pessimism. Victims often feel sorry for themselves, evade responsibility, and wallow in their feelings. When faced with a slight, a victim will often see it as proof of their own victimhood even when other people would just brush off the situation or fight back. As with the previously discussed behaviors, victimhood can be contagious. To better understand a victim, Gallo suggests examining whether the person in question is really being victimized. She also recommends trying to figure out what triggers a victim. The benefit of this is that it can help a person determine which tactics they can use to improve the situation. One of the tactics Gallo suggests is to validate the feelings of a victim. Sometimes knowing that their feelings are validated is enough to stop the victim from complaining. She also suggests encouraging a victim to take responsibility and to recognize their own agency in situations. Gallo cautions the reader to protect themselves against victims because too often they can turn an entire team against one person if they feel they are being victimized.

The passive-aggressive peer is the fourth archetype. All too many people are familiar with passive-aggressive actions and tendencies in people. Some of the behaviors associated with passive-aggression are acting rudely and then denying it, promising to perform a task and not performing it, and twisting the words of the other party in an argument. Many passive-aggressive people are afraid of rejection; therefore, they do not specifically say what they want or need. Many people use passive-aggressive techniques in order to avoid conflict. Passive-aggressive behavior is often performed by people who do not have much power within a situation. Passive-aggression can hurt teams. One study showed that passive-aggressive organizations were only about half as profitable as similar organizations. To further understand the situation, Gallo recommends considering what is triggering the behavior and also whether the reader's own past history with passive-aggressive behavior could be tinting how they are viewing the situation. To help alleviate the situation, Gallo recommends people avoid labeling a person as passive-aggressive as this often leads to frustration. She then suggests having a conversation in which behavior can be discussed. She suggests avoiding email or text situations for such conversations. She also recommends getting input from other people as to whether they are witnessing the same behavior. If they are, they can then determine how to proceed together. She suggests always modeling the behavior you want to see.

The know-it-all is the next archetype Gallo explores. This archetypal person always believes they are right; they avoid sharing credit, and they frequently will not listen to criticism. Gallo explains the human tendency to believe that we are better at something than we are. People also tend to associate confidence with competence which may not be the correct judgment. She describes the phenomenon of mansplaining as a form of know-it-all behavior. Gallo says that many of the know-it-alls she has worked with in the past have acted in such a way to overcome incompetence. Working with a know-it-all can impede the confidence of those around them. To better understand the know-it-all, Gallo recommends considering what they are trying to prove, whether their confidence is justified, and whether the know-it-all is causing real problems or if the behavior is simply annoying. She provides numerous tactics to try in this situation. For a know-it-all who insists on interrupting, she suggests telling them beforehand that they would prefer it if they avoid interrupting. She references Kamala Harris's tactic during debates with Mike Pence as the woman simply said, "I'm speaking" when Pence tried to interrupt her. She also suggests asking for facts and data when a person believes the person they are speaking with may not actually be correct in their claims. As with other archetypes, she suggests modeling appropriate behavior.

> **Working with a know-it-all can impede the confidence of those around them."**

The sixth archetype discussed is the tormentor. Tormentors are classified as people who have had to suffer through hard situations in order to make it to where they are, and they expect those after them to suffer in the same way. To explain this archetype, she tells the story of a woman named Celeste who bragged about how little time off she took when she had children and how she started working right when she got out of the hospital. She asked employees to cancel vacations and work during honeymoons. As Gallo writes, "She made it clear that she hadn't had it easy coming up in their industry, and she wasn't going to smooth the way" for others. Often tormentors will assign negative characteristics to a generation of people, will deny systemic barriers, and will set impossible standards. She attributes a lack of empathy, envy, and social identity threat to this sort of behavior. She suggests coworkers in these situations consider whether the organization encourages such behavior. In order to help alleviate some of this behavior, Gallo suggests approaching the tormentor as a mentor. This can help increase the tormentor's empathy. She recommends against getting into a power struggle with the tormentor as this could actually make the situation worse if the tormentor feels threatened.

The biased coworker is the next archetype discussed. Sometimes biased coworkers are explicitly offensive towards certain groups of people. This is often against company policy and is possibly against the law. Often the offenses are more subtle and are considered microaggressions. The recipients of this behavior and those around them have to determine how to respond. Gallo explains that perpetrators might subtly exclude people with their language and expectations. These can be based on assumptions made about groups of people. Gallo urges the reader to consider whether they were the victim of the aggression or a witness. She believes that "As a bystander, you should only choose to ignore a biased comment when your safety – or the safety of the person who has been targeted – is at stake." She explains that there are some real risks with speaking up, but there are also risks to not speaking up. She recommends the reader, in these situations, decide when and how they should respond and also whether they should report it. She recommends trying to foster a growth mindset. She says that one helpful response in the face of a biased remark can be to ask questions. A person can ask the person why they made that assumption or the reasoning behind what they said. This can help the offending party come to the conclusion themself that they have made an inappropriate remark. She recommends preparing for defensiveness but also labeling behavior what it is as necessary.

The last archetype Gallo presents is the political operator. These people are prone to taking undue credit, gossiping, hoarding information, and purposefully undermining others. Gallo draws a distinction between good and bad office politics. To determine on which side a behavior lands, she suggests considering whether anyone is hurt by the behavior. When dealing with a political operator, Gallo recommends determining which behaviors are problematic and in which ways they are. For those with a competitive streak, she suggests avoiding getting pulled into competition with the political operator. She also recommends that the reader make their work known so others can see what they are contributing. She also believes that offering help to the operator and asking for advice from them can help turn around behavior. She has specific strategies for particular types of political operators such as liars, gossips, and credit stealers.

Once she has finished discussing the individual archetypes, Gallo goes on to explain principles that are helpful in dealing with anyone. Many of these revolve around the reader's own mindset and perceptions and work to help the reader see more aspects of a situation while developing an awareness of their own biases. She advocates for staying curious about the behavior of others and experimenting to find solutions that work. Gallo then closes out her book with discussions on how people can properly care for themselves in difficult work situations.

Gallo's book attempts to help people find at least partial resolution to their difficult relationships at work. She does not advocate leaving a work situation as the first solution. Instead, she suggests employing the aforementioned techniques as well as many others discussed in her book to at least help alleviate some of the difficulty. She believes that most of the problematic people in work environments fit into one of the eight archetypes, but she provides tactics that can work for all sorts of people, even those difficult to classify. People spend so much time at work that quality professional relationships are a worthy goal to pursue.

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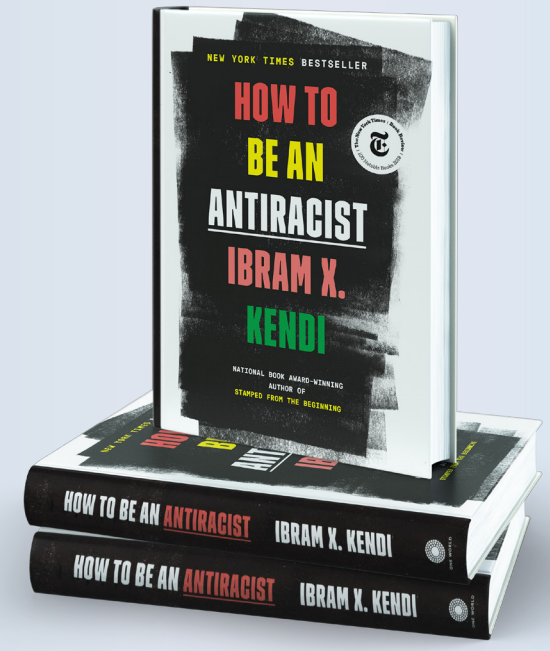
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# How to Be an Antiracist

Ibram X. Kendi

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## How to Be an Antiracist

*by Ibram X. Kendi*

Ibram X. Kendi is one of America's foremost historians and leading antiracist voices. He is a National Book Award-winning and #1 *New York Times* bestselling author. *How to Be an Antiracist* is his third book. His fourth book, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* written with Jason Reynolds, is also a #1 *New York Times* bestseller. Kendi is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and the Founding Director of the Boston University Center for Antiracist Research. He is a contributor writer at *The Atlantic* and a CBS News correspondent. Kendi is also the 2020-2021 Frances B. Cashin Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for the Advanced Study at Harvard University. In 2019, Ibram X. Kendi was awarded the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship. *www.ibramxkendi.com*

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## The Radical Choice We All Must Understand

On January 17, 2000, standing on a stage before a largely Black audience, a high schooler delivered a powerful speech in the final round of the Prince William County Martin Luther King, Jr. Day oratorical contest. Today, as a *New York Times* bestselling author, professor of history and international relations, public speaker, and founding director of the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University, Ibram X. Kendi reflects on the racist speech he gave that day with shame.

It was well received; the audience spurred him on with appreciative applause. But, Kendi now says, it was filled with "unproven and disproven racist ideas about all the things wrong with Black youth, ironically, on the day when all the things right about Black youth were on display." At the time, he says he wasn't cognizant of the fact that "to say something is *wrong* about a racial group is to say something is *inferior* about a racial group." Further, "to say something is *inferior* about a racial group is to say a *racist idea*."

Kendi realizes now that his own "internalized racism" led him to believe Black people themselves were the problem, not "the policies that ensnared them."

*How to Be an Antiracist* teaches readers to recognize and face the racist ideas ingrained within themselves and to find the "roots of problems in power and policies," not in people. To achieve true racial equity in our nation, we must identify the problems in policy and push for actively antiracist policies that move the needle. It starts with each of us, individually.

Kendi acknowledges that he used to say and do things that were racist most of the time. But he is changing, and so can we all.

## Definitions to Clarify Understanding

Language is ever evolving. In order to fully comprehend the case Kendi makes for embracing antiracism as the desired path forward, it is critical to establish the meanings of terms frequently found in the text.

**Racist** is defined as "one who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea."

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An **antiracist** is "one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea." As is the standard throughout Kendi's book, the focus is on policy and ideas, not some irreversible quality of a person individually or the people themselves that make up any particular racial group.

In order to understand what racism is, we must first discuss the concepts of racist policies, racist ideas, and racial inequity. To define **racial inequity**, Kendi provides a clear example. "In 2014, 71% of White families lived in owner-occupied homes, compared to 45% of Latinx families and 41% of Black families." If there were a roughly equal percentage of home ownership among these three racial groups, there would be racial equity. As it stands, this is a real-world example of racial inequity.

"Any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups" is a **racist policy**. Policy includes "written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people." Linking to the example of home ownership, decades of racist policies have created the gaps between Whites and Latinx and White and Blacks in property ownership. Here Kendi points out that the terms "institutional racism" and "systemic racism" are commonly used to describe this gap. He prefers using "racist policy" for its ability to pinpoint exactly what and where the problem lies. It is not vague like the more popularized terms.

Kendi defines a **racist idea** as "any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group in any way." He shares a quote from one of our founding fathers to hammer home the definition. The quote is a reflection of long-held beliefs that still permeate the consciousness of our society. About a decade after writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson said, "The blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments of body and mind." Many such racist ideas are quilted into the fabric of our society from our earliest beginnings on and they serve as a foundation for the racist ideas that are sustained today.

To combat this ongoing struggle in our society, Kendi urges we must move towards antiracist policies and antiracist ideas. **Racism** is the result of "a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas. **Antiracism** is the exact opposite. Backed by antiracist ideas, antiracist policies lead to racial equity. Having a firm understanding of racism and antiracism allows us to recognize and "make sense of the racialized world around us." Only then can we move forward with meaningful change.

## What Side of History Will We Stand On?

Whether we endeavor to acknowledge it or not, racial inequity is all around us. It takes the shape of laws in plain sight and hides from the world inside our "private thoughts." The good news is, these inequities are changeable. Kendi says that "racist" and "antiracist" are "not permanent tattoos." They are more like "peelable name tags" that can be worn or taken off depending on the actions of a particular person. We are not born this way. We do not become this way. "We can only strive to be one or the other" in every thought we have, every word we speak, and every action we take.

Being antiracist, Kendi asserts, is tantamount to fighting an addiction. It "requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination." We must decide "what side of history we will stand on." Being an antiracist is a "radical choice," when compared to the ingrained, normalized patterns of racist ideas of our history. We must engage in a "radical reorientation of our consciousness" to be an antiracist. Each of us must make this radical choice to move our country in the right direction and get on the right side of history in this moment.

## The Duel Within

Assimilationist ideas and segregationist ideas are two types of dueling consciousness racist ideas, we learn from Kendi.

An *assimilationist* is "one who believes the racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviorally inferior and is supporting cultural or behavioral enrichment programs to develop that racial group." The belief is that one group should rise to the level of an assumed-superior racial group. Typically, White people are positioned as the "superior standard."

*Segregationists* similarly believe that racial groups are inherently superior or inferior, however the belief here is that one or the other is "permanently inferior" and "can never be developed." Therefore, segregationists support policies that keep racial groups separated from each other.

An *antiracist* promotes ideas that "racial groups are equals," "that none needs developing," and therefore, supports "policy that reduces racial inequity." This focus on policy over people is a difficult shift for most Americans. We have been trained over time to "see the deficiencies in people rather than policy."

People are all around us, present in our daily lives. Policies are "distant" and intangible. This makes it easier for us to point at people over the more-elusive idea of policy and policy making. Americans are especially blind to "seeing the policies lurking behind the struggles of people." Kendi emphasizes that opening our minds and giving attention to the connection between policy and inequity is a critical component to affecting change in our society's racism struggle.

## The Foundations of Racist Ideas

Kendi's devotes chapters to explain a variety of differences we can perceive between racial groups that "create a hierarchy of value" and therefore, lay the foundation for racist ideas. Kendi acknowledges that differences do exist between differing racial groups, but those differences are not better or worse. The problem is the hierarchy of value placed on them. To move from racist to antiracist, a person must understand and extinguish racism that is based on a hierarchy that has been established related to biology, ethnicity, body, culture, behavior, color, class, and space.

A biological racist believes that people of different racial groups

**All individuals are susceptible to making irresponsible choices. However, the failures that result from those choices shouldn't 'tarnish' the entire racial group. . .**

are biologically different and that those differences are inferior or superior when compared to each other. A biological antiracist promotes the idea that all racial groups are the same from a biological standpoint and that "there are no genetic racial differences." This is one of the racist ideas that is "widely held" and that "few people realize they hold." For example, holding the belief that Black people have more natural athletic ability than White people is a biologically racist idea.

A bodily racist perceives "certain racialized bodies as more animal-like and violent than others." A bodily antiracist looks at violent or nonviolent behavior on the individual level, having nothing to do with race. This form of racism has historical roots to seeing Black people as "beasts." Research has shown that today, Americans who hold this racist idea see Black bodies as being "larger, more threatening, more potentially harmful, and more likely to require force to control" than comparative White bodies.

Cultural racists "create a cultural standard and impose a cultural hierarchy" between different racial groups. To demonstrate this type of racism, Kendi points to Ebonics, a term for the distinct language used within Black culture. Both languages have grown from the other root languages. English stemmed from German and Ebonics from modern English. However, modern English is considered proper and Ebonics is considered broken English." Kendi says that the hierarchy is made clear by the fact that English is not likewise considered "broken German."

Behavioral racism occurs when someone's individual behavior is attributed to being part of a particular racial group and further, that the "racial group is responsible for the behavior of individuals." All individuals are susceptible to making irresponsible choices. However, the failures that result from those choices shouldn't "tarnish" the entire racial group of which that individual happens to belong. The "White screwup is handed second chances and empathy." The Black screwup "faces the abyss after one error."

Colorism refers to the group of racist policies that lead to inequity "between Light and Dark people" within the same racial group. Kendi points out that within any racial group, there are variations of color. Colorism occurs when the Light people within a group experience greater gains in comparison to the Dark people in that same group. Examples supported by research include favoritism from White people for lighter-skinned politicians, income disparities between Light and Dark members of the same race, and the preference in hiring Light people over Dark people, "regardless of qualifications."

Class racism refers to the "policies of racial capitalism" against particular race-classes. There are nearly countless combinations of race-classes. They are groups formed by the "intersection of race and class." Poor and elite are classes. Black and White are races. Poor White or Elite Black are race-classes. It is elitist to say that poor people are lazy. Believing Black people are lazy is a racist idea. Class racism is formed when we say, "Black poor people are lazier than White poor people, White elites, and Black elites." "White trash" is a class-racist label used frequently by White people towards White poor people.

Space racism "normalizes and elevates elite White spaces, while doing the opposite to Black spaces." One of many examples provided refers to violent crime. Black neighborhoods are "stigmatized as places of homicide and mortal violence" while White neighborhoods are not similarly connected to "the disproportionate number of White males who engage in mass shootings." Kendi says that we must disconnect ourselves from space racism to understand that "we will find good and bad, violence and nonviolence, in all spaces" regardless of the richness or poorness, Blackness or Whiteness of the inhabitants.

At the core of Kendi's book is the point that a person, policy, or belief cannot be "not racist." We hear the words, "I am not a racist," from the mouths of countless, mostly well-meaning individuals. This notion of color blindness, Kendi asserts, is a major part of the problem. What's wrong with being "not racist"? It signifies neutrality. His book circles back again and again to this point. It is not enough to remain neutral. Instead of passively labeling oneself as "not racist" we have to snuff out and abolish policies that are racist and replace them with those that are actively antiracist. He says, "We know how to be racist. We know how to pretend to be not racist. Now let's know how to be antiracist." This requires taking a hard, sometimes painful, look in the mirror.

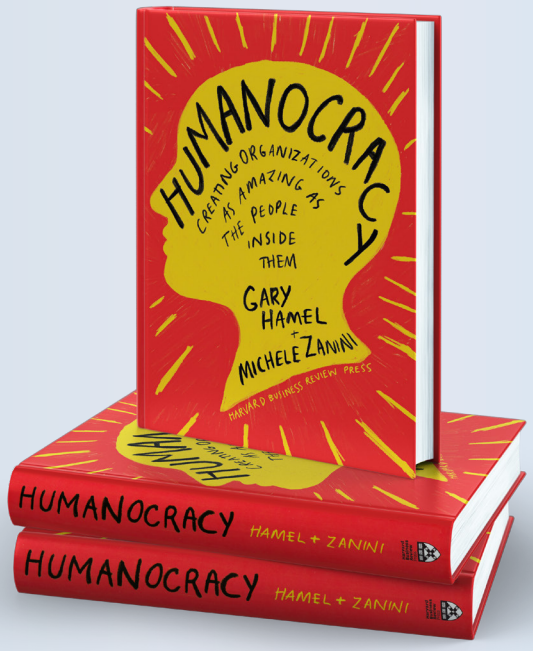
Part memoir, part political guide, *How to Be an Antiracist* leads readers through a series of personal accounts from early childhood through adulthood that illustrate and illuminate Kendi's own racist ideas and actions. Kendi's retrospection gives readers a firmer grasp of the racist ideas lurking within us all and stokes the fires of courage for each individual to face their own. Kendi's hypotheses are tied to his own personal and myriad historical accounts that show how we've failed to achieve equity among racial groups in our country. Kendi encourages us to view our own racism in the mirrors of our past and present and view antiracism in the mirror of our future. Readers may long for more advice on what one can do to affect change in this positive direction. For now, Kendi calls us to change our thinking and push for actively antiracist policy changes at every level of government. We are at a pivotal point in the ongoing fight for racial equity in our country. Anyone seeking to understand the full historical picture and forge a progressive path forward will benefit from fully digesting and reflecting upon the powerfully personal writing of Ibram X. Kendi in *How to Be an Antiracist*.

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# Humanocracy

Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Humanocracy

By Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini

Gary Hamel is on the faculty of the London Business School and is a cofounder of the Management Lab. Professor Hamel has been hailed by the Wall Street Journal as the world's most influential business thinker, and his landmark books have been translated into more than twenty-five languages.

Michele Zanini is a cofounder of the Management Lab. Zanini is an alumnus of McKinsey & Company and the RAND Corporation and holds degrees from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the Pardee RAND Graduate School.

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Harvard Business Review Press

# How to Create a Blueprint for Evolutionary Change

Organizations are stymied by sluggishness, timidity, and bureaucracy in a time when change is constant and the ability to be nimble is crucial. The people working inside organizations are unable to tap into their innovative side, remain passionate, and drive organizational growth. This is a travesty for both the organizations themselves and those who are stifled inside of them. But there is good news for anyone who finds themselves out of patience and keen to "learn, grow, change, and contribute" to a company "that can outrun change."

In ***Humanocracy: Creating Organizations as Amazing as the People Inside Them***, authors Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini show readers how to "launch an unstoppable movement to equip and empower everyone in their organization to be their best and to do their best." Organized around the "building blocks" of motivation, models, mindsets, and migration, readers will learn how to create and follow a blueprint for evolutionary change. With the help of Humanocracy, organizations stand to win the ultimate prize of future readiness.

## The Case for Humanocracy

Imagine working in an organization that truly valued your contribution, gave you the leeway to problem solve independently, and avoided power-based politics. In this scenario, work would not feel like work at all. In reality, however, most organizations aren't anything like this. Instead, they are bogged down in bureaucracy that has the very opposite effect on innovation, growth, turnover, and employee well being.

The authors write that "the typical medium- or large-scale organization infantilizes employees, enforces dull conformity, and discourages entrepreneurship; it wedges people into narrow roles, stymies personal growth, and treats human beings as mere resources." The result of such red tape are organizations that can't survive ever-changing market conditions and that are filled with energetic people stuck inside a lethargic system. The authors slam the bureaucratic model with such scathing words as "inertial, incremental, and dispiriting." But they have good news.

Organizations can and must break free from the confines of

officialdom by choosing a different path. Humans are uniquely designed to forge a new way forward, seek progress, and solve tough problems. It's our nature. We tend to believe that it is in the nature of organizations to be "brittle and backward looking," and thus, we feel it's hopeless to try to overcome the stagnation. Hamel and Zanini believe that we have unconsciously assembled organizations to be inhuman by choice to gain "control, consistency, and coordination," and have lost the spark along the way. Many of these choices need to be reexamined, and that is the premise of *Humanocracy*. The bulk of the book is dedicated to laying out "a blueprint for building organizations that are fully human and fully capable."

## Motivation for Leaving Bureaucracy Behind

Humans can sometimes find it difficult to break out of their comfort zone. This is one of the challenges organizations have to overcome in order to break free of bureaucracy. A key factor to motivating team members to take the ride is decentralization. With decentralization, employees enjoy far more autonomy. They are encouraged to identify a problem, create a solution, and implement it on their own. This fosters a deeply entrepreneurial spirit that permeates all aspects of the workplace. It flips the pyramid on its head so that leadership supports new ideas that are mobilized by team members at every level rather than shutting them down. In one word, this model offers a highly motivating core value: faith. That faith is translated to team members in a number of tangible ways.

- Compensation for Creativity: Employees are rewarded in the form of compensation and bonuses that are tied to innovation and paid to the team in full, not to individuals. This framework "encourages collaborative problem solving." There is never the "not my problem" attitude because it becomes the entire team's problem. Everyone dives in to help solve it. If revenue begins slipping, there is a push from below to stoke the fires of growth. Teams and divisions pressure leaders, actively look for new opportunities, and court new customers directly. They are more than willing to hire new teammates and experiment with different methods and product offerings. They are given the authority to exercise their creativity and this is monumentally motivating.

- Cultivating Competence: Nimble organizations take active steps to improve upon the team's skill level and encourage individuals to seek out professional development opportunities. A culture that is attuned to "building deep knowledge" onboards new hires that intend to make a career out of their time, not simply collect a paycheck. New hires are scrutinized in terms of their "resourcefulness and capacity to self manage" rather than their education or skill set. Education and skills can be learned on the job later while those characteristics are seemingly inherent. Team members should expect to float around many different departments, learning the ins and outs across a variety of specializations. This keeps employees engaged, committed, and excited while simultaneously building a workforce that is better prepared to face any challenge that comes the organization's way.

- Collaboration: Teams or, worse still, individuals who work in a vacuum are a formula for stagnation. Organizations must ensure there exists a "dense network of lateral connections" that help "stitch together far-flung divisions with little or no top-down direction." Opportunities to work together must explicitly be arranged, such as annual learning visits to other branches or departments. But more importantly, leadership must promote collaboration on both a formal and informal basis. This can be accomplished directly through policy, such as a "share everything" policy on transparency. It also helps to design "healthy competition" between teams in reaching particular goals that makes collaboration natural, easy, and fun.

- Create a Trusting Environment: When employees fully trust in their organization, they become firmly committed to it as well. The aforementioned pillars of compensation, competence, and collaboration go a long way in instilling trust among team members within an organization but there are others. Doing whatever it takes to avoid layoffs, even when times are really tough, works wonders on the commitment front. Offering special incentive programs, like profit-sharing schemes, only to those not in senior leadership positions has a similar impact. Upward feedback from employees to leaders is another surefire strategy for instilling trust and commitment from within.

- Confidence: Team members must be given the chance to have authority and responsibility that has real consequences. Fostering authority without permission is exceedingly empowering. When allowed to determine not only what the targets are but how the team is going to reach them, teams succeed. That success breeds an unshakeable confidence that positively impacts the organization in countless ways. Of course, some decisions will result in failures, big and small. Part and parcel to this pillar is an acceptance that failures happen and they are tolerable. Failure is a demonstration that someone has "pushed the limits of their abilities" and that is something to strive for, not shrink back against.

## The 7 Principles of Humanocracy

Companies and organizations that are convinced of the benefits to be gained through the banishment of bureaucracy can benchmark themselves against other organizations who have successfully made the transition. In doing this, the goal is not to discover what that organization does differently and mimic it. The goal is to figure out how that organization thinks differently. The authors organize this blueprint portion of the book into principles that "comprise a comprehensive and generalizable set of guidelines for building a post-bureaucratic organization. Together, they form the humanocracy genome."

1. Ownership: The authors note that there is a commonality in startups that illuminates the ownership principle of humanocracy. In a startup, it is very common for employees to be energetic, engaged, risk taking, and daring. The entire team is "united in their passion to break new ground." This entrepreneurial spirit leads to big wins for a fledgling company and

“Expect that experiments will go wrong and do not punish the experimenter for the failure.”

it is “equally essential to human flourishing.” Leaders must invest fully, metaphorically and with financial support, in the development of entrepreneurship within their organizations. Giving team members ownership through accountability, empowerment, and authenticity serves as a bedrock for the cultivation of that spirit. In practice, this looks like profit-sharing, small collaborative teams, the redistribution of authority, and operating autonomy amongst units or teams.

2. Markets: Human beings strongly prefer choice to mandate. We can see how this principle plays out when comparing the yields gained in free markets versus gains enjoyed by a state-run monopoly, for example. Most leaders “acknowledge the virtues of free markets, but the companies they run are typically structured like command economies.” With decision making firmly planted at the top of the hierarchy, companies fail to take advantage of their human resources. There is “wisdom in the crowd” and organizations would bear more fruit by leveraging this principle.

3. Meritocracy: “Meritocracy raises the returns on talent by ensuring that individuals are free to contribute and succeed, whatever their social rank or personal connections.” Bureaucracy “systematically undermines” this cause. Those who are at the top are sometimes there due to an abundance of confidence rather than an abundance of competence. Top management needs to seek open and candid feedback from their team members regarding their performance and improve in areas in which they are lacking. Reliance on peer reviews between team members can also yield better performance outcomes than reviews from managers. Team members should also be given the authority to oust incompetent, low-performing managers.

4. Community: Support, inspiration, and connectivity are all tenants of community that leaders need to foster between all team members. “Intentional, intimate collaboration is central to human life.” Building a sense of community fortifies “norms of reciprocity and increased social cohesion” that ultimately, aids teams in rising to the challenge when confronted with a tough task or time. Organizations can build community through making emotionally resonant mission statements, give teams constant access to collaboration, institute team-based rather than individual goals and rewards, and celebrate acts that demonstrate the organization’s commitment to community.

5. Openness: Like cities, societies, and institutions of higher education, organizations fare far better when they are open, welcoming, and diverse. Diversity creates “a nearly limitless number of opportunities for mashing up ideas, talents, and resources in new ways.” On the converse, uniformity breeds stagnation. To remain standing or, better yet, grow in the face of changing market conditions, organizations must open up wide. To do this, they can recruit a diverse talent pool, fight the fear factor by welcoming and encouraging disagreement from team members, and mix up teams to ensure that different voices are able to contribute to a variety of solution-strategy sessions.

6. Experimentation: People are naturally experimental. As children we push boundaries to see when and where our parents will draw the line. We try out different looks and activities until we find a place that feels just right for us. We never stop trying new things and organizations must do the same. In practice, this must be introduced and implemented intentionally. Set goals for the “number of experiments your organization runs each year” to a number equal to approximately one per employee. Using “design thinking” to come up with new ideas and test them before investing in them. Expect that experiments will go wrong and do not punish the experimenter for the failure, but rather praise the effort and willingness to take a risk.

7. Paradox: On the surface it may seem appealing to strive for an easy going, decision-free environment. But as nice as easy may sound, it would be terribly boring in the end. “Conundrums are what make life interesting.” When faced with a paradox, the “trade-offs involve goals that are, or seem to be, contradictory.” This forces us to think through the challenge, and think hard! Creative thinking that does not tolerate either/or choices is a good place to start. Team members should be equipped “with the information and skills they need to make smart trade-offs” and insist on data that reports on the cost of “default trade-offs.”

Authors Hamil and Zanini aim to place humanity back at the top of organizations’ priorities. For too long, the focus has shifted to improving efficiencies, creating systems, and putting powerful leaders at the top of the pyramid to make sure things happens according to plan. These long standing practices have stifled growth, blunted progress, and all but crushed innovation under the weight of the ensuing red tape.

Their case against bureaucracy is put forth using refreshingly colorful language more reminiscent of lyrical prose than a typical business book. For example, a point about outdated modes of operations is made by saying, “Unlike human beings, organizations are pretty much crap at change.” “Today we expect the newcomers to beat the geezers.” This insistence on artistry is a clear advantage and makes reading Humanocracy more lively, interesting, and engaging. Just like the newly-human-centric organizations the authors lobby strongly to create.

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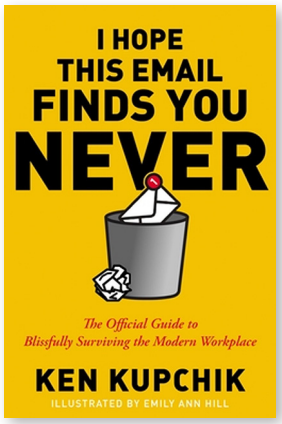
# I Hope This Email Finds You Never

Ken Kupchik

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# I Hope This Email Finds You Never

## The Official Guide to Blissfully Surviving the Modern Workplace




*by* **Ken Kupchik**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Congratulations! You've been hired at your dream a job. Given how competitive it is in today's world, that's quite an accomplishment. It takes countless hours to search through job postings, go through multiple rounds of video interviews, and to click that "I'm not a robot" thing on the employer's website. Exhausting! Now that you've put that stress behind you, it's time to move onto new stress. Luckily, you won't have to wait long, because there's nothing quite as nerve-racking as the modern workplace.

Unlike most workplace books, however, ***I Hope This Email Finds You Never: The Official Guide to Blissfully Surviving the Modern Workplace***, this one won't sugarcoat, deflect, or mislead. Author Ken Kupchik won't bore you with some business titan's life story, and he won't try to convince you that if you just follow a trendy new self-improvement fad, you'll be promoted to CEO. This book puts aside the motivational screeds, productivity hacks, and pop-science, and focuses instead on things in the workplace that truly cause us grief in a lighthearted, entertaining, and (most importantly) cynical way.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to have good general workplace etiquette
- Six tips for getting into a remote-work routine
- How to avoid new work assignments during meetings
- Five signs it's time to move on and find a new job

## Part 1: Employee Orientation

Starting a new job can be overwhelming. There are people to meet, information to digest, and lots of preparation required to counter the lies you told on your resume. Whether you're an experienced employee or new to the workforce, you can be sure that at some point in your first few days, you'll start to wonder whether you've made a grave mistake (you have). The good news is that your new employer has invested time and resources into a comprehensive indoctrination process known as "new-hire orientation."

### Better than Ambien: Employee Training

Your training period is a great time to soak up knowledge, better understand workplace dynamics, and scroll through Instagram so you can see all the people who are having fun because their parents are rich. It's important to take notes and pay attention, especially when people are discussing what to order for lunch.

Employee training provides new hires with requisite skills and knowledge required to carry out the functions of their job. Whether the skills being taught are broad or specific to a particular role, they will be presented in the most boring, depressing, and unpleasant way possible. If you find it dull and boring, don't worry, the job itself will be dull and boring too.

## Part 2: General Workplace Etiquette

Once you've settled into your new routine and milked being new for all it's worth, you'll want to adopt the unwritten rules of the workplace. Oftentimes, these rules will be observable without actually being documented, not unlike the rules of a prison gang.

### Manners, Greetings, Salutations, and Conversations Pre Approved by HR

Having good manners can help you excel in the workplace, unless you want to become a senior manager or an executive, in which case the exact opposite is true.

A good rule of thumb is to treat others the way you want to be treated. No matter who you're addressing, whether it's the janitor or the CEO, you should always lead with respect. In the workplace, *what* you say is just as important as *how* you say it.

Here are a couple of examples:

**Acceptable:** "Thanks for taking the time to go over this."

**Not Acceptable:** "I appreciate you graciously setting aside a few precious minutes for me, Your Highness."

**Acceptable:** "Do you need any help on this?"

**Not Acceptable:** "I will literally pay you to stop emailing me."

It might be tempting to behave the same way around your coworkers as you do around your friends, but the difference is that your friends (probably) aren't getting paid to spend time with you. This is why having good manners and following the unspoken rules of workplace etiquette are so important–being around you is already difficult enough.

### The Rules of the Kitchen: Stealing Someone's Yogurt is Literally a Crime

There is, perhaps, no other place where proper etiquette is as important as the kitchen or break room. Unlike the bathroom, we don't have individual feeding stalls, so respecting people's boundaries and adhering to unspoken rules of the kitchen is tantamount to a smooth workplace experience.

When people are hungry, they turn into rabid animals, which makes it that much more important to be considerate when secretly eating someone else's food. Whether you brought your own lunch from home or spent thirty dollars on a greasy sub, make sure you follow the rules of the kitchen.

### Navigating Social Events

Social events are a common occurrence in the modern workplace and they can be a great way to blow off steam and get to know the people you work with in a more informal setting. But they can also carry risks, as the loose, permissive nature of social events can bring out the person you swore you left behind in college.

Though a work-related gathering might feel more social than professional, it's important to be on your best behavior, because what happens outside of work won't stay outside of work for long. A good rule of thumb is if you wouldn't do it at the workplace, then you shouldn't do it at a social event, which probably rules out having a good time.

## Part 3: Coworkers

The modern workplace is *filled* with coworkers, who now have direct unfettered access to you at all hours of the day thanks to the magic of smartphones and direct messaging. This is why your relationship with your coworkers is so important. Play your cards right, and your coworkers will

In the end, you might realize the benefits of remote work far outweigh the burdens of the office, or you might just be looking for an excuse to get away from your spouse.

have your back. But make a mistake, and you'll have to look over your shoulder, as your workmates will be angling to take you down.

Building relationships in the workplace is never easy–there are so many variables that come into play. A coworker's seniority, their trustworthiness, and their compensation as it relates to yours all must be factored in.

Workplace friendship is a journey, not a destination. If you don't make a connection right away, don't fret, since it usually takes time for people to warm up to their new colleagues.

### Boundaries

The relationships you develop at work can be impactful, but there are many ways in which they will differ from relationships in your personal life. It's important to set and follow boundaries, lest you find yourself stuck in an unpleasant situation from which you can't escape.

Boundaries can help protect us from being exploited, but they can also help put distance between ourselves and our less trustworthy coworkers. These are the types of people who have no qualms about throwing us under the bus if it suits their ends. Given the opportunity, they'll ruin our jobs and our lives, and won't lose a wink of sleep.

Plan to keep your coworkers at arm's length if you want to avoid ending up in an uncomfortable situation. And the best way to do that is by establishing clear boundaries. Boundaries can be used as signals to make it look like you're a hardworking professional, focused on tasks and responsibilities. And, as we all know, appearances are everything.

## Part 4: Working Remotely (Wink, Wink)

Recent advances in technology have given us many new experiences, such as the feeling of anxiety at nearly every waking moment, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. These same advances have allowed tens of millions of employees to perform their job duties from home, bringing the workplace to our bedrooms and home offices.

For many, remote work has been a godsend but for others, the prolonged isolation has caused undue distress, and the lack of structure has made it difficult to be productive, which sounds believable enough to garner sympathy if you ever need an excuse for why you haven't done any work.

You can work remotely without losing your job, your mind, or your laptop. In the end, you might realize the benefits of remote work far outweigh the burdens of the office, or you might just be looking for an excuse to get away from your spouse. Either way, read on.

### Getting Out of Your Bed and Into a Routine

One of the more difficult challenges those new to remote work must face is the question of how to structure their day. Getting into a routine starts with forming good habits. Since you're obviously not going to do that, the next best option is to trick yourself into doing just enough to avoid putting your job in jeopardy.

While everybody's approach to remote work will be different, the following tips can help you add some structure to your day and avoid the pitfalls of nearly unlimited freedom.

**Tip #1: Use the morning hours wisely.**

Productivity experts recommend you wake up the same time you normally would if you were going into the office, but this book recommends that you wake up literally thirty seconds before your manager starts checking to see if you're online.

**Tip #2: Create a dedicated workspace.**

This allows you to separate your professional life from your personal, so whenever you're in your workstation, you can focus exclusively on work and not on the fact that your personal life is in shambles.

**Tip #3: Minimize distractions.**

Limit distractions by getting household chores done before sitting down to work, or after you've finished for the evening, and ask the people you live with to be mindful of the fact that even though you're at home, you're technically still at work.

**Tip #4: Maintain a consistent schedule.**

Starting and stopping work at the same time everyday ensures consistency and creates a healthy balance between your personal and professional lives, both of which involve sitting on the couch for hours and vacantly staring at a screen.

**Tip #5: Take breaks throughout the day.**

Taking breaks at home becomes complicated since there's not much separation between you and your couch, your kitchen, and the counterfeit designer purse rink you're running out of your spare bedroom. Make sure to schedule breaks throughout the day, or you risk unnecessary burnout.

**Tip #6: Make sure to leave the house.**

Since you no longer have to go into an office, you might find that you're spending an inordinate amount of time at home. Whether it's going out for a walk, working at the local coffee shop, or flying out to Vegas to audition for an experiential circus troupe, you need to avoid letting yourself get cooped up at home.

Like anything else, remote work has its upsides and downsides. While some people might thrive on being locked in their bedroom all day, others will long for the camaraderie and structure found in an office. And no matter which side of the spectrum you're on, you can rest assured that your opinion is probably wrong.

## Part 5: Meetings

Love them or hate them, meetings happen in every workplace, and every type of employee, no matter how junior, will be forced, at some point, to attend one. Some meetings will be short, and some will feel like they're never going to end; some will be enjoyable, and some will feel like a police interrogation.

But whether the meeting is a productive one or not, you can always be sure that there's no way you'll ever walk out of a meeting and say, "Man, I'd really like to do *that* again."

### Excuses to Get Out of Meetings While Making People Feel Bad for You

If you've ever wished you could snap your fingers and make every meeting on your calendar disappear, you're not alone. Impending meetings have led to many sleepless nights, not to mention a myriad of creative excuses to get out of attending.

If you're looking for a good (and believable) excuse, try using one of the following:

- "I'm sorry, but I'm not feeling well and can't make it to the meeting."
- "You'll have to excuse my absence, since I will be praying for your forgiveness during that time."
- "Unfortunately, I can't make it due to a conflict. The conflict is between the meeting and my desire not to go."

In life, we are often forced to do things we don't want to do. And at work, we're *always* forced to do things we don't want to do. Meetings are at the top of that list, which is why having a strategy to get out of them is so important.

### Punting the Ball: How to Minimize the Chances of Getting More Work Assigned to You During a Meeting

The biggest risk of attending a meeting isn't losing precious work hours or being outed as a fraud; it's walking away from the meeting with more work. You need to go into every meeting with a plan for how to avoid, or at least mitigate, additional assignments.

Without a concrete plan, you risk leaving the size of your workload to chance, and hope, as they say, is never a strategy, especially in the workplace where all hope goes to die.

Here are some tips:

- Constantly talk about how swamped you are.
- Try to look as flustered as possible.
- Be proactive about deflecting assignments.
- Volunteer for work to gain more control over what's being assigned.
- Lie about things related to your health, stress, or nebulous "personal issues."
- Disappear to reduce the likelihood of being assigned more work during the meeting.

Those who have mastered work avoidance can get more fulfillment from their jobs than those who take it in stride. After all, isn't this (avoiding responsibility) the hallmark of a fulfilling life?

Whether you choose to dodge, prevaricate, or half-ass it, make sure you give it your all (the avoidance, not the work itself), because the alternative asks way too much of you.

Whether you choose to dodge, prevaricate, or half-ass it, make sure you give it your all (the avoidance, not the work itself), because the alternative asks way too much of you.

## Part 6: Surviving the Day-to-Day (Lord, Give Me the Strength)

To say that day-to-day life in the workplace can be challenging is an understatement. Only the people who put their well-being first will survive with their psyche intact, while the strivers will burn out, give up, or become successful and fulfilled because they achieved their dreams through hard work and perseverance.

Tackle this conundrum head-on to make the most of the aspects of the workplace that are often ignored for shinier objects. It's the things that happen day to day that can really wear you down but you can get around them, so long as you're willing to be a bit shameless.

### Deadlines: Are They Important or Merely Suggestions?

Having to do things you don't want to do for money is bad enough but made much worse when there are arbitrary points in time by which a task must be completed. These narrow fields of time are called deadlines, and they make it much more difficult to drag out projects for maximum enjoyment, forcing us to get things done under threat of reprimand or termination.

But how seriously should we take deadlines and is there anything that can be done to mitigate their impact on our prime web-surfing hours? The answer is complicated and will mostly depend on how gullible your manager is.

While advocates might say that deadlines help keep people on track to ensure they remain productive, everybody else knows the truth: deadlines got their name because they make us wish we were dead. That's why missing, avoiding, and ignoring deadlines has become so trendy.

The next time your manager tries to interrupt your life of leisure by giving you a deadline, don't get angry. She's just doing her job. Instead, smile, say thank you, and then do anything and everything possible to meet the deadline, or to get yourself out of the assignment–the choice is yours.

### Annual Reviews, Salary Negotiations & Existential Dread

Throughout the term of your employment, you should expect to go through a review process, usually held annually, during which time your manager will determine whether your work has met expectations and whether you deserve a promotion and/or a salary increase.

While we both know you deserve neither, it's in your best interest to play an active role in this process and advocate on your own behalf. As they say, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, and you are very squeaky indeed. The goal is to steer your employer toward an optimistic picture of your productivity and away from the volume and quality of the work you've actually done.

Instead of trying to wing it, you should take the time to properly prepare for your performance review. After all, it will affect how much money you make, which is literally the most important thing in life. Annual reviews are the perfect time to ask for a raise.

Here are some tips:

- Research how much somebody in your role is supposed to earn.
- Try to approach your manager when they're in a good mood.
- Wear your worst outfit so it looks like you can't afford decent clothes.
- Be clear, concise, and vaguely threatening.
- Have a back up plan in case things don't go as planned. Crying is not a back up plan.
- Be prepared to offer an ultimatum. But also be prepared for your supervisor to gladly accept it and show you the door.

As unpleasant as they might be, annual reviews are your best opportunity to get a raise. Management understands that they have to throw their employees a few scraps each year or they'll start to lose valuable employees. The next

time you're asked to do your annual review, make sure you go for broke–you have nothing to lose by trying.

### Work-Life Balance and Its Direct Correlation with Being Broke

As children, we learn about wondrous fairy tales designed to enchant and delight us, and to show us that there might be more to the world than meets the eye. The most pervasive fairy tale, however, is the idea of work-life balance–because unless you're working from home, on a part-time basis, while getting paid a full salary, there's really no such thing.

Short of going to prison, there are few ways to feed and house yourself without having to work. While we all wish we could find fulfilling jobs that offer the perfect mix of work and play, the best we can really hope for is a company disorganized enough to allow us to slip through the cracks and a manager aloof enough to let us get away with it.

Work-life balance isn't about perfection. It's about constantly gaming the system in your favor, in ways both big and small, obvious and subtle. Take what you can get and run with it, and never, ever quit.

## Part 7: Termination of Employment (Let's Pretend We Liked Each Other)

Like the temporary happiness of your childhood, sooner or later, everything must come to an end. The workplace is no exception and these days, there's nothing unusual about spending a year or two with a firm before moving on to greener pastures.

### Is it Time to Move On, or is it Just Indigestion?

At some point in your employment, you might get an uneasy feeling. Before you dismiss it as your run-of-the-mill anxiety, or the by-product of stuffing yourself full of beef every afternoon, you should ask yourself whether your time with your employer is drawing to a close. While knowing when to leave an employer isn't an exact science, there are some signs that might point to yes.

Here are a few that you don't want to miss:

Sign #1: Every morning, you sit in your car with your face in your hands.

Sign #2: Someone offers you a job with better pay or more opportunity for advancement.

Sign #3: Your manager keeps emailing you with the subject line "Please leave."

Sign #4: You're not being praised for every bit of menial effort you manage to squeeze out.

Sign #5: You no longer need to be employed as a condition of your parole.

Knowing when to quit can be difficult, but quitting itself is super easy and feels great. So don't be afraid to throw in the towel when work no longer brings you the joy you feel you deserve, because there's nothing worse than being stuck in a job that's no longer a good fit.

Remember: you are in charge of your destiny, along with a host of seemingly random circumstances over which you literally have no control at all.

### Getting Furloughed, Laid Off, Fired, or Summarily Executed

In some cases, the decision of whether to leave will be made for you. There are many ways a company can get rid of you, whether through temporary processes like furloughs or permanent means like layoffs and terminations. Sometimes, you can see your termination coming before it happens.

The following signs may indicate that your employment will soon be coming to an end:

- You receive more than one negative performance review.
- Your boss no longer asks for your help.
- The company puts your personal belongings in a cardboard box every morning.
- Your coworkers start to refer to you in the past tense.

The idea of losing a job that you rely on to pay your crushing monthly expenses can be scary. The fear of not knowing where your next paycheck is coming from tends to cause immense anxiety, though it means literally nothing to your employer, who will forget about you forever the second you step foot out the door.

Look out for yourself and understand your options. You have a choice: you can either view it as negative and feel sorry for yourself, or you can use it as motivation to find a better job that you'll get fired from eventually as well. No matter which you choose, always remember that jobs come and go–but your negative attitude will always remain.

## Saying Goodbye

Throughout life, we all experience moments of change. In these moments, we realize we're leaving something behind, which usually brings about a sense of melancholy, a sadness brought forth by the understanding that all we'll have left are memories of times gone by.

Leaving a job is not one of those moments. Leaving a job can be incredibly freeing, and until you run out of money, you might even experience a few fleeting moments of joy.

Because, as you might have gathered from reading this book, joy is rarely found in the workplace.



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Ken Kupchik is a writer and the creator of Sales Humor, a popular social media account with over one million followers across Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. His first book, The Sales Survival Handbook: Cold Calls, Commissions, and Caffeine Addiction--The Real Truth About Life in Sales, was published by AMACOM (now HarperCollins Leadership) in 2017. He lives in Boston, MA.

· Book 21 of 47 ·

# It Pays to PLAY

Kristi Herold

soundview Executive Book Summaries®

# It Pays to PLAY

## How Play Improves Business Culture




*by* **Kristi Herold**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

"All work and no play" makes for a dull workplace…and a costly one.

Organizations that provide opportunities for employees to playfully connect, bond, and build friendships see improvements in retention, engagement, and innovation. Intentional play at work creates a culture that benefits all employees' physical and mental health and the company's bottom line.

Kristi Herold, founder of JAM (one of the largest adult recreational sports league providers in the world), wrote ***It Pays to PLAY: How Play Improves Business Culture*** as a rich resource filled with ideas for play at work—whether in-person, hybrid, or remote. This book illustrates how the ROI from play is multi-faceted and exponential. Learn the ways play can be easily and affordably implemented—regardless of your industry—benefiting everyone from the most junior employee to the C-suite right through to the end customer. It truly does pay to play.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How intentional play at work benefits all employees' physical and mental health.
- How intentional play at work benefits the company's bottom line.
- Ideas for play at work, whether in person, hybrid, or remote.
- The ways play can be easily and affordably implemented regardless of the industry.
- How to playfully connect, bond, and build friendships at work.

## Introduction

PLAY: A Definition - Verb: engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.

Play is powerful. It has stopped war in its tracks. The ancient Greeks valued the art of playing games so much that it took precedence over fighting, leading them to take the remarkable step of suspending all war maneuvers, legal squabbles, army attacks, and death sentences until playtime was over. If play is powerful enough to stop war, imagine how powerfully it can positively impact your workplace!

The fact is, play is both natural and powerful. It provides an energy boost, engages the imagination, and helps to develop problem-solving skills. Certainly, play is prevalent in the lives of most children. But now we also know that individuals who are fortunate enough to keep a playful attitude as adults are likely to benefit in many ways.

Through this book, we will see how play can help busy adults by reducing their stress levels, increasing creativity, creating stronger relationships, boosting their energy levels, keeping their minds sharp, improving their mental and physical health, and staying happier in general.

This book is dedicated to showing leaders—in businesses of all sizes, everywhere—that play in the workplace is an essential part of a healthy corporate culture. Simply put, an investment in play leads to happier, more productive employees, a stronger organizational culture, and greater profits. By the end of the book, you'll see that making time for play is just as important as other facets of your business, like hiring, marketing, or production, and can make your organization stronger than you ever imagined.

## Chapter 1. PLAY Improves Retention

The last thing you want is for someone to start working at your business only to leave six or nine months down the road. This type of turnover is a waste of everyone's time and energy, and it's expensive. You've spent too much investing in building this person up to be of service to your organization to have them go elsewhere. Having a fun, playful culture that helps keep amazing people on your team, as well as potentially win some back, absolutely pays dividends when it comes to loyalty and retention.

High turnover is expensive, demoralizing, and time-consuming and should be avoided whenever possible. Fun and play help friendships and bonds develop between coworkers. When people have friends at work, they're more invested in their jobs and more motivated to do their best for each other. While play is not the only factor that can solve the problem of high employee turnover (money still matters), play is an important and easily implemented factor that improves culture and often gets overlooked. Having meaningful friendships at work makes people want to stay (and possibly return if they do leave), reducing turnover and simultaneously fostering loyalty.

The good news is that employees who play together and feel strong connections to others at work are happier, making them more likely to stick around. Less turnover creates more stability and benefits both the health of the entire team and the bottom line of the organization. In addition to helping with loyalty and retention, making time for play at work can also increase engagement and morale among your staff.

## Chapter 2. PLAY Increases Engagement

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment an employee has to the organization and its goals. When your team members are engaged with one another, their work, and the customers they serve, of course your company is going to be better off. Engaged teams are that much more caring, and they deliver better service, keep costs down, and are more willing to help out their teammates.

Employees who are engaged at work tend to be happier, more motivated, more connected, more productive, and more likely to stick around. Happier employees who feel a connection with their peers boost morale across the board, which can also increase the company's profitability and productivity. Actively disengaged employees bring others down and degrade the workplace culture.

Research shows that play at work leads to greater job satisfaction, a friendlier work environment, and a higher level of dedication to one's job. Creating fun connections at work that boost engagement can be simple and not overly complicated or costly.

Happier, engaged employees are also more likely to stay physically and mentally healthy. This benefits them, and it helps your organization stay strong even in the face of unexpected global developments.

It's a basic human impulse to want to connect with the people around us. When we're at work, we want to engage not just over job-related matters as company employees, but on

a much more personal level as well. We want to get to know our coworkers as human beings and bond with them. One of the easiest ways to encourage these bonds—and in turn, increase engagement—is through play.

## Chapter 3. PLAY Improves Health

The benefits of play are not new; however, the pandemic definitely amplified the issues being faced by so many in our society in regard to loneliness, anxiety, and depression, when the inability to socially connect in person with others was mandated. Further, as a majority of offices around the world moved to a remote work model, and with many deciding to stay remote or hybrid after mandates lifted, the need for work colleagues to find ways to connect playfully has become more and more apparent.

Forms of play that blend physical activity and fun with social interactions can do wonders for an employee's physical and mental health. Social play amplifies the benefits of exercise, leading to greater mental and physical fitness and less anxiety, stress, depression, and loneliness.

Physical health benefits of play can come from sports, theater, music, dance, and countless other fun group activities. Mental health benefits of play can come from all of the above, as well as just connecting virtually for some laugh-filled play. Workers who have improved their mental and physical health will call in sick less often and perform better at work. Not only do workplace team sports and group activities play an important role in keeping people physically and mentally healthy, but playing together also improves the energy of your team.

Providing an opportunity for your employees to play together doesn't need to be complicated or costly. For approximately $6–10/week per employee, the value that both your staff personally and your organization overall will derive from playful physical activity will be priceless.

## Chapter 4. PLAY Improves Energy

Making time for play—whether it be sports, a game of cards over lunch, or playing music together (play comes in many different shapes and sizes)—packs a powerful energizing punch for those who participate. It really doesn't take much to create these boosts. Depending on the activity, five, ten, or fifteen minutes can be enough to make a big difference.

As company and team leaders, you can encourage your team members to take energy-boosting breaks. You can also provide ideas as well as props, tools, and resources to help make it happen. With frequent short breaks throughout the workday, your employees will enjoy energy boosts, and you will benefit from a higher level of productivity from your people.

As play releases endorphins in our bodies, it naturally helps boost our energy and offset the effects of stress and burnout. Playful activities during the workday, either in the workplace or in remote or virtual settings, serve as powerful connections to unify and energize employees as teammates. When playing team sports and games, whether winning or losing, camaraderie develops that carries over into the workplace.

Taking mini-breaks throughout the day and week provides the energizing, restorative effects of taking a mini vacation Even if it may feel counterintuitive, encouraging employees to take breaks will boost their energy and productivity. Play breaks also serve another important purpose: play inspires creativity. And increased creativity leads to innovation and improvement, which all the top companies prize.

## Chapter 5. PLAY Increases Creativity

Every company wants to be seen as innovative, and with good reason. Innovation leads to all kinds of benefits, from growing into new markets to operating more efficiently. Innovation happens faster and more easily when companies foster and reward creativity, and the good news is that it's fairly simple and inexpensive to get your employees to be more creative. One easy outlet for fostering creativity is increasing the opportunity for playtime.

One obvious choice that you, as a leader, can make in order to encourage creativity among your team is to establish time for your employees to play. Build play into your budget and schedule. As your business grows and you seek the best ways to do things, continuously look for opportunities to boost and bring out your team's creativity. Doing so will help build creativity among all your employees, so that everyone can learn how to solve problems more easily and get those innovative sparks flying. The benefits of creative innovation will be felt internally among your staff and externally by your customers and will also affect your bottom line.

Organizations can innovate more easily when they encourage and reward creativity. Playful activities that lead to plenty of laughter and social interactions release feel-good hormones, like dopamine and endorphins, that help people become more creative and come up with groundbreaking concepts.

Play develops greater trust between teammates, breaking barriers by eliminating hierarchies and allowing for people at all levels to share their innovative ideas more openly.

Companies known as some of the most innovative in the world value creativity and develop ongoing opportunities for their employees to play. When people are more creative, they come up with better solutions Creative employees are more empowered and engaged, typically feel happier, and thus serve clients better, too, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction.

## Chapter 6. PLAY Creates Happier Customers

Most business leaders would agree that a key to a company's success is an ongoing stream of happy customers willing to pay for the company's goods and services. And then retaining them—getting them to come back—again and again, year after year. Retaining loyal customers is far less expensive than finding new ones, so it makes sense that happy employees = happy customers = happy profits.

Play at work and outside of work with workplace colleagues boosts employee satisfaction, which makes employees more motivated in their dealings with customers. Happy employees who see their jobs as fun and worthwhile will serve their clients more enthusiastically, creating superior customer experiences. Whether customer-facing or behind the scenes, it's just as important for employees in all roles to access happiness-boosting playtime opportunities, since end users still rely on the products or innovations being developed by these employees. Happier teams create sunnier interactions and stronger consumer relationships. Employees who play feel happier and create a happiness ripple effect around them.

Companies that value people, play, and fun are some of the most successful ones around. Just as Gallup asserts, having engaged employees leads to having happier customers. When customers love your organization, interactions will increase. Sales will go up. Profits will rise. When you invest in your employees' happiness by creating a culture that embraces play and creates opportunities for fun social interactions, you invest in both employee and customer loyalty. From there, the sky's the limit in terms of creating and retaining customers for life.

## Conclusion

"We do not stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing." —George Bernard Shaw

The positive benefits that come when business leaders make time for play in their organizations are undeniable. By intentionally focusing a little time and effort on fostering play at work, you and your organization will see amazing boosts in employee retention and loyalty, engagement and morale, physical and mental health, energy and productivity, creativity and innovation, customer satisfaction and retention, and last but not least, your company's bottom line.

This is important: investing in play truly impacts your P&L—it really does pay to play. It's not an exaggeration to say that play can transform your entire business and is just as integral to its financial health as other areas, such as hiring and marketing.

In order to leverage the immense power of play, you will have to heed the call. You will want to look at your retention and eNPS scores and truly ask yourself the tough question as to whether or not your employees are really happy. And from there, you will want to start taking seriously the fundamental human need and desire for play.

Trust me: you will never regret making time and space for play in the workplace.



An innate entrepreneur, **Kristi Herold** combined her passion for sport, business, and community in 1996 and founded JAM (formerly Sport & Social Group), one of the largest adult recreational sports league providers in the world, connecting millions of people through play. When the 2020 pandemic forced sports to pause, Kristi's team created a new service: providing professionally hosted virtual (and now in-person and hybrid) events to help corporate teams all over the world stay connected through play.

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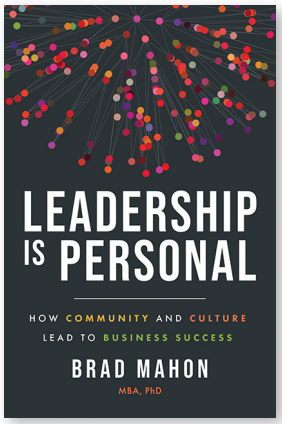
# Leadership Is Personal

Brad Mahon

Executive Book Summaries®

# Leadership Is Personal

## How Community and Culture Lead to Business Success




*by* **Brad Mahon**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What makes a great leader? Achieving success in every business venture? Keeping shareholders happy? Climbing the corporate ladder as fast as you can?

***Leadership Is Personal: How Community and Culture Lead to Business Success*** by Brad Mahon proposes another perspective. Leadership is about aligning your personal values with those of the company you work for. It means leading by example and being able to create a vision and inspire your team to make it happen. It is about creating true community engagement and bringing all the pieces together to create mutually beneficial relationships.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- The importance of defining your values and using them to guide you in your leadership journey
- Find your voice by assessing your teams' feedback – both spoken and unspoken
- The importance of building strong relationships with the community your business serves
- Create and embrace the corporate culture in everything you do

## Introduction: Why Community Engagement Matters

At the age of thirteen, I set about negotiating my first business deal: full compliance with grounding punishment in exchange for an electric guitar and amplifier.

I did make noise in some local bars, found my way into music school and settled into a teaching job at the local college.

Leadership was never part of the plan; it was an accident. Or was it?

Back when I was ten years old, I had been named one of several team captains for next year's school intramurals.

I worked up the courage to ask our principal, Mr. Walters, what a house leader did. "I want you to be you. I want you to help others, especially the younger kids," he said. "Encourage them, teach them, and show them, through your actions."

It was an early lesson that shaped my views on leadership, culture, and community. Teenage Brad ran for class president and won. At the time, I never saw these as leadership roles. Only later would I connect the dots: leadership is service.

This book is a reflection on my life's successes and failures. What I've achieved is teachable. My core premise? Community engagement and corporate culture drive business success.

## Part 1: Discovering the Leader Within You

### Chapter 1: Knowing Your Values

I was at the go-kart track with my wife and our four kids. I felt the flip phone's vibration in my pants pocket and opened it to answer.

"Enrollments in the college's guitar program are climbing," Laura, an administrator in our music department, explained. "Senior administration believes the program holds enough potential to create its first coordinator position, and we're thinking of you for the job."

Five days later, I signed a one-year contract. One by one, I'd sign six more.

Across those seven years, the program's reputation grew from local to regional to national to international, with enrollment increasing by 357 percent. It happened thanks to one thing: engagement.

I felt unprepared for leadership; I had no training. I never thought to consult books, take leadership or management courses, or seek other resources.

My guitar professor, Sharon, handed me the book that would change my life: W. Timothy Gallwey's *The Inner Game of Tennis*.

The book led to my embrace of performance psychology. I returned to my worn copy of The Inner Game, determined this time to apply its principles to my new leadership career.

My first leadership role helped affirm my belief in the value of community and led me to identify another key value: personal growth.

Reflection helped me better understand myself as a leader. That knowledge, in turn, led me to the next step: discovering how my values aligned with those of my employer.

I held a leadership role at an institution that had recently completed its strategic planning process. I contributed to the focus groups that guided the process. Yet, I did not see my core beliefs reflected in the school's mission, in its vision, nor, most distressingly, in its values.

Thankfully, I enjoyed a good working relationship with the university's leader. President Tom encouraged me to imagine putting the newly minted strategic plan into a sifter. He was telling me that I didn't need to see myself in all the plan, only some of it.

I gave the document plenty of time and consideration. My values did not align with the organization's values.

The sifting exercise prompted my discovery of another core value: authenticity. And just like that, I knew: it was time to start looking for a new job.

Values-based leadership goes beyond the bottom line to create authentic buy-in. As Mark Carney, former governor of the banks of England and Canada, writes, values-based leaders generate enthusiastic engagement among colleagues and other stakeholders, including the consent of their community to operate. This fosters organizational success by activating community engagement and nurturing corporate culture.

### Chapter 2: Finding Your Voice

I had recently accepted the role of director at what I'll call Protest University. I found a disengaged community and a disgruntled staff.

While many stakeholders were unhappy with more recent

My authentic voice is rooted in my values —of collaboration and care for our shared community.

events and decisions, it was becoming clear that some had never been happy and likely never would be.

Dan, a longtime employee, was one of those people. When he requested a meeting, I brought to the session a frustration-fueled determination to bring some immediate order to the ongoing chaos—and to do it by sending a message.

What a disaster.

My voice was aggressive, and I quickly set him up for the knockout.

I sat alone for several minutes, with everything feeling wrong.

I had found a voice—but was it my voice? It couldn't be. It felt terrible. I needed to find my authentic voice—and fast.

As the turmoil I'd inherited at Protest U continued, it became clear that I'd need to bring my ability to listen to my leadership journey.

I set up one-on-one meetings with every employee and genuinely listened, methodically hearing and assimilating all they said.

Soon, I organized a meeting with the full staff. I gratefully and genuinely acknowledged to the entire group the new perspectives I'd gained.

As I spoke, I felt their eyes locked on mine, their heads nodding, their thoughtful attention. I had listened to them, and now—at last— they were listening to me.

This time, I'd found my authentic voice—the voice of the leader I wanted to be.

My authentic voice is rooted in my values—of collaboration and care for our shared community. Invariably, these values, consistently applied, foster collegiality and growth.

### Chapter 3: Creating a Vision

Our kids' impending "launch into the real world" meant I could begin considering leadership opportunities in other cities.

Before long, I sat facing a large interview panel. They offered me the gig: head of performing arts at what I'll call Faraway U.

On my first day, I arrived early, bursting with enthusiasm. It wouldn't last. Inside the department, morale was low. Enrollments had slowly declined for several years.

It was like we were all below deck on a ship, maintaining the engines yet directionless; our only order was "stay afloat." We needed to chart our course. We needed a North Star.

I turned to stakeholders for history lessons and learned of a time when the music department and concert hall were community hubs, complete with vibrant classrooms and sold-out concerts.

During Faraway U's recruitment process, my final interview included a campus tour led by my future boss. When we arrived at the concert hall, the doors were locked. The space was temporarily closed.

Soon after I'd started my new role, we resumed modest activity in the building, including re-inhabiting a few of its offices. Cue the opportunity.

A local concert promoter contacted me. He represented a notable musician, Jeffrey Rempel, and asked about using our concert venue.

The big evening finally came.

The next day, the concert was all people talked about. Students were inspired, faculty and staff were engaged. Even senior admin, the money people, and the facilities staff were pleased.

Our North Star was shining. Brightly.

I had a vision. I imagined our school as a beacon for all—a nucleus for the performing arts, where everyone was welcome. And I immediately started communicating that vision.

We brought diversity to our concert hall by befriending the city's folk festival and other professional presenters. We supported amateur performing arts organizations by

opening our space for rehearsals. When the bewildered yet grateful organizations asked what we wanted in exchange, I asked them to share our logo on their website and identify us as a supporter, sponsor, and friend.

I challenged myself to bring the same energy and enthusiasm to each day. I recognized that I always had a choice. Earning a 10 of 10 for my attitude, effort, and actions was possible every day—it was up to me, and it became more than my goal.

But how exactly—and to what ends—have I applied this principle? Here's a hint: community.

## Part 2: Fostering Community Connections

### Chapter 4: Be Visible, Make Connections

Being visible in school allowed me to connect and create meaningful relationships with my teachers and peers. It's a habit I've maintained throughout my career and in my experience, visibility is the essential first step toward engagement.

At a town forum, the facilitator asked the assembled community and business leaders, "What is our town's value proposition to current and prospective residents?" Attendees began calling out answers: "We have a hospital." "Indoor swimming pool."

Finally, someone said, "The college. We have a college in our town."

It took twelve minutes, and somebody had even mentioned the dog park before our campus! The college's low visibility in the communities it served could be neatly summed up in one of my mom's favorite truisms: "Out of sight, out of mind."

So how, the question became, did we get Grasslands front of mind?

I joined a service club. The atmosphere was pleasant and the conversations friendly, and our networking linked me to other events, activities, and organizations—more opportunities to increase our visibility. Before long, I was no longer the new president of Grasslands, but simply "Brad from the college." And it all started with simply showing up.

One year later, we doubled our program offerings and tripled enrollment in Hazlet. The year after that, we were running short of classroom space.

Valuing community engagement has contributed to my professional success. Show up, engage, and connect—visibility is a vital investment.

### Chapter 5: What Does Your Community Value?

The television series Friends was a pop culture phenomenon, producing ten seasons that aired from 1994 to 2004. So what was such a famed show about? Fundamentally, it showed the impact of friendship and drew upon the value our society places on loyalty and connection.

That's what this new role of mine needed: friends. So I began to look for friends.

I started with people and organizations that already had relations with the college, including elected officials, donors, and sponsors. Another tool aiding my quest to learn what mattered to my communities was attendance at municipal government meetings.

The event drew community leaders, business owners, educators, researchers, and municipal and provincial government officials. All placed great value on the cornerstone of sustainability, and a value I strongly share: access to services. Which of course includes postsecondary education.

This offered Grasslands the opportunity to act, to help fill the need. My slogan became "What can we do for you?"

From small, inexpensive gestures, like opening a gymnasium to the public to big investments, like creating a whole new program or establishing student housing, identifying and collaborating to fill the needs of our organization's constituents has been a defining factor in Grasslands' success.

Discovering those communities' values shaped my approach to engagement here.

Whether you are new to a community or to a role, remember: you bring fresh eyes. Therefore, use them! Attend events and observe. Build connections through conversation. Be curious and genuinely interested. Ask questions. Listen. Then, plainly state that you want to know how your organization can best serve the community.

### Chapter 6: Identify Your Potential Partners

In chapter 2, I shared reflections about my time as director at Protest U and finding my voice.

I was called to the vice president's office. The end-of-day meeting time made me curious and a bit uneasy. My assumptions were wrong. It wasn't a reprimand, but an offer

Whether you are new to a community or to a role, remember: you bring fresh eyes.

to lead the faculty as interim dean.

In my new interim dean role, I experienced the sense of isolation that has led leaders down through time to affirm the old adage "It's lonely at the top."

Protest U was again needing to make difficult decisions, many of which I would now implement. The faculty's isolation was real; some even seemed to be hoping for its demise. As I studied my struggling faculty, I learned that partnerships, on- and off-campus, had once been a touchstone. We needed to reengage the community.

This excited me, because it also aligned with my values.

We had become disconnected from the community we were supposed to be serving. We needed to realign our program off and quickly. But how?

Medicinal cannabis had been legal in Canada for several years, but now the federal government was planning to broaden the law. The emerging sector required a workforce, so I wondered if our faculty could take a leadership role in cannabis education.

However, we needed a partner; our school was unknown in this sector. David led Green Leaf U's large cannabis education program. At about three years old, it was well developed, and David and his team wanted to expand the reach of their curriculum.

We sent many emails back and forth. Then it happened: he suggested we meet.

What strikes me most when reflecting on that day is how little we discussed the program, contracts, or other "nuts-and-bolts" details. Instead, we shared stories that revealed our values. I heard his voice and saw his vision. We had a partner, and I had a friend. I wasn't alone.

We moved forward, signed the papers, and launched the joint (heh) program. And it worked. By providing access to education, we created pathways to employment, which only increased our value proposition to the community we served.

Partnerships are essential to progress and foundational to your professional network and support system. Explore your community to identify potential partners and proactively build partnerships.

### Chapter 7: Put Out the Welcome Mat

My tenure as president of Grasslands College began on August 1. I soon learned that we offered no postsecondary summer classes. The under-usage bothered me. Empty spaces are lost opportunities for community connection, openness, and inclusion at the school. Being visible in the community is necessary, but seeing the community in our spaces is equally important.

We needed to put out our welcome mat.

Earlier in my leadership career, I had a favorite coffee shop on campus. Ryan ran the coffee shop. One day, Ryan surprised me with an invitation to the launch of his newest location. As I entered, I was again surprised, this time by the somewhat sparse crowd.

Ryan greeted me; he was beaming. He explained that this was his "soft launch," with invited guests being his most loyal customers, close friends, and some family.

Ryan's soft launch inspired me to apply a similar strategy in opening our postsecondary spaces to the community. We quietly vocalized our intention to those already closest to us—current supporters, including staff and existing partners.

As the buzz grew organically within the community, more people came forward. We continued by connecting with organizations and businesses that aligned with our values and complemented our programs.

## Part 3: Cultivating Internal Culture

### Chapter 8: Company Culture Matters

In those early days as interim dean at Protest U, my new boss, the vice president, had directed me to begin my tenure by conducting a faculty review. In the hallways, I noticed office doors closed and sensed uneasiness when I encountered employees. My faculty had a culture problem.

When employees feel uninspired or disconnected from an organization's mission, vision, and values or feel like they don't matter, there's a risk to your brand. My employees needed to feel they were first.

As a leader, I remind staff and stakeholders that my office door is always open. I noticed that few came for visits. It fairly screamed "power," confronting visitors with a large, expensive oak desk. I replaced it with a more modest surface that ran parallel to a side wall. The barrier was gone.

Then something interesting happened. A few months into my new role, a management team member began leaving her door open. Then another did. And as those doors opened, conversations took place, and people felt heard. Trust was building. Our culture was improving.

Our actions aligned with our words. Our internal community was building, and its inhabitants included staff and management. At Protest U, we came together and built a community—a team—and success followed.

### Chapter 9: Lead by Example

How do we build social harmony in our workplaces? The previous chapter offered some solutions. Here, we'll focus on another facet of the construction process: modeling social harmony yourself.

It was the spring of 2020, and the world had just closed. At Protest U, we closed the campus and instructed faculty, students, and staff to work remotely, but it soon became clear that certain business functions required employees to be on-site. We had no option but to declare some workers essential and order them back to campus.

At the time, I felt like we were at war—battling a virus with life-or-death implications. There was no time for discussion. "This is war—follow my orders," I thought.

I was wrong.

In an environment of fear, I added to the uncertainty. By choosing not to show empathy and seek understanding, I wasn't walking the talk by modeling my expectations.

I called an online staff meeting for all who had been ordered back to work. I expressed my sincere desire for renewed dialogue and let them know that they were in a safe place to provide it. Months of fear and frustration poured out.

I admitted my mistakes, acknowledged my poor communication, and apologized. I had not been leading with consistency at the precise moment that authentic leadership was most critically needed. And I finished by sharing with them how much our entire school community valued what they do.

Upon reflection, I have discovered that my actions are like a pebble dropped in a still pond—those ripples affect my team, which affects our clients, which affects our business, and all of it directly impacts our overall success or failure. So work on you first, then lead by design—by setting an example, by teaching and mentoring, and by investing in your people.

### Chapter 10: Values-Based Hiring

The light was green. We were ready to offer the job to our first-choice candidate. Gavin was hired quickly and without broader consultation. On paper, he had the experience and checked most of the competency boxes. His hiring was a failure.

Across my first year, I'd used my voice to cultivate the values of regional cooperation. Gavin pointed the ship in the opposite direction, cultivating an "us versus them" mindset.

It was a wake-up call. Without shared values, alignment is impossible. We needed to start hiring for values fit.

Competencies still mattered, of course, but we started evolving our hiring practices, exploring their alignment with our values, voice, and vision.

But as well as our reimagined hiring process had worked, ensuring smooth integration to our culture was the first step, one as critical to employee (and organizational) success as the hiring process itself.

Whatever an employee's pay grade, the recruitment process is a two-way street. It is as critical that the candidate is sure they want to work at your organization as it is that the organization wants them on the team.

### Chapter 11: Communication and Celebration

When I started my role as director of Protest U's conservatory of music, I learned there was tension between two opposing groups: those associated with curating the onstage talent and those who supported the facility and its events.

Alan wasn't management, but he was the most senior and most respected member of the Back-Stagers. He approached me one day and asked if we could chat.

Thanks to Alan's ice-breaking, I soon started meeting with the Back-Stagers' management team. We got to know each other as people and leaders and gave voice to our values and vision.

With time, it became normal to see Center- and Back-Stagers talking in the concert hall lobby, the hallways, even in each other's offices.

Another year and still more progress led to Protest U's senior admin nominating the Center-Stagers and Back-Stagers for the university's Efficiency Team Award at the annual employee appreciation event.

We won!

We'd created an internal community, and together, we served our external community. The catalysts: communication and celebration.

## Conclusion: The Engagement Advantage

Reflecting on my lived experiences, every success has had one common denominator: community engagement, both internal and external. It all begins with getting out there—and bringing your values with you.

At its core, leadership is a personal journey of self-discovery, learning to connect, and building partnerships.

Wherever your leadership path takes you, it is my sincere hope that you find your authentic self and lead your teams to become more purposeful and impactful than they ever thought possible.



**Brad Mahon,** MBA, PhD, has enjoyed more than 25 years as a leader in higher education. His experience spans from the classroom to the boardroom, always with an emphasis on engaging the community. As a college president and past university dean, Brad passionately advocates for providing learners with transformative educational experiences and aligning institutions with the communities they serve. Collaboration and cooperation are hallmarks of his administrative tenures, including establishing strategic partnerships with other educational institutions, community organizations, and industry.

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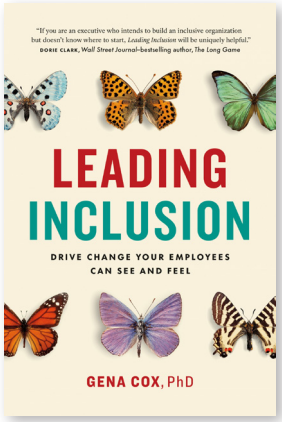
# Leading Inclusion

Gena Cox

Executive Book Summaries®

# Leading Inclusion

## Drive Change Your Employees Can See and Feel




*by* **Gena Cox**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Creating an organization that truly values inclusion starts from the top down. Leading inclusion should go beyond a moral responsibility. It should become a vital leadership competency.

The book ***Leading Inclusion: Drive Change Your Employees Can See and Feel*** lays out strategic steps leaders can take to infuse an organization-wide vision for diversity and inclusion that makes marginalized workers feel seen, heard, and valued. Here, we are introduced to a "Respect First" R.E.D.I. (Respect, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) approach that plays a critical part in crafting and implementing lasting change.

Author Gena Cox deploys her extensive research from several one-on-ones with DEI practitioners, executives, and employees of color to create a comprehensive framework that brings real results. Her words and insights enable leaders to forge a mindset for bold action this change requires so much.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to build a truly inclusive workplace from the top down.
- How to build the REDI mindset and vision.
- Why CEOs and c-suite executives play a vital role in creating a culture of inclusivity.
- How to develop and deploy a result-yielding REDI framework.

## Introduction

Race and ethnicity classifications vary significantly across the globe, as do the histories and social forces influencing the human experience. However, race-based mistreatment is the most commonly reported form of workplace discrimination in the US, and racial equality is still elusive in broader society. Employees of color, particularly black employees, continue to face occupational segregation that pushes them to the bottom of the workplace hierarchy.

I wrote this book to show leaders like you how to lead an inclusive organization, by setting a vision for diversity and inclusion and cascading it into the organization. The goal is to lead in a way that employees can see and feel the difference in their day-to-day work experiences. In this book, I focus on the inclusion experiences of people of color, primarily black people in US workplaces. Nevertheless, the insights can enhance the work environment for any employee, regardless of their natural human variation.

I decided to use my unique training and experience as a Ph.D. organizational psychologist, executive coach, black woman, mother, and immigrant to help business leaders address this persistent inclusion challenge in America's workplaces. I want you to feel empowered to act not just to improve diversity but also to enhance feelings of inclusion for all who work in the companies you lead. This book is your partner as you work to make America better, one employee at a time.

## Part 1: Skin in the Game

### Chapter 1: CEOs Can Change America, One Employee at a Time

George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's killings illuminated racial injustice and disparities in the US as never before. Racial discrimination and the resulting trauma are like a national medical mystery; the pain is real but the source is often not known or acknowledged. Healing from racism requires action and support, including from those who have not experienced it and don't understand it.

Stakeholders, especially employees, expect business leaders to address these issues.

Since persistent racial segregation has isolated Americans from people who do not look like them, leaders may need to study history and current social trends to understand these new leadership expectations.

Leaders must infuse REDI into their core business strategy. REDI stands for Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. It is a term I use instead of DE&I (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). The REDI Outcome is a "respect-first" model – because if leaders don't first ensure that underrepresented employees feel respected, none of the other outcomes will matter, nor will they be sustainable. Incorporating REDI in their business strategy will then drive the kind of meaningful change that employees and other stakeholders can see and feel. REDI requires a long-game approach. The REDI 10/4 model suggests ten actions you can take to make a positive difference and four you should avoid. The REDI 10/4 Effective Actions are:

- Get out front. As a CEO, C-suite executive, or board director, you must take the lead in managing racial issues. Not taking action will lead to a loss of credibility among your employees.
- Communicate with employees first (before you communicate with the press or other public media about the issue)
- Communicate as soon as possible.
- Acknowledge your feelings.
- Communicate with all employees.
- Provide quick, sensible support.
- Gives employees a forum to help them express their feelings.
- Develop a "crawl-walk-run" connection strategy so your employees don't feel cornered and have time to think about what they want to say.
- Listen and analyze.
- Use employee surveys to get fine-grained data.
- The REDI 10/4 No-Nos include:
- Do not talk only to the employees of the group directly affected. This approach further "otherizes" those employees.
- Do not assume that employees from the targeted group will share their experiences unprompted.
- Do not ask the most senior person from the targeted group to be the company's spokesperson for the issue.
- Do not ask the marketing department to highlight the targeted group in ways that seem performative or inauthentic.

Business leaders can help eliminate race-based workplace disparities by listening to and connecting with employees of all races.

### Chapter 2: Yesterday Explains Today

Most Americans live racially segregated lives. Slavery in the US created systems that perpetuated systemic disparate treatment of black Americans based on race and ethnicity. Although the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery, black people's lives since then have generally continued to be separate from and mostly unequal to the lives of the descendants of those who designed that oppressive system.

Systemic racism has resulted in disparate outcomes by race and ethnicity in many aspects of life, including education healthcare home ownership, and workplace experiences. Racial segregation has aggravated these disparities and made it difficult for Americans to know and understand the connection between these historical facts in black Americans' current experiences.

Business leaders can help eliminate race-based workplace disparities by listening to and connecting with employees of all races. Segregation costs us a lot: we misunderstand each other, we distrust each other, and we avoid each other. We also hesitate to reach out to an action base that can shrink the gap. But as an executive, you don't have a choice. You must lead all employees, so you must provide leadership to help others understand these realities so you can make sure all employees in your organization have an equal chance to thrive. This needs an Inclusion MBA: A Mindset for inclusion and a willingness to take Bold Action. Only then can leaders bridge the gap, emerging as inclusion role models for those around them.

## Part 2: Mindset: Rethink What You Believe

### Chapter 3: The Diversity and Inclusion Imperative

Stakeholders (especially employees and investors) are calling for REDI changes, and the rising generation (Generation Z) is pushing for more, and faster, change than prior generations. Investors want social justice and the common good. Today, there are increased calls for transparency and accountability.

However, it is difficult to build and lead an inclusive organization without first understanding the experiences of those who have been traditionally excluded. Most Black Americans are descendants of enslaved laborers and post-Emancipation, domestics, field hands, and janitors. Their parents worked hard but often did not have equal access to education, healthcare, nutrient-rich food, and housing. Today many of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren may still not have equal access to the promise of American opportunity. Some may be working in your company today and some of them are marginalized at work, on top of all their other challenges. It will take intentional acts of noticing to see these patterns, understand these human experiences, and create solutions to counter their impact on your employees.

CEOs need to lead REDI by being active participants in making the workplace better when it comes to racism. Corporate executives have the unique power to make REDI changes that can enhance the experience of all employees including those from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Americans want CEOs to lead on social issues. Gen Z is not about the status quo. This generation is more radically and ethnically diverse than any other. You must create and maintain an environment in which traditionally underrepresented groups do not face systemic hindrances and are unequivocally safe to voice the injustices they experience.

### Chapter 4: Understand Your Beliefs about REDI

Leaders must practice REDI to effectively lead all employees. But despite good intentions, some executives' REDI work may be hindered by implicit (and conscious) bias and by REDI anxieties. The leaders I mentioned consistently mentioned three factors that fostered anxiety and inhibited their REDI action:

- REDI role uncertainly. Some executives said they were unsure how to prioritize REDI, because of a lack of clarity about the problem within their organization and concern that the issue would consume disproportionate time relative to their other obligations.

- REDI dodging. Some expressed discomfort with conversations about social and political issues, including racial justice in the workplace.
- REDI distance. Many leaders I interviewed recognized and acknowledged they did not have experience interacting with people who did not look like them.

Leaders must recognize and fix their own implicit biases. However, REDI leadership will depend more on addressing systemic bias in organizations than fixing individual employees' unconscious biases. Leaders who want to lead the REDI strategy must intentionally learn about and connect with a wide range of employees.

Use the five-step REDI Action model as a framework to prepare for modeling the way toward an inclusive organization. The essential mindset for driving REDI change is knowing your "why," and the essential behavior is modeling the way.

Your efforts to build an inclusive organization will be influenced by both conscious and unconscious factors. If you want to make even a dent in the REDI challenge, I encourage you to follow the comprehensive five-step REDI Action model to process your feelings in preparation for action:

- Understand what you believe about REDI.
- Face your REDI Anxieties.
- Connect with people you currently do not understand.
- Build your personal Get REDI plan by creating a personal REDI advisory team, recruiting mentors, educating yourself about the demographic characteristics of your workforce, continuing your self-education, giving face time to a greater variety of leaders, and preparing to answer the key REDI questions.
- Model the REDI way like the organization's primary change agent.

### Chapter 5: The Truth About Working in Your Organization

It is a truth, regularly discussed among employees, that the higher leaders are in organizations, the fewer details people share with you about what is happening below you. Management literature is replete with situations where critical information does not make it to the top of the organization in time to prevent a disaster. Executives exist in a bubble that may obscure certain realities of employee experience.

The higher you are in an organization's hierarchy, the harder you must work to encourage colleagues to tell you what is really happening below you. It is not easy for employees to speak truth to power, so you must consistently and intentionally create conditions that will help employees speak up. This is what is known as "psychological safety." You must create a culture of psychological safety and then listen intently to what employees want to share.

The typical day-to-day experiences of high-level executives likely differ from those of their employees, customers, and suppliers. Add to that the fact that employees may avoid telling you the truth or might tell you what they think you want to hear. And to top it off, because you are human, you might misperceive some things and fail to perceive others' exclamation. You can overcome these barriers by making it OK to speak up, by listening more than you tell, by asking incisive questions, and by making sure you get data from a variety of sources and not over-rely on your inner circle.

As business leaders begin to address REDI in the workplace, most direct their human resources department to hire more people of color. However, since under-representation (diversity) and day-to-day experience (inclusion) are distinct issues, solutions must also be distinct. Your first remit as a senior leader is to clarify whether you have a diversity issue, an inclusion issue, both issues, equity issues, or no issue at all.

To really understand employee experience, understand how managers behave. Insist that managers support all employees (not just the chosen few) with 100% leadership.

## Part 3: Boldness: Make Inclusion Scalable

### Chapter 6: CEO and Board Using the Same Playbook

REDI strategy should be on the board's priority list. Progress on REDI will be influenced by how board directors interact among themselves and with the CEO and by the organization's pattern of responding to change. Both CEOs and the board must get comfortable talking about race and ethnicity. You can't generate realistic solutions to challenges that have their bases in race if you can't even talk about the subject.

Workplace cultures are shared, pervasive, enduring, and implicit and impact most interpersonal and group outcomes. The emotional component of REDI work and the vulnerability it requires might be an opportunity for CEOs and board members. It could connect them and enhance their

> You can't generate realistic solutions to challenges that have their bases in race if you can't even talk about the subject.

shared REDI understanding. Diverse boards are needed to help drive REDI outcomes. Individual board members must be willing to search their hearts if they are to make our REDI progress.

### Chapter 7: The C-Suite Inclusion Infusion

The C-Suite's reactions to the REDI strategy will vary, just as representation patterns and their parts of the business may vary. Your executive team members can make or break your efforts to build an inclusive culture. CEOs must help the C-Suite understand the REDI "why" and lead other decision-makers and managers to the necessary mindset.

Involve the entire C-suite in defining the REDI vision and hold them accountable for outcomes that support your REDI vision. Define the REDI vision to lead the rest of the organization and hire the CDO after you define the REDI vision. When you create a high-level REDI Vision before you select a CDO, the person you hire will have the clarity needed to hit the ground running. Use the six-point REDI Vision framework below to organize your thoughts:

- Assess the current organizational culture and employee experience. Your team can accomplish this by using employee surveys, reviewing passive operational and performance data, and conducting interviews and focus groups.
- Define your REDI BHAG. What is your Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) when it comes to REDI? It doesn't have to be a detailed strategy, just a North Star that answers questions like, "What do you want to accomplish?" "What do you want employees to say about REDI twelve months from now?" "What matters for your organization?"
- Make REDI work your core work. If you want to see improvements in diversity and inclusion outcomes, make the work part of the overall business strategy.
- Define the focus. Define the specific REDI elements – respect, equity, diversity, inclusion – on which you want the organization to focus.
- Strategically place the CDO (or other REDI leader) in the organization structure. The best use of a CDO is as a "coordinating mechanism" – someone who can aggregate the viewpoints of many decision-makers to address collective choice problems. Anything less may not help you make meaningful change.
- Define the characteristics and success criteria for the CDO role.

### Chapter 8: A CDO with Resources and Political Clout

CDOs cannot be successful if those upon whom they depend for political, strategic, and financial support do not yet have a REDI Vision. The REDI lead role is often set up to report to the CHRO, and this structure works when the CHRO is a confident political powerhouse, when REDI issues have already been on the C-suite agenda for many years, or when the organization already has the outlines of a REDI strategy. One big challenge with the CDO-reporting-to-CHRO model is that it fails if the CHRO is threatened by the attention the CDO will inevitably get from the rest of the C-suite. However the CDO needs the authority to influence outcomes in various functions across the enterprise, not just talent management outcomes. Aside from completing your REDI Vision before hiring the CDO, here are the other things you can do to support the CDO:

- Define a fit-for-purpose CDO role and let that determine where the position will sit in the organizational structure.
- Ensure that the C-suite is in sync regarding messaging within their areas of responsibility. You want each member to feel they are part of this key decision and that they are expected to partner with the CDO.
- Define a REDI budget that can accomplish your REDI Vision. Don't make the CDO beg for the resources they need to do the job.
- Set up the CDO role as a strategies partner to all other parts of the business – a coordinating mechanism, not a siloed functionary.
- Encourage partnership from the start.

### Chapter 9: Meeting in the Middle

73 percent of US managers are disproportionally White. Many managers lead people who do not look like them. Managers have the power to make or break your REDI strategy.

One of the reasons so many employees are dissatisfied with their jobs is that their managers do not pay enough attention to the daily human experience on the teams they lead. REDI requires a new manager mindset about interactions with all employees, especially employees of color. People of color do not need "special leadership" or more leadership. They need their leaders to provide them with the same support they mete out to other colleagues but often withhold from them.

Use your REDI Vision to effectively frame the "why" for your managers. Make it clear to all your managers that REDI work is a priority for you and them. Said the expectation with each manager that 100% leadership will be required – they must be designated hitters for each member of their team. Communicate your high-level REDI vision to your managers before your CDO starts. Let managers know that although the CDO will lead the REDI vision, the CEO and the entire C-suite will have skin in the game and will be active partners with the CDO.

You need your REDI program to make sense to your whole organization. Your primary stakeholder for this work is your entire employee population. Once you know what you believe, have a strategic REDI vision, and know how to start removing the barriers to our REDI work through partnership with your executive team, board, and managers, you are more likely to be successful in diversifying the talent in your organization and building an inclusive work culture.

## Part 4: Action: It Won't Be Easy, But It Can Be Done

### Chapter 10: HR and the Science of Inclusive Leadership

Effective REDI solutions should be built upon data-based insights that show leaders what matters most. Ad hoc actions may not hurt but may result in disappointing outcomes or unintended negative consequences. To get valid REDI data insights, leaders must ensure that the insights your advisors provide our disaggregated in a way that will enable you to see the patterns of the demographics that matter in your organization. Here are the questions to ask yourself when strengthening the link between HR and inclusive leadership:

- What is the basis, in data, for the guidance you are currently receiving about REDI work in your organization?
- How is your organization defining the success of the REDI work?
- What accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that managers' actions are aligned with your REDI expectations?
- How will you know which of the REDI actions you are taking are making a difference for your employees?

### Chapter 11: Seeing All Women Clearly

Gender disparities in the workplace are well known, but women of color face a double-whammy when they must deal with the challenges of gender and race simultaneously. Women of color are asking for leadership to be redefined. Any such redefinition will benefit not just these women but all employees. Organizations will benefit when leaders establish systemic practices, including sponsorship and allyship, to help men and other women understand the experiences of women of color and support their thriving at work.

### Chapter 12: How to Build a Workplace Culture

Executive leaders define the culture of the organization. Inclusive leadership should be part of the values you build into your organization's culture. Employees need to see and feel what you're doing; That is how they judge if your leadership is inclusive or not. Whether employees thrive or stay, or wither and leave will depend on how they feel about what you build.

A healthy organizational culture is a prerequisite and perfect starting point for the REDI journey. You and your company do not need to be perfect. You just need to be willing to learn continuously. You'll make mistakes, but employees will have your back as long as you are honest with them. Keep what works; Discard the rest. Just keep driving change that employees can see and feel. And, as you do this, your business will thrive too.

Start by defining cultural expectations first. Then, put mechanisms in place to support execution. Planning is excellent, but execution is the actual test. Insist on accountability. State clear expectations and hold leaders accountable for their progress relative to those expectations. Quantify the desired outcomes.

## Conclusion: Making Corporate America Better

Corporate life will never be the same. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the rules of the workplace for everyone. This is an ideal time for you to think about rebuilding better. Start with an Inclusion MBA (Mindset, Boldness, Action) lens. Build a REDI (Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) framework in all aspects of your business. Finally stop focusing on "the business case for diversity," because what justification is necessary beyond the fact that all humans deserve to be treated fairly and equitably?



**Dr. Gena Cox**'s nuanced insights and straightforward-yet-relatable style are why leaders seek her counsel. She is an organizational psychologist, executive coach, and speaker who blends research and real-world insights to help leaders enhance their influence and impact. Gena is the author of *Leading Inclusion*, an award-winning guidebook for building inclusive organizations from the top down. As a prominent voice on human-centered leadership, she guides leaders as they respond to evolving stakeholder expectations. Gena believes "diversity and inclusion" are nothing more than effective leadership and healthy work cultures.

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# Love as a Business Strategy

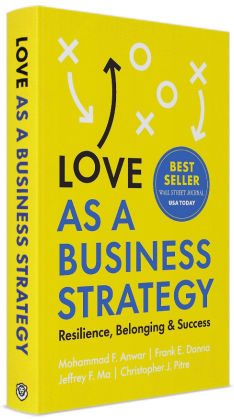
Mohammad F. Anwar, Frank E. Danna, Jeffrey F. Ma, Christopher J. Pitre

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# Love as a Business Strategy

## Resilience, Belonging & Success

*by* **Mohammad F. Anwar, Frank E. Danna, Jeffrey F. Ma, Christopher J. Pitre**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Can love be the leading factor for business success? In ***Love as a Business Strategy,*** the authors stress that not only can it be, it must be. After experiencing all of the pitfalls of a business that didn't put love first, the leaders of Softway discovered that by leading with love they were able to not only meet business objectives but also treat the people around them better and make everyone in their business happier to work for them. By leading with love in business, companies will be able to create a culture that attracts and retains top talent, influence the behaviors of everyone around them for the better, and ultimately meet their business goals and achieve more than they ever thought possible.

But first, they must learn to master inclusion, empathy, vulnerability, trust, empowerment, and forgiveness at every level of their business. They must understand how to put the human back in human resources, and why together everyone can achieve more than they can alone. In the end, every business will find that they benefit from the power of love both on a human level and when it comes to financial success.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why love is good for business.
- Why culture is better than strategy, and behavior is even more important than culture.
- The Six Pillars for creating a culture of love.
- How putting people first creates systems that lead to better business outcomes.

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## Introduction

In its simplest form, love as a business strategy means putting people at the center of work by creating a workplace that puts humanity first.

Here's why that matters: the average person spends more time with their coworkers than they do with their own families. For most people, then, work lies at the very center of their lives. That's a lot to ask of a person— and far too often, this sacrifice goes unacknowledged and unrewarded. Many organizations put little thought into the environment they create for their employees, which often results in an indifferent or downright toxic culture. Eventually, this culture starts seeping into other aspects of their employees' lives.

It doesn't have to be this way. People and profit don't have to be mutually exclusive. There is not one number on a balance sheet that isn't connected to a human being. That means that if you want to produce better numbers over the long term, then you should support and empower the people behind those numbers.

Change begins by embracing your own ability to affect change. Whether you're the CEO or the newest team member, you have influence. If you can learn to wield that influence in the service of a culture of love, you will find value both for yourself and for your organization. In fact, you may even find that the impact you have is far greater than you could have ever imagined.

## Why Love is Good for Business

The work of building resilient, high-performing companies starts at the individual level. How we treat each other creates or destroys culture. In order to build a culture of love, each and every member of an organization should be working toward improving their own behaviors— both for the betterment of themselves and for others.

Through introspection and self-awareness, meaningful behavior change is possible. We're able to achieve resilience and belonging, which in turn lead to our ultimate goal of high-performing teams and better business outcomes.

### What Is Love?

When we talk about love in the business sense, we're talking about a deep-rooted and intrinsic care for other humans. Love in the workplace means working as a team with good communication. It means putting other people before yourself. It means looking tot he person on your right and on your left and asking what is best for them as a whole person. Genuine, human care creates a ripple effect throughout everything people touch in an organization. It means focusing on humanity, not just profits. Love means doing things out of care for others and with the intent of helping others, even if those things aren't easy.

### Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast

Culture is about the emotional environment you create and the behaviors that build it— whether the environment is toxic or supportive. Culture is all around us, binding us together. We can't see it, but we can feel its presence in everything.

Companies love to showcase all their shiny bells and whistles to entice prospective employees to join their team. However, as wonderful as these perks are, they are just features of your workplace— features that have little to do with your company culture. Leaders focusing on perks and benefits alone don't create a workforce of engaged contributors.

Strategy is great, but a well-conceived plan is meaningless if your team isn't united around that plan. They will struggle to execute and struggle to make proactive choices in service of organizational goals. A healthy culture has an uncanny ability to motivate and unite people.

### Behavior Eats Culture for Lunch

Over the past few decades, companies have rightfully stressed the importance of culture in building a successful business. But while our hearts are in the right place, our focus can often be unnecessarily broad, failing to account for eht impact of individual behavior on culture as a whole.

Groups are made of individuals. As such, cultures are the result of individual behaviors. Each day, the behaviors of every single team member serve to either strengthen relationships or destroy them. And as their relationships go, so goes the organizational culture. The healthier the relationships, the healthier the culture. If a culture of love is the goal, our individual behaviors are the path forward.

## Understanding the Culture of Love

In the next section, we'll explore the Six Pillars of Love. These pillars are much like the cylinders of an engine— you need all six firing in harmony in order to create momentum and move forward. If even one cylinder is firing out of sync, performance suffers— and it may even fail.

These pillars all represent words and concepts you've heard before. In fact, you may even be tired of hearing them. Keep an open mind. Ask yourself, "How can I apply this pillar to myself? What would this look like in practice around me?" You might even discover some pillars that your organization is missing entirely.

### Inclusion

In companies that don't explicitly emphasize inclusion, many team members feel as if aspects of who they are might not be welcome or appreciated— as if they aren't allowed to be their full selves at work. As a result, they hold back important parts of themselves that could potentially add value to the organization.

A culture rooted in inclusion, however, enables everyone to contribute at a high level. A fully included team is a more productive team, and a more productive team produces far better business outcomes. However, creating space for that full inclusion can be a challenge. Organizations must look for opportunities to include, and to establish a place where team members include, even when it's more convenient and less costly not to.

### Empathy

It's not easy to fully understand and embrace a situation that someone else is going through. Doing so requires not only a high level of emotional intelligence, but also a willingness to bear the same burden someone else might be experiencing. It is for these reasons that practicing empathy may be the most challenging Pillar of Love— and also the most critical.

Empathy is being able to turn off your mic and turn up the volume on everyone else. In other words, empathy is about not just listening to the needs of others, but also seeking to understand their emotional experience.

### Vulnerability

Vulnerability isn't always easy. It takes a lot of courage, but it's almost always worth it. In fact, it's the secret sauce of building human relationships; when people see you being vulnerable, they want to be more vulnerable, too.

A culture rooted in vulnerability allows people to be open and honest and share meaningful emotions. It means we're willing to own mistakes and learn from those mistakes, rather than having to be seen as perfect. Your job isn't to be perfect all the time. Your job is to bring your ideas to the table and to create a successful organization. A successful organization is nothing but a series of mistakes that turned into opportunities. Viewed from that lens, vulnerability is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness.

### Trust

Predictive trust is trust based on an expectation that someone will perform according to your expectations. But there's a deeper form of trust— vulnerability-based trust. This is built on what the Harvard Business Review refers to as the three elements of trust: relationships, expertise, and consistency. Each element is important, but relationships are ultimately the determining factor in building vulnerability-based trust. If a person is inconsistent or lacks crucial expertise, trust in that person might take a hit, but it can be rebuilt. If a person betrays a relationship, however, it may be impossible for others to ever trust in them again.

### Empowerment

When you are empowered to do your job, you feel valued, trusted, respected, and included. You feel as if you can bring your full self to work, contribute to a culture of love, and help grow the organization.

In a culture of love, empowering a team member isn't about putting someone in charge and then ignoring them. It's about setting them up for success. When approaching empowerment from a growth mindset, you can remain engaged and available without intervening or micromanaging the process. Instead of handing your team members answers, you clear a path for them so they can arrive at the answers themselves. It can be difficult sometimes to avoid the impulse to intervene, but we've seen time and time again that when you give someone a chance, they will rise to the occasion.

### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the ability to look past someone's mistakes, shortcomings, or offensive actions, and continue to build a relationship. In business, and in any relationship, forgiveness is not a one-and-done event but rather an ongoing process.

For the people that we love, whether in a personal or professional context, our empathy and forgiveness require constant renewal. It is through this process of renewal that we can best understand what forgiveness looks like in a culture of love.

## Put Love to Work

In the following sections, you'll learn what happens when you embrace a culture of love. Can love be woven into process, tools, and hiring practices— the very DNA that makes

a business functional? Is love really a viable option that can bridge the gap between better cultures and more revenue? The answer— backed up with data— is yes.

### To Lead is to Serve

A culture of love is enabled and embodied through servant leadership. This practice is not just 'a nice thing to have.' It is essential. Put others needs first, be humble, practice gratitude, do not ask others to do something you're not willing to do yourself, always assume good intent, look for the good in others and find weaknesses in yourself, respond instead of react, know that power does not equal leadership, take care of others, and recognize that change starts with you. These are the ingredients of true servant leadership.

### We Are Better Together

Successful teams share a few common elements that help them excel. They feel free to speak up, they admit ignorance and describe what they do or don't know quickly, and there is no single leader in the group, with team members taking turns leading and sharing what they have learned.

A high-performing team is autonomous, practices the six-pillar culture, believes that 'we' is greater than 'I,' is outcome-oriented, and is fine with failure because they recognize it leads to growth.

## HR (Humanity Required)

How you recruit, how you hire, and how you manage and grow your talent matters. After all, in a culture of love, people are the whole point.

When you pursue love as a recruiting strategy, your workforce will become more diverse and more effective. You must learn to look beyond the resume to the real person, careful to consider people with nonstandard backgrounds for a given role. Don't recruit as if you were painting by numbers. Be open to what someone's background and life experience might bring to the table.

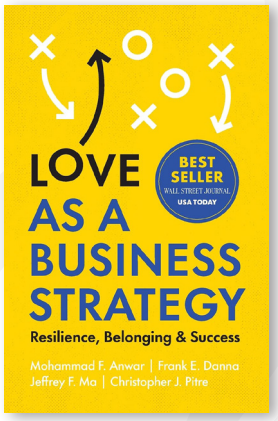
### Systems: People, Process, and Technology

It doesn't matter how technical the process or mundane the system. Every policy decision we make should be approached through a lens of love. We should be constantly asking how our decisions and interactions impact others. If our systems don't reflect our desire to put people first, then our claims to have a culture of love would be meaningless. When you focus on how you can best support your people, all decisions on process and tools will flow naturally from there.

### Waiting on the World to Change

How can you make your change personal to people? How can you show them results? How can you communicate in a way that is not only engaging, but also compelling? Change is possible, but your words and behaviors are what will convince people to change. Ultimately, that is the best kind of proof— the proof in action.

You can be valued for your difference in opinion. You can truly be one person and not a work version and a home version. You can be included and aspire to lead. It's all possible, when we lead with love.




Softway is a business to employee (B2E) solutions company that offers experiences, services, and technology products to help build resilient, inclusive, and high-performing companies. In 2015, when a toxic culture almost bankrupted the company, Softway's leadership team--including authors **Mohammad Anwar** (CEO)**, Chris Pitre** (VP)**,** and **Frank Danna** and **Jeff Ma** (Directors)--vowed to bring humanity back to the workplace. Today, through the Seneca Leaders program and other employee-focused offerings, Softway is helping thousands of leaders spanning over forty-six countries transform their businesses by putting love to work.

***Love as a Business Strategy: Resilience, Belonging & Success*** by Mohammad F. Anwar, Frank E. Danna, Jeffrey F. Ma, Christopher J. Pitre. © 2021 Mohammad F. Anwar, Frank E. Danna, Jeffrey F. Ma, Christopher J. Pitre. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Lioncrest Publishing. 336 pages, ISBN 978-1544520278. Summary copyright © 2021 by Soundview Book Summaries ®

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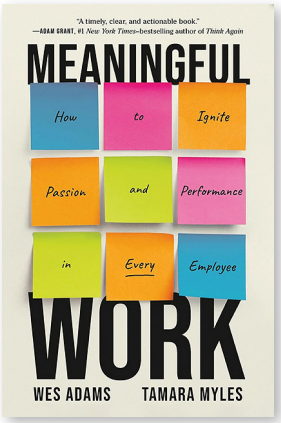
# Meaningful Work

Wes Adams and Tamara Myles

Executive Book Summaries®

# Meaningful Work

## How to Ignite Passion and Performance in Every Employee




*by* **Wes Adams and Tamara Myles**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Great leaders cultivate the conditions their people need to thrive. They know that none of us dream of mediocrity. What we really want, what we hope for, and what we all deserve is the opportunity to do meaningful work.

In ***Meaningful Work: How to Ignite Passion and Performance in Every Employee***, Wes Adams and Tamara Myles have developed an evidence-based framework for meaning-driven leadership. Drawing from the experiences of thousands of people from twenty-five industries, they identified specific leadership practices and organizational structures that make work more meaningful. With the three pillars of meaningful work—community, contribution, and challenge, readers are able to discover the elements of their jobs that tell them that they matter, that their work matters, and that they are growing into better versions of themselves. When they are present, people thrive. When they are missing, people languish.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn about the power of meaningful work
- Discover how to align behavior and values
- Create meaning through community, challenge, and contribution
- Make connections through embracing authenticity

# Part I: Every Job Can and Should Be Meaningful

## The Power of Meaningful Work

Meaningful work is the difference between connecting wires and connecting people. It is the essence that transforms everyday drudgery into work that makes us feel connected, fulfilled, and engaged.

### I COULDN'T BE MYSELF

The positive effects of finding meaning at work extend beyond the individual, impacting the organization and touching families and communities. That is the power of meaningful work.

### A WIN-WIN STRATEGY

Decades of research show that when employees like Rushmie experience meaningful work, they are happier, are more engaged, and stay with their companies longer. When that happens, organizations become more innovative, adaptable, and profitable. Employees who report high levels of meaning at work are 64 percent more fulfilled, 4.5 times more engaged, and 69 percent less likely to quit. Additionally, research shows that work well-being has the strongest impact on overall well-being.

### MEANINGFUL WORK IS GOOD BUSINESS

In April 2021, Marriott was named one of the 2021 Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For by Great Place To Work for a record twenty-fourth year in a row, the only hospitality company with this distinction. Marriott's long history of success is built on their commitment to putting their people first. The company continually invests in creating meaningful work opportunities for their associates with a focus on development, recognition, compensation, career advancement, and skills training. As a pioneer in the hospitality industry, Marriott was also one of the first companies to introduce a global well-being program more than two decades ago, focused on nurturing the physical, mental, and financial health of associates worldwide.

### RECLAIMING MEANINGFUL WORK

Although often used interchangeably, meaningful work isn't just about purpose. We define meaningful work as work that provides community, helps us contribute to something that matters, and challenges us to learn and grow. Our research shows that leaders have an outsized impact on whether employees experience work as meaningful. Leaders who build community, help people understand how their contributions matter, and challenge them with opportunities to learn and grow, foster meaning for everyone on their teams.

## How Leaders Make Work Meaningful

### UPSTREAM LEADERSHIP

Meaning-driven leadership is the upstream strategy that leads to innovation, creativity, performance, retention, and engagement. Many leaders try to solve one employee crisis at a time. They deal with issues like faltering productivity, low engagement, chronic burnout, quiet quitting, and high turnover as individual problems to be solved. Only a few look upstream for a systemic solution that will not only prevent future problems, but will also unlock the full potential of every employee.

### DESIGNING FOR MEANING

Human nature is shaped by human design. This means that leaders need to design for meaningful work. The idea of intentional business design is not new. Just as a house requires proper tools, materials, and a blueprint to be constructed successfully, meaning at work requires leaders who design workplaces around community, contribution, and challenge and give individuals the tools to build them.

### THE THREE C'S OF MEANINGFUL WORK

Community: Meaning-driven leaders help employees thrive by encouraging social connections. Dedicating time to promote positive social interactions at work can be a powerful way to build community.

Contribution: Meaning-driven leaders help people understand how their work adds value. When people are able to see the positive impact their efforts have on others, or how their day-to-day tasks ladder up to the larger goals of the organization, work becomes more meaningful.

Challenge: Meaning-driven leaders help employees reach their full potential. When leaders believe in us and provide challenging opportunities, we stretch our capabilities and feel that our work supports our personal growth.

### PUTTING ON YOUR OXYGEN MASK FIRST

Start by examining the Three C's in your own work and reflect on how you can increase each one. Taking time to reflect on your own experience of meaning at work is important and will help you become even more intentional about making work meaningful for your team.

Meaning-driven leaders are intentional about cultivating connection to increase feelings of belonging.

### Alignment: The Foundation of Meaning at Work

VALUES IN ACTION

Values guide employees' behavior while also forming the basis of an organization's culture. They communicate to the group which behaviors are rewarded and which are punished. The more clearly these guides and guardrails are defined, the better the ability of leaders to foster meaning at work.

VISIBLY MODELING VALUES

Research on social learning, the process of learning by observing others, shows that the actions of leaders strongly influence a group's understanding of appropriate behavior. This is especially the case when it comes to values alignment in organizations. Alignment between what a leader says and how they behave sets the tone for the rest of the organization.

MODELING IN THE MODERN WORLD

In today's work environment, hybrid and remote structures can make it more difficult for employees to consistently observe their leaders. For those leading in these environments, alignment won't always be obvious. Many decisions may go unobserved. The small, day-to-day actions of leaders are harder to see through a flood of emails, Slacks, and Zoom meetings. When we are separated by this digital distance, it's often unclear how the limited behaviors that are seen connect to an organization's values. Bridging this distance requires more intentional communication from leaders.

ALIGNMENT IN CRISIS

When your values and your behavior are aligned, they are meaningful signposts for the road ahead. On the other hand, if you don't walk your talk, employees see organizational values as just empty words on the wall. Trust erodes and cynicism takes root. Meaning is quickly destroyed.

THE COSTS OF MISALIGNMENT

In the face of a major misalignment that erodes trust and stifles meaning, it can be difficult to fully recover. In addition to keeping their own behavior aligned, leaders must also align the policies, procedures, and processes of the organization around its values.

VALUES-DRIVEN SYSTEMS

Policies and practices that are misaligned with values quickly erode trust. They send the message that values aren't a priority and destroy meaning on the job. Misalignments are especially destructive to meaning when they exist in performance reviews, financial rewards, and formal recognition programs.

ALIGNMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Regardless of which values your organization prioritizes, alignment with those values lays the necessary foundation for meaningful work. Our research found that high alignment is a prerequisite for building meaningful work, while low alignment quickly erodes it.

## Part II: Creating Meaning Through Community

### Cultivate Connection

SUPERORGANIZATIONS

In healthy forests, trees operate less like individuals competing for resources and more like communal beings, sharing resources to increase their collective resilience. These forests are so interconnected and codependent that scientists have referred to them as superorganisms. Like these healthy forests, high-performing "superorganizations" also leverage the power of connection and cooperation to thrive.

THE POWER OF CONNECTION

Supportive relationships at work are a source of growth, well-being, and meaning. Leaders who facilitate frequent positive interactions with others, strengthen the connective tissue of their superorganizations. Meaning-driven leaders are intentional about cultivating connection to increase feelings of belonging. There are two powerful ways in which leaders can increase the quality of connections at work:

Building Trust-By understanding the different pieces that make up trust, we can more easily work on improving it. The first element of trust is integrity. The second element of trust is competence, your ability to perform your job well.

Designing Shared Experiences-Shared experiences create a feeling of belonging, where everyone is part of something fun and meaningful. More than that, they create lasting memories that become part of the office culture, help break down barriers, and strengthen bonds.

LOWER-DIFFICULTY, LOWER-PURPOSE EXPERIENCES

On the lower end of the purpose-difficulty continuum are casual connections, a great opportunity for people who don't know each other well to become acquainted and form friendships. These activities are what most organizations are already doing to increase belonging. One way to design more inclusive casual connections is to incorporate them into the workday. Successful shared experiences have to have an intentional design. Examples: Synchronized breaks and home base teams.

HIGHER-PURPOSE, HIGHER-DIFFICULTY EXPERIENCES

Experiences on the higher end of the purpose-difficulty continuum help teams deepen their connections through more substantial and challenging interactions. They can be instrumental in fostering lasting relationships and a sense of belonging among team members. Example: Volunteer opportunities

THE CONCIERGE OF CONNECTION

Our research leaves no room for doubt: fostering relationships across the organization is critical to making work meaningful. It is how superorganizations make every individual feel connected. Whether these bonds are nurtured during existing meetings, shared meals, volunteering together, or other shared experiences doesn't matter. What truly matters is that leaders prioritize building belonging to strengthen everyone's sense of community at work.

OTHER PEOPLE MATTER

When leaders build trust and design shared experiences, they foster belonging. In order for these meaningful connections to not only survive but also thrive, it is crucial for leaders to also embrace authenticity.

## Embrace Authenticity

In the extensive research that we have conducted during and since the program, we found that meaning-driven leaders build belonging by welcoming everyone's full selves and welcoming their full range of ideas.

DROPPING THE MASK

A recent survey found that a staggering 60 percent of workers regularly engage in covering. This has negative consequences not only for the individuals who cover, but also for the performance of the organization. On the other hand, when leaders create space for people to drop their masks and show up fully, they foster belonging and strengthen connections.

EVERYDAY STORYTELLING

Storytelling can be a powerful tool to create belonging. Leaders facilitate everyday storytelling by sharing the everyday experiences of their own lives and by actively inviting others to share theirs. When people regularly talk about the things that are happening in their lives outside of work, it sends the message that everyone's experiences are welcomed and valued.

WAS THAT OK?

It is hard to be genuinely engaged when we have multiple demands on our time and attention. Responding in the Engage and Elevate style involves actively engaging when someone shares something positive with you. What matters is that when someone shares these moments with you, they are seeking to capitalize on that positive experience and hoping to feel seen and validated.

EVERYONE WANTS TO HAVE A VOICE

Only when people are comfortable being themselves can they bring their real and diverse perspectives to the table. After all, you can't expect someone who doesn't feel included to share what they really think. When others make us feel like our ideas and perspectives matter, our sense of belonging increases and work becomes more meaningful.

THE POWER TO CHOOSE YOUR RESPONSE

Responding productively when people raise concerns, disagree, or challenge our assumptions can be tough. To help you respond productively, we created the PEAR model, which stands for pause, explicitly acknowledge, ask questions, and reflect.

Leaders can set the stage for a meaningful relationship by creating a meaningful hiring and onboarding experience.

FROM MUSCLES TO BRAINS TO HEARTS

Fostering a workplace culture that embraces and values each individual's authentic identities and ideas is not just a commendable goal but also a strategic imperative. The future of work calls for leaders who are not only intelligent but compassionate, not just skilled but understanding.

### Beginnings Matter

Leaders can set the stage for a meaningful relationship by creating a meaningful hiring and onboarding experience. This starts with hiring carefully for values alignment and continues through an intentional social and cultural onboarding process.

VALUES-ALIGNED RECRUITMENT

Earlier, we highlighted the importance of values alignment in fostering meaningful work. When making hiring decisions, alignment is especially critical. Assuming they are competent, hiring a candidate whose values are aligned with the organization's generally enhances performance across the board.

THE NBA OF FAST FOOD

By making values, not just skills, a focal point in your recruitment process, you gain insights into the candidate's character and also provide them with a transparent view of your organization's culture. This alignment is crucial for fostering a work environment where individuals feel a sense of belonging and are inspired by the shared values that drive the organization forward.

CHARACTER COUNTS TWICE

Talent × Effort = Skill

Skill × Effort = Achievement

This means that when trying to hire for character, you need to understand how a candidate's values show up in their day-to-day lives.

THE VALUES INTERVIEW

1. Ask candidates about their values.
2. Create a scorecard.
3. Look for values-added, not just values-conformity.

THE INGREDIENTS OF A MEANINGFUL ONBOARDING

Leaders who want to start as they mean to go on, focus on two essential (and mostly overlooked) ingredients to create a meaningful onboarding experience—cultural mastery, which involves orienting employees to their unique culture through storytelling and shared rituals, and authentic relationship building, which includes helping new employees show up authentically and cultivate connections right away.

ONBOARDING BUDDIES

An onboarding buddy is your first office friend—someone whom you can ask questions from the trivial, such as where to find the bathroom or where to eat lunch, to more nuanced questions about cultural norms and office dynamics.

AUTHENTICITY IN ONBOARDING

Even if you don't have control of your organization's onboarding process, you can still use cultural mastery and authentic relationship-building practices when new people join your team, when you kick off a new project, or even when hosting a special event.

## Part III: Creating Meaning Through Contribution

### The Power of Positive Feedback

We crave positive feedback from others because it lets us know that our work matters. When employees receive positive feedback from their leaders and colleagues, their sense of contribution increases and their work becomes more meaningful. Leaders can inspire us to greater heights when they let us know what we've done well. Research shows that people are more likely to learn from positive feedback than they are from critical feedback.

BEST FEEDBACK

B: Behavioral-The feedback focuses on the actions someone took. Instead of praising an outcome, behavioral feedback highlights the specific actions you observed that led to that successful outcome.

E: Explicit-The feedback is explicit about the impact the person's behavior had on you and others.

S: Strengths-Based-The feedback references a strength that the person showed.

T: Timely-The feedback is delivered as soon as possible after the behavior occurred.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM COLLEAGUES

Peer recognition, like recognition from leaders, satisfies our deep desire to know that our work matters. Peer feedback activates contribution at the same time that it helps strengthen community.

CELEBRATING BIG MOMENTS

Big moments of celebration help cement a long-term sense of contribution for people. In addition to incorporating positive feedback into your organization's daily work, investing in big, celebratory moments can create big doses of contribution that last all year long.

### Communicate Bigger Impact

Leaders have to invest intentionally in connecting daily tasks to work's bigger impact. Meaning-driven leaders do this in several ways—by directly connecting employees with customers and other stakeholders, by capturing and sharing stories of moments that matter, and by reframing daily tasks as opportunities for positive impact.

## Part IV: Creating Meaning Through Challenge

### Balanced Autonomy

Our innate desire to make our own decisions is evident at an early age. Autonomy, the freedom to determine our own actions and make our own choices, is an essential human need. Our ability to learn and develop a sense of self-efficacy relies largely on the challenges of having to choose our own way forward. Decades of research show that autonomy is a critical component of a healthy and productive job. Autonomy leads to increased productivity, satisfaction, and well-being.

BALANCED AUTONOMY

Balanced autonomy exists when leaders empower employees to make decisions within the boundaries of organizational values. First, leaders can empower employees to do their work and accomplish goals in their own way. Second, leaders can give people flexibility to choose a work environment that is most effective for them, such as at home or at an office. Third, leaders can provide people with self-directed opportunities to learn and grow by taking on new roles within the company.

### The Zone of Possibility

Our research has found that nurturing potential and challenging people to grow creates meaning at work. When leaders push people beyond their comfort zones while giving them the support they need to succeed, they lift them into what we call the Zone of Possibility.

WHEN HIGH EXPECTATIONS MEET HIGH SUPPORT

A leader with high expectations believes in someone's potential and challenges them to reach their full capabilities. These leaders raise the bar by providing meaningful opportunities for someone's development.

High expectations without adequate support can thrust people into the Zone of Anxiety. High support without high expectations can lead individuals to the Zone of Boredom. In the Zone of Wasted Potential, where low support meets low expectations, people are deprived of the opportunities, challenges, and care needed to grow. Only in the Zone of Possibility—where high expectations meet high support—do we experience increased engagement, motivation, and meaning.

WHAT'S STRONG WITH YOU?

People flourish at work when they're able to use their signature strengths. In a study of ten thousand people, those who used their strengths consistently were eighteen times more likely to be thriving at work than those who didn't.

THE MARIGOLD EFFECT

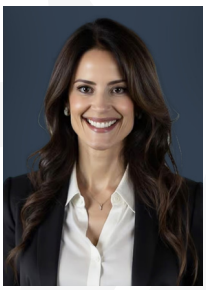
The marigold is one of the best companion plants around. Marigolds repel pests, enrich the soil, and attract pollinators. Not only do they protect plants and vegetables from pests and weeds, but they also help them grow and thrive. We can find marigolds in our workplaces too. They are the leaders and colleagues who encourage, support, and nurture us as we grow.

Despite seismic shifts shaping the future of work—the rise of generative AI, the shift to hybrid workplaces, and changing expectations about the role that our jobs should play in our lives—one constant remains: the human search for meaning. No matter how work evolves, our needs to experience a sense of belonging, to believe our efforts matter, and to fulfill our potential will endure.

We're in the middle of a disruptive and transformational moment in human history. Global events of recent years have forced a reckoning in our collective understanding of why we work. Nearly half of meaning at work is tied to the actions and decisions of our leaders.

By focusing on the Three C's, leaders can help us find and cultivate meaning in every job. Leaders, like gardeners, help create the conditions needed for us to thrive. As we look to the future, we don't know what the world of work will bring. It's almost certain that increased change and disruption are on the horizon. We can't predict what will happen next, but we do know that finding meaning has never been more important in the eyes of employees.





Wes Adams is founder and CEO of SV Consulting Group. He has led teams that were recognized as one of Fast Company's Most Innovative Brands, won multiple Webby Awards, and received two James Beard Award nominations. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia. Tamara Myles is a consultant and international speaker with over two decades of experience helping leaders improve business performance. She is a professor at Boston College, an instructor at the University of Pennsylvania, and author of The Secret to Peak Productivity. She lives in Concord, Massachusetts.

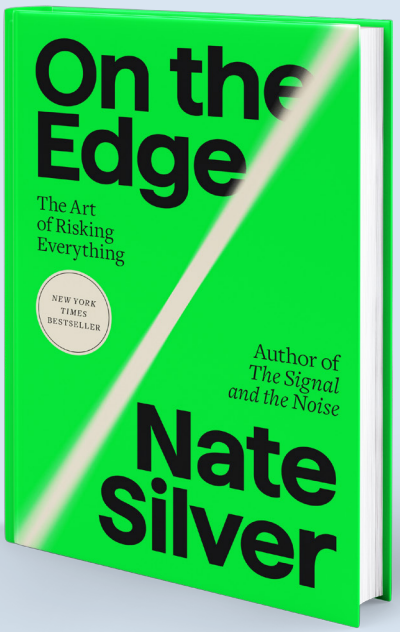
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# On the Edge

Nate Silver

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## On the Edge

**The Art of Risking Everything**

*By Nate Silver*

**Nate Silver** is the founder of FiveThirtyEight and the New York Times bestselling author of The Signal and the Noise and On the Edge. He writes the Substack "Silver Bulletin."

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Mastering Risk to Shape Modern Life

In his book, ***On the Edge: The Art of Risking Everything,*** Nate Silver takes his considerable experience with predicting odds and gambling to help readers understand industries that rely on gambling. He then goes further to discuss how probability, risk-taking, and quantitative analysis affect people the world over when these are applied to practical issues like artificial intelligence and nuclear arms.

Possibly the most obvious industry Silver examines is that of casino gambling where he discusses probability and poker and other table games along with discussing the pitfalls and promises of slot machine gambling. He also goes into quite a bit of detail on sports gambling before heading into a detailed discussion on venture capital and Wall Street. Silver is not just interested in the tactics professionals in these fields employ. Rather he spends a considerable amount of time discussing the personality and character traits that draw people to these fields and help them be successful to greater or lesser degrees. As someone who has spent considerable time gambling with funds larger than many Americans will ever gamble with, Silver has an interesting perspective and ample insight into the world of probability and wagers.

## Game Theory

Central to a discussion on gambling is an exploration of game theory. In one way game theory can be used to describe the mutually assured destruction that results when two major powers get nuclear weapons, such as the United States and Russia. Each country has the power to destroy the other completely, but both must refrain from doing so because should they launch an attack, they, in turn, will be destroyed by the enemy.

Game Theory is due, in large part, to John von Neumann. Game theory got its name because it was "inspired by the study of games" like poker that involve bluffing. A poker player must bluff at times because otherwise the "opponent has no incentive to pay you off when you have a good hand." Game theory involves the behavior of "two or more agents… in situations where their actions dynamically impact one another. It seeks to predict the outcome of those interactions, and to model what

strategy each player should employ, to maximize their expected value while accounting for the actions of other players." Game theory pertains to "the equilibrium that emerges when everyone pursues their best strategy."

Important to game theory is the idea of a focal point. With a focal point, players can benefit from cooperation. In situations like this, multiple players benefit as opposed to a zero-sum game where only one can win. The aforementioned nuclear situation is an example of such compromise that benefits all parties.

## The Importance of Physiological Cues

While understanding game theory is important, it is also important for a gambler to understand their own and others' physiological cues, psychological states, and tells. Silver Talks about a time when he was playing in a particularly high stakes game. He believed that because he was experienced and skilled that he would be able to calm his physiological response. He was distraught to find that this was not the case. During his next game, he feared that this heightened response would again return, but it did not. This is because the stakes in the next game were not as high. It appeared that no matter what his mind focused on, his body understood the stakes involved.

Eventually Silver learned that this was not unique to him or to gambling. In many high stress fields, practitioners' physiological responses are high even when they don't want it to be. This is not a weakness, he learned. It is just a sign of the wisdom of the human body. Because of the body's wisdom, it is important for gamblers to tap into those physiological responses that may be alerting them to information their psychology and empathy can not pick up on. These physiological responses can be correct even when an individual does not understand them. This does mean that psychological analysis and reading tells are not important for poker players. Silver just wants his reader to ensure that any analysis of such involves an exceptionally large sample size to mitigate the chance of error.

## The Psychology of Gamblers and Gambling Institutions

Silver then turns his attention to the history of Las Vegas and the gambling industry which can give insight into those who wager sums there of all sizes. Many decades ago people arrived in the region with the hopes of gaining riches during the Gold Rush. These people were looking to make money and were willing to travel large distances in order to do so. In addition, many of these people were men who were either single or who were great distances from their families. This made them ready participants for the gaming industry as they attempted to prove themselves out West. As such, the gambling industry became associated with the region because it had ample players.

Laws and regulations ebbed and flowed throughout the years. These days, casinos could very easily cheat without getting caught, but Silver explains how it is not in their best interest to do so. He refers back to gaming theory to explain why. If a casino could make more money cheating its customers, then competing casinos could do the same as well, eliminating any advantage they gained while alienating customers. Because of this, it is in all casinos' best interest to play fairly to keep those around them doing the same. In addition, millions and sometimes billions of dollars went into building these gambling establishments, and organizations do not want to risk losing that money if regulations should tighten because of suspected malfeasance or should sentiment turn away from the institutions. Today's institutions cater to all walks of life from high rollers to working and middle class people, the latter two of whom gravitate more towards slot machines than to poker tables.

## Sports Gambling

Silver then turns his attention to sports betting in his chapter on competition. Despite the possibility of earning money in this type of gambling, there are multiple drawbacks to gambling on sports. One of the drawbacks is that with many of the online gaming sites, when a person proves they can win a significant sum of money, they may be limited to the amount of money they're allowed to bet. Alternatively, the online platform may stop them from betting altogether. The platforms do not want to needlessly lose money, and they have the wherewithal to make sure that this does not happen.

To get around platform restrictions, some gamblers hire whales to place bets for them. This goes against the rules of most online gaming platforms, and as such, precautions have to be taken so that the whales themselves do not get limits placed upon them on the platforms. Silver further notes that it is not unheard of for a gambler to be prosecuted harshly for breaking gambling laws.

Silver writes about the difficulty he had when he was involved in sports betting because of its all consuming nature. He would check on his sports first thing in the morning and before going to bed every night as well as throughout the day. In short, he was consumed with the world of sports. He does not know if he crossed over into gaming gambling addiction at this point, but he doesn't rule out the possibility. Gambling of all sorts can be addictive, and sports gambling is definitely not immune to this.

## Risk Takers

Between the first part of his analysis, and the second author, Silver, takes a break in what he labels, his halftime chapter. In this chapter, he looks to physical risk takers such as astronauts and explorers to see what they have in common with gamblers. From these physical risk takers, Silver is able to glean lessons that risk takers of all stripes live by. One of these is that risk takers have to be willing to actually take a risk. He talks about mRNA researcher who joined a small startup company that was performing this type of research so that she could pursue the field that she wanted to. She knew her career would run its course if she were to develop the technology herself, so she teamed up with others who were already in the process. She took the risk. Another trait of takers is that they are willing to put in the time to practice. To illustrate this, he points to Michael Jordan who spent countless hours practicing shots. Silver also writes about the importance of being conscientiously contrarian. By this, he means that risk

> **Silver also writes about the importance of being conscientiously contrarian. By this, he means that risk takers must not be afraid to stand apart from the crowd and be different.**

takers must not be afraid to stand apart from the crowd and be different. He explains that when he argues on the Internet, his purpose is to be accurate and to eventually be proven right. He believes this is different from many other peoples objectives and because of this he's often able to achieve what he wants to, to win the argument. His goal is to be the best.

## Silicon Valley and Wall Street

In Chapter 5, Silver takes a closer look at both Wall Street and Silicon Valley and what makes these two institutions successful and also what occasionally puts them at odds with each other. Silver believes that Silicon Valley has a better "capacity for abstract, analytical reasoning" while "Wall Street is more explicitly quantitative than Silicon Valley." Still, when it comes to personality cluster traits such as "competitiveness, risk tolerance, [and] independent-mindedness," Silicon Valley leads Wall Street by a large margin.

Silver sees Silicon Valley as having "two essential traits." The first is "a very long time horizon." This goes against the capitalist tendencies of many Americans who most desire quick returns. It also provides challenges since it is easier to determine short term odds rather than long term. It is people who are in it for the long game that can win the most when it comes to Silicon Valley. The second trait particular to Silicon Valley is that "it offers asymmetric odds that reward taking chances on upside risks." This can be problematic when much of the money on the line does not come from those taking the risks. This also creates a "winner-take-all-economy" where the venture capital community is extraordinarily small.

Many people have difficulty making bets that are likely to fail, but many in Silicon Valley are able to "pull the trigger on investments" even though they may be likely to fail. Silver talks about people he describes as foxes. These people hold a cluster of traits including a tolerance for risk, adaptability, and being empirically minded while also being willing to act on incomplete information. These same people are often good at forecasting. Silver believes Silicon Valley is successful because "it marries risk-tolerant VCs like Moritz with risk-ignorant founders like [Elon] Musk." Despite Silver's sympathy for Silicon Valley, Silver also believes many of the Valley's critiques such as its overstatement of its contrarian nature and possible discrimination against women, Black people, and Hispanic people.

## Quantifying Decisions

Silver ends his chapter on quantifying decisions and effective altruism by stating that when "near infinite amounts of value" are on the table, then what could possibly be off the table. He describes effective altruism as a "way of thinking about the world - quantifying hard-to-quantify things, engaging in cost-benefit analysis in situations where people might not think to apply it." He claims that this is relevant to a book on risk because utilitarianism, the pursuit of "the greatest amount of good for the greatest number" is itself an issue prone to mathematical representation, and as such, is a topic of interest to people prone to quantitative thinking.

Oftentimes the questions at stake are of particularly high risk. An example of this is the allocation Congress made of $2 billion in 2022-23 to prevent pandemics. They made this calculation despite the enormous price in human life and in money (approximately $14 trillion) that Covid cost. This is described as a failure of the establishment in light of the risks and, because of the common nature of such failings, is the reason people of means are at times interested in risk and reward when it comes to such issues.

Issues of altruism can be looked at on grand scales such as Congressional budget allocations and nuclear proliferation, but it can also be used to discuss moral dilemmas faced on a more personal level. A theoretical example of this is the trolley problem. If numerous people are going to die in a trolley accident unless you pull a lever that would divert the trolley and kill a trolley worker down the track, should you pull the lever? Many people believe they should because more lives will be saved in this manner. The issue becomes cloudier for many people, however, when it is not a trolley worker on the track who will lose his life but rather is a mother and a child. Such decisions require the calculation of risk and reward just as questions around a poker table do, and as such, people interested in one are often interested in the other.

These questions are not just theoretical. The Covid pandemic demonstrated how everyday people have to make decisions involving risk and reward. During the pandemic, people had to weigh the benefits of social interaction with the risks of Covid exposure. The author gives an example of a single mother who is also an essential worker. She could choose to send her child to daycare, greatly increasing her child's risk of exposure to Covid. The mother could instead have an elderly relative watch the child. This would decrease the child's exposure to Covid, but it would increase the elderly relative's exposure to the virus, and this relative would be much more prone to severe illness should she acquire it. In addition, the mother could choose to quit her job, isolate herself and her child, and risk losing her home should she not be able to find a job where she could work from home. These questions of quantification are not only relevant to gamblers. As this example shows, such issues of moral philosophy are relevant to the lives of everyday people in pedestrian

situations. Still, the money and influence that the elites have can make their decisions have far reaching impacts.

## Implications for the Rest of Us

Estimations of value, risk, and altruism by those with means and power are of concern to all people, and this is seen, in particular, in a discussion of artificial intelligence. Silver notes the different opinions people have of AI, including those who believe that it is highly likely that AI will bring about the ruin of humankind. While people argue about the risk, most people assume that there is at least some risk posed by artificial intelligence. The level of risk acceptance and aversion of those with the power to direct AI is of import to all of humanity especially because there are some who believe that if there is a possibility of great improvement in the lives of humanity, then great risk in the attainment of those improvements is acceptable, even if that risk is total annihilation of humanity. The question arises as to who gets to make that decision for all of humanity, and if anyone, indeed, should have that power.

Silver goes on to discuss some of the dangers AI presents. He explains that the scientific community does not understand exactly how AI knows much of what it does. People cannot understand if AI is getting close to thinking like actual humans because there is only so much the scientific community knows about how the human brain works. Could artificial intelligence start acting on its own in ways that go against the desires of humanity? The odds of such an occurrence cannot be known nor could the potential outcomes be inferred. Still, nobody knows whether the outcomes of AI could be catastrophic, extraordinarily positive, or somewhere in the middle. Silver, himself, does not believe the pursuit of AI should be altogether stopped.

Nuclear deterrence is another area where probability and risk are involved. Silver brings up a scenario whereby Russia bombs the United States with nuclear weapons. Very few people stand a chance at survival. The question then for the president hiding in a bunker is whether or not to retaliate and kill Russians in turn. There is not much benefit for anybody living in the United States as their death is all but assured. Therefore, to send the nuclear bomb would be purely an act of revenge. Silver believes that upwards of 90% of people would choose to bomb Russia in this situation, and he claims that this is a good thing. Without this willingness, nuclear weapons would not act as a deterrent. The weapons only stave off nuclear war because of the threat of retaliation.

## In Conclusion

Silver starts out his book with a discussion of the River and the Village. The River consists of the risk-takers in the world, people like himself and Elon Musk. These are people who want to push the envelope forward and who want to win big. On the other hand is the Village. Members of the Village are members of society's entrenched institutions such as the government. The Village is much more conservative and finds itself at odds with the River at times. Throughout his book, Silver attempts to explain the thought processes of the River to help the uninitiated understand risk and probability but also to advocate for the strengths of those in the River while explaining some of their weaknesses. Silver uses examples from the real world and delves into such complex issues as artificial intelligence and nuclear war. The beginning of his book explains gambling and risk taking and the theories that underlie these domains while his later chapters explain how these gambling principles affect people throughout the world, effectively bringing the thought and philosophy of the River to readers and the world at large.

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# Pick Up the Gum Wrapper

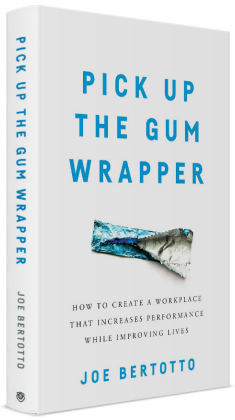
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# Pick Up the Gum Wrapper

## How to Create a Workplace That Increases Performance While Improving Lives

*by* **Joe Bertotto**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

So many employees in organizations today get anxious every Sunday night about having to report to unfulfilling jobs on Monday morning. But imagine working in a place where you're doing more of the work you're good at and enjoy, and a place where you're not only accepted for who you are but also encouraged and supported as you grow.

***Pick Up the Gum Wrapper: How to Create a Workplace That Increases Performance While Improving Lives*** identifies three ways leaders can create such a workplace and propel their companies forward: leverage each employee's uniqueness using Gallup's CliftonStrengths; identify Behavioral Expectations for their organizations; and design leadership practices that will foster a workplace culture rooted in high care, high performance, and high accountability. Not only will your employees look forward to coming to work on Monday morning, but the business results of this workplace improvement will energize you like the thrust of a rocket booster!

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to promote a highly engaged workforce.
- How to create agreed-upon Behavioral Expectations that foster mutual respect and predictability among the workforce.
- How to implement leadership practices that provide a springboard for employees' performance to soar and to live better lives.
- How to achieve "Worvana": Nirvana at work!

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

The author overheard a group of young people talk with great enthusiasm about the day when they could leave their jobs to live the good life: twenty and thirty-somethings talking about retiring? What a shame to dislike your work so much that you would wish your day, week, year – well, basically, wish your life away!

But your work can provide the opposite experience. A place where your contributions are valued and celebrated. A place where you have a strong sense of affiliation with your colleagues as you strive to accomplish great things for customers and one another. A sense of purpose. A place where you are not only accepted for who you are but also encouraged and supported as you grow. A place where you're doing more of the work you're good at and enjoy.

What companies need are leaders who want that same supportive environment and are courageous enough to do what it takes to install the right elements.

## Why Make the Effort?

There are three kinds of employees at organizations today:

(a) Some pick up discarded gum wrappers that they see on the floor at the office. These employees continuously give their best effort on projects, volunteer within the company and community, and take initiative. Gallup reports that 34 percent of employees fall into this category.

(b) Others see the gum wrappers but walk by without picking them up. They will show up on time and do a good job within their role, but initiative is not something they prioritize. 53 percent of employees see themselves in this category.

(c) A few contribute to the negative work environment by throwing the gum wrappers down in the first place. They'll say, "I can't stand it here. I'm here because I have to be." 13 percent of employees fall into this category. They poison the well and drag everyone's morale and performance down.

There are three components to building a productive culture and propelling your company forward:

(a) Learning, appreciating, and leveraging each employee's uniqueness using Gallup's CliftonStrengths: People want to be accepted and appreciated for who they are. CliftonStrengths shows us how we're unique, what we're both good at and enjoy, as well as where we might be undermining our own success.

(b) Identifying Behavioral Expectations: Behavioral Expectations are the kinds of commitments you make about how you're going to work as a community of people.

(c) Defining leadership practices that are designed to build a workplace culture rooted in high care, high performance, and high accountability.

## Overarching Principles for Creating Culture

If the company is performing well on the outside, does it really matter what's happening inside? According to Gallup, companies with highly engaged workforces outperformed their peers by 147 percent in earnings per share. It matters. And it matters to the people who come to work every day.

When initially setting out to create and build a new culture, start with the leadership team. People who manage others set the tone when it comes to culture. Leaders should follow the advice of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said, "What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say."

Component 1: Learn about Employee Uniqueness with CliftonStrengths

### We're All Unique

Each person has gifts they bring to the team. As leaders, our goal is to understand, appreciate, and leverage those natural talents. The process begins by using the CliftonStrengths Assessment, at three different levels. First, it leads to greater self-awareness. Second, it helps everyone effectively manage their relationships productively. Third, it gives us insight into the work we do that we're good at and enjoy.

Once you've taken the assessment, the Gallup website provides you access to a variety of reports and videos that define your talents. As you begin to recognize the capacity of your talent themes, you start to understand how they benefit you and how they can benefit the performance of your team and your organization.

Have the members of your team take the assessment. Once members become familiar with their results, have each person highlight the words, phrases, and sentences that resonate in their Strengths Insight Report and share it with the rest of the team.

Playing to strengths is the number one action we as leaders can take to increase everyone's commitment to pick up

the gum wrappers. We can't let roles and job descriptions determine how to put people's strengths to work. Those can be too limiting and inhibit performance.

Component 2: Identify Company Behavioral Expectations

## What Similarities Drive Your Organization?

In a company with firmly established Behavioral Expectations, employees with entirely different work styles and methods of communicating can still feel confident they'll be treated consistently and fairly in every interaction. Behavioral Expectations are a set of agreed upon codes of conduct that bring together a group of unique individuals and create predictability in how they interact with one another. Behavioral Expectations serve as a North Star for unity, allowing team members to be who they are while honoring how they work with one another.

Crafting Solid Behavioral Expectations Behavioral Expectations should be easily remembered statements for how you expect those in your organization to act and communicate. Two examples are, "Blamers are Drainers," and "Everyone Deserves Your Best."

Gather together those you've selected to craft the Behavioral Expectations and instruct each person to write down what they believe are the two most critical Behavioral Expectations for the organization. Then sort the cards, remove the givens, and combine the cards that have matching patterns. Then take a maximum of five and draft a memorable phrase for each one. Have each participant personally try to live them over the next month. Meet again and discuss, recrafting as necessary. Then introduce them to the whole company.

Make Behavioral Expectations a Priority. Most companies unveil their Behavioral Expectations with elaborate fanfare, but after a few months, the gusto is gone and it's back to business as usual. Embedding Behavioral Expectations is difficult because we may be asking people to change their behavior, and they may not see any need to do that. For Behavioral Expectations to matter, you must make them of equal importance to performance expectations. That means if a person is on pace to exceed her performance goals but is doing it in a way that violates the Behavioral Expectations, that can't be ok.

Here's how to keep Behavioral Expectations in the forefront of everyone's mind: Review them at every all-team meeting; Start each meeting with a story that illustrates someone living a Behavioral Expectation; Begin every week with a company-wide voicemail that further clarifies and explains a Behavioral Expectation; Put the Behavioral Expectations on a placard that is placed on everyone's desk; Put the Behavioral Expectations on a screen saver on everyone's computer.

Exemplary conduct is driven by devotion to the Behavioral Expectations.

Component 3: Build Defined Leadership Practices

### Got Purpose?

One of the author's formative career-related experiences was working for a manager who went out of her way to spot his strengths, aligned them with his work, and gave him consistent feedback and coaching. When a manager is focused on her employees, sees the potential in them, invests in them, and believes in them, it provides a springboard for the employees' performance to soar and to live better lives. Managers should ask questions like, "Why do you come to work every morning in this job?" "What legacy do you want to leave?" "How do you want to feel about the contribution you make to your colleagues?"

### Manage to Outcomes

Give Your Team the Freedom to Be Themselves: It's more effective to work with people as they are than to try to change them to suit our needs. Performance will be better when we allow people to work in their own way to achieve their goals. Setting achievable goals can be difficult. Use the acronym ASK to help set achievable, measurable goals: ASK: Agreed-upon, Strengths-based, and Known. Agreed-upon means setting goals that are mutually determined. Involvement is critical to goal achievement. Performance goals should be Strengths-based. When each of us is working from our talents and strengths, our results will be exponentially better than if we are working from a deficit position or a weakness. Give people work that will feed their minds and inspire their hearts. It's always more enjoyable to spend time on the work you're good at and enjoy than on the work you're good at but don't care about, or worse, the work that drains you of energy or you're uncomfortable with your performance.

All the performance goals in the world are meaningless if people lose sight of them as competing demands and changing priorities descend upon them, which is where the "Known" part of the ASK acronym comes into play. Make your goals measurable and deadline-driven. Each goal must be crystal clear. In addition to communicating regularly on goals, offer positive and constructive feedback to help team members improve individually and collectively.

### Act with Benevolence

Benevolence means having a disposition to do good. We demonstrate our care for people when we give them our time and attention in a customized way. A law of human dynamics that's close to universal is: you get what you give. As people recognize that you're serving their desires, they'll respond in kind. Think of what you can accomplish when every member of your team is playing to their strengths and giving every ounce of discretionary effort. You'll achieve the most sought-after state in the workplace: "Worvana." Nirvana at work!

### Celebrate the Individual

No one ever left a job for feeling over appreciated. Meaningful recognition is a key element in creating engaged employees who pick up the gum wrappers. One District Manager asks each of his team members the following question: "When you do outstanding work, who do you want to know about it, both inside the company and out?" One of the team members, David, said his 2-year-old daughter. The manager waited until David's wife and daughter came to visit, got down on one knee, and told the daughter David was one of his best employees. Tears streamed down David's face. That's what it means to Celebrate the Individual: being intentional about building a level of intimacy in the relationship and taking actions that make each person who reports to us feel not only appreciated but celebrated.

Celebrate Development Invest in people to help them become better today than they were yesterday. When it comes to development, don't forget about long-tenured employees. Don't confuse experience with not having a need to develop.

## Working for the Greater Good

Create the company you want to work for by building bridges with your peers. That's really at the heart of working for the greater good.

Support Is Invaluable "I am my colleague's keeper." When people work for the greater good, politics, manipulation, and self-serving motives are decreased, and everyone is free to do their jobs with less concern. You want to build a company where no one has to have your back, not because it isn't supportive but because no one's trying to stab you.

## Conclusion

In a workplace that leverages the CliftonStrengths Assessment, lives Behavioral Expectations, and cultivates leaders who serve others, there are no gum wrappers on the floor. Discretionary effort is given freely. Employees don't dread Mondays. Work energizes teams, not drains them.

But remember, great vision requires great effort. Stay the course and try not to get discouraged. Sometimes, trying something new can be met with resistance. However, as your team sees the benefits of an organization transformed, that resistance will melt away.

Create the kind of legacy where people think about your leadership long after they've left, where they're inspired to make their organization gum-wrapper free. That's the best kind of leader to be—remembered for the difference you made in people's lives.



Joe Bertotto has more than three decades of experience helping leaders improve their workplace environments and increase team productivity in a way that helps people live better lives. Joe works internally as the chief culture officer at Vizo Financial Corporate Credit Union and consults externally with numerous organizations successfully using this approach. Joe was one of the first Gallup Certified-Strengths Performance Coaches, and he and his wife, Judy, are the first married couple in the world to be Gallup Certified-Strengths Coaches.

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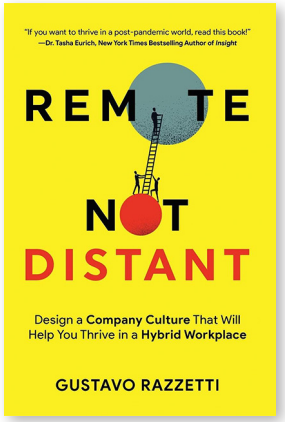
# Remote Not Distant

Gustavo Razzetti

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# Remote Not Distant

## Design a Company Culture That Will Help You Thrive in a Hybrid Workplace




*by* **Gustavo Razzetti**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Welcome to the beginning of the end of the workplace as we know it. Normal is gone. The culture that got you here won't get you there. The problem is that most organizations were forced to switch to a work-from-home model and failed to change their way of thinking. CEOs still believe that company culture is only achieved when people are together. But it doesn't have to be that way. You can work remotely and still be connected. You don't need an office to feel like you're part of a team.

As companies are once again postponing returning to the office, there is a unique opportunity to reset the culture and leverage the best of both worlds: in-person and remote. Now more than ever, a strong culture is crucial for driving positive results. In ***Remote Not Distant: Design a Company Culture That Will Help You Thrive in a Hybrid Workplace***, author Gustavo Razzetti will help you build an anywhere/anytime culture to adapt and succeed in a hybrid workplace.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What company culture is and why it matters.
- Five mindset shifts required to succeed in a hybrid workplace.
- Six modes of collaboration for distributed teams.
- Five hybrid work models that release agility.

## Foundation: What is Culture and Why Does it Matter Anyway?

The pandemic has put "the way we do things around here" to the test, and culture matters now more than ever. But before we talk about how to upgrade your workplace culture and thrive in a hybrid workplace, let's discuss the concept of culture and why you should care.

Many people think culture is about perks such as ping-pong tables, free beer, and fancy food. Free yoga sessions and sushi are nice. However culture is much more than that; it's the environment that helps people do their best work.

Intentionally designed cultures not only increase employee engagement but also produce stronger business results. Both science and common sense tell you that a positive workplace culture creates a positive business impact.

### What Culture Does

While people still tend to think in terms of what culture looks like, it's more helpful to think in terms of what culture *accomplishes*. A strong culture produces the following five effects:

1. **Culture supports results**: According to the Organizational Health Index, companies with the strongest culture can perform 200% higher than those in the bottom quartile.
2. **Culture creates teams**: Culture creates a shared identity that generates both attraction and rejection. It is the glue that brings people together.
3. **Culture gives employees meaning**: Culture provides not only a shared view of "what is," but also of "why."
4. **Healthy cultures adapt better to change**: Research by McKinsey shows that 70% of organizational transformations fail because of culture-related issues.
5. **Culture boosts (or destroys) employee motivation**: When people's values or purpose align with those of an organization, they are more likely to enjoy working there.

Clearly, a healthy culture makes a difference. Moreover, culture can be deliberately shaped to serve your company, much as a fruit tree is pruned to keep it healthy and productive. Every company has a culture by chance or by choice, but successful cultures are the result of intentional design.

The following principles are recommended when approaching culture design.

- **Human-centric**: starts with the employee in mind and how they perceive their organization's culture and what is or isn't working
- **Systemic**: every organization has a system that shapes the behavior of its employees
- **Co-created**: Smart leaders tap into the collective wisdom to find solutions that will help improve culture.
- **Experimental and iterative**: Culture design is not a one-time activity. Being prepared to adapt is even more critical in a hybrid environment.
- **Evolving**: Think in terms of building on what's working while improving or eliminating what's not.

To apply these principles to build culture remotely, you must design an "Anywhere/Anytime Culture" that connects people and helps them do their best work, regardless of when and from where they work. To start, you need to reset and evolve your culture.

## Step 1: Reset Your Culture

***This step addresses the five mindset shifts required to succeed in a hybrid workplace and how you can build a strong remote culture, regardless of where you team members work from.***

The hybrid workplace is here to stay. But, as a whole, hybrid is difficult to do right. You need to be intentional about revisiting almost everything about your culture. Seize this unique chance to consciously design a successful hybrid workplace that bridges the gap between what employees want and what leaders demand.

It's time for a reset.

To thrive in a hybrid workplace, your organization needs to adopt five key mindset shifts that form the basis of much of the culture design work to be done.

### From Culture by Chance to Culture by Design

It's true that, left to its own devices, company culture is organic; it will happen naturally and emerge freely. However, in a hybrid environment, you need to be more intentional.

Company culture design should be treated just as intentionally as designing a new product. It should start and end

Accepting the increasingly fluid boundaries between work and personal life, rather than building higher, stronger walls between them, will create a more humane and flexible workplace.

with the user in mind, turning it into a co-creation process. Successful remote-first organizations co-design their cultures with their employees.

### From Input to Impact

Historically, organizations have rewarded input–visibility, effort, presenteeism, etc.–over outcome. Organizations can benefit enormously by shifting their focus away from traditional input measures and focus on impact. People want to be part of something bigger than themselves. If you want engaged and productive employees, focus on the impact you want to create and they will follow.

### From Work-Life Im/balance to Work–Life Integration

For most of us, the more we try to pursue "work-life balance," the harder it becomes to achieve. Working from home has created a more human connection to work. Accepting the increasingly fluid boundaries between work and personal life, rather than building higher, stronger walls between them, will create a more humane and flexible workplace.

### From Synchronous to Asynchronous Collaboration

Traditional workplaces were filled with synchronous communications. Meetings required everyone to show up, and people were expected to take calls and respond to emails immediately, regardless of what else was going on. Experts agree that whether your team is fully remote or hybrid, it should adopt an async-first approach. Asynchronous collaboration creates a different, more flexible set of rules.

### From One-Size-Fits-All to Flexibility

A common denominator of successful remote companies is that teams have a say in how things get done, from shaping the remote work corporate policy to having the flexibility to adapt them to their own needs. Managing the complexities of scheduling, integrating individual and collective needs, and overseeing people who work from different locations isn't easy; having a centralized, top-down approach won't work. Team members can make better decisions when given freedom and authority.

### Reset Culture: Where to Start

Leaders of hybrid teams will have to do what regional and global leaders have always done: work hard to create connections between on-site and remote employees. Managing remotely is not the same thing as managing in the office. Unlearn what used to work.

Here are some of the most significant adjustments you can make to build on your efforts:

- **Let Go of Control; Become a Facilitator**: Facilitate better conversations, encourage people to ask better questions, let them find answers, and listen. Leading as a facilitator means letting go of the desire to be in charge and in control.
- **The Office is the New Offsite**: The truth is that the office isn't necessarily a great place to get work done. It's time to rethink the office as the new offsite. It will become a space for special occasions, such as brainstorming, launching a new team, celebrating a new win, or running design sprints.
- **Supercharge the Trust Battery**: Working in a hybrid environment requires trusting employees more than ever. This is critical for success. The trust battery is slow to charge yet quick to drain.
- **Virtual Friction is Healthy**: Teams that embrace tension, rather than run from it, are more successful. This is even truer in a remote environment. Promote transparency and encourage people to address conflict in the open.
- **Obsess Over Communication**: Employees usually do a lousy job of communicating in a physical space. Provide a well-written handbook that documents everything, providing a *single source of truth*. Instead of coming up with answers, look for answers in the system itself, saving time, neutralizing emotions, and reducing conflict.
- **Leave No One Behind**: Those who work remotely cannot be left out of crucial conversations. A hybrid work environment requires being more intentional about inclusion and equal participation.

## Step 2: Reimagine a Shared Future

***This step challenges the idea of alignment. Rather than having a vision imposed on them, team members want to be part of the process. Review how to reimagine a shared future with a team purpose to define clear priorities and expected behaviors.***

Normally, we associate successful organizations with a strong product, technology, or leader, but it's the organizations with a strong sense of purpose–the ones that have created a shared future that includes everyone–that usually end up leaders in their industries. In hybrid work, a clear purpose serves as a kind of North Star that keeps employees aligned in the service of a shared future, regardless of how distant they are from each other.

### Priorities: Good > Good

Leadership is the art of making decisions. Saying "yes" is easy, but what we say "no" to defines our success, especially when we have to choose between two good things. Great leaders know when to make sacrifices to stay focused. Prioritization is all about making tough calls, especially when it requires favoring one good thing over another good thing.

And it is not limited to strategic business decisions, such as the product innovation pipeline. What you choose–or don't–is crucial to designing your workplace culture, too. Thriving workplace cultures have clear priorities. Successful company cultures are crystal clear about what's important to them; they know what to say "no" to. Prioritization is more than just focusing; it's about staying true to what an organization stands for.

### Priorities in a Hybrid World

A hybrid working environment creates additional tensions between what individuals want and what's possible. Defining priorities in advance can help minimize conflict and simplify decision-making. Here are some examples of priorities that address common tensions affecting hybrid teams:

- Outcome, even over effort
- Personal needs, even over team preferences
- Team members' well-being, even over productivity

## Step 3: Reignite Belonging

***This step focuses on belonging; ensuring that team members feel safe enough to bring their full selves to work, challenge the status quo, and come up with innovative ideas.***

Belonging is a fundamental part of being human; we are social animals who need to be connected to others to thrive. Connection makes us feel safe, trusting, and collaborative. Leaders tend to underestimate the power of belonging. However, we know that strong personal connections build healthy teams. A strong organization is built on a foundation of human connection. People don't just want to be part of a team–they want to belong. Creating an environment that honors humanity, not just high performance, is vital for workplace success. This is even more important when employees are working remotely and can't rely on physical proximity to help them bond.

### Am I Connected?

When you belong, you don't need to be a different person at work. You can speak freely without fearing retribution. You actually enjoy working with your colleagues. Work is not just a job, but an enjoyable experience. Intimacy, vulnerability, and contribution create belonging. Fortunately, belonging doesn't require physical proximity, just a different mindset. You can cultivate a sense of belonging that helps bridge the gap and bring people together despite the distance.

### Psychological Safety Matters More than Ever

Psychological safety means that people can bring their full selves to work, speak out, and challenge the status quo without fear of retaliation. Simply put, it is the difference between silence and participation.

Unfortunately, according to Gallup, only 30% of employees strongly feel that their opinions count at work. This is bad news, not just for workers who don't feel comfortable expressing themselves, but for organizations that may not be making the most of their employees' talents.

Safety is not the opposite of risk-taking; it's a conduit to experimentation. A safe environment isn't simply about being "nice." Diversity of perspectives, disagreement, and debate are key drivers of innovation. A safe culture makes it easier for quiet voices to speak up, increasing participation of introverts, women, and minority groups–the people who are interrupted or ignored the most.

### Rituals Change Behavior (Really)

Rituals do more than create belonging. They are powerful because they create awareness of the mindset and behaviors that we want to change. Here are five key areas of opportu-

The key to building a thriving culture of collaboration is knowing when collaboration isn't necessary.

nities for developing team rituals:

1. Get to Know Your Team Members: build cohorts, ask each other questions, meet each other's loved ones.
2. Celebrate Your Culture: Recognize team members and strengthen bonds.
3. Reinforce Positive Behaviors: Acknowledge and reward employees for their work and efforts.
4. Increase Belonging: Do things together in particular ways such as building playlists, having contests, holding a virtual bonfire.
5. Improve Virtual Collaboration: Call out interrupters or intentionally design for work times that ban distractions, such as Slack or email.

Rituals are symbolic shared experiences that strengthen connections, communication, and a sense of belonging. Through repetition, they help reinforce desired beliefs and behaviors.

## Step 4: Rethink Collaboration

***This step is a deep dive into the six models of collaboration in a hybrid workplace. Review the different types, which to use when, and why teams must default to asynchronous communication.***

For decades, business experts have glorified "collaboration" as a way for organizations to be more productive and innovative. However, there was never a lot of evidence that collaboration was the key to either innovation or productivity–and now there's even less. The push for hyper collaboration drains people. It creates collaboration burnout and may be just as likely to undermine performance as to enhance it.

The key to building a thriving culture of collaboration is knowing when collaboration isn't necessary. The traditional approach to collaboration is broken. We've been sold on the idea that collaboration is all or nothing and we've been programmed to think that collaboration only happens in real-time. There are many ways of working that don't require collaborating with others synchronously or, for that matter, collaborating at all. To thrive in the new reality of work, you must rethink collaboration.

### The Problem with Real-Time

Collaboration burnout was already a problem long before the pandemic started. The globalization and digitalization of the economy were forcing people to collaborate more, even outside their organizations, increasing the number of meetings, calls, emails, Slack messages–you name it. The result was collaboration overload.

The lack of clear boundaries to the day, like commuting to and from work, has made it more difficult to switch off. Prioritizing input over outcome is not helping either. When presenteeism and workload are success metrics, employees are afraid to step away. But just because you *can* always be on doesn't mean you *should* be. If you never take time to wind down, motivation, productivity, and creativity suffer.

Resolving the disconnect between employer expectations and worker needs, between the demands of the workplace and the realities of our personal lives, requires rethinking how teams collaborate and communicate in a hybrid workplace.

### Balancing Synchronous and Asynchronous Work

Collaboration is what we want to *achieve* together–it unites us around a shared future–but it doesn't require that team members *work* together. Dividing and conquering a project is also a form of collaboration. Asynchronous communication adapts best to flexible schedules and relieves the pressure from having to respond immediately. Instead, people can respond at their own pace without interrupting their flow, creating a better collaboration across different time zones.

### Six Modes of Collaboration for Distributed Teams

This framework unlocks the possibilities of a hybrid, non office-centric workplace and is based on two different axes:

- "Me Time" versus "We Time"–activities we do at our own pace and time versus those that we do together.

- "Deep Work" versus "Casual Work"–activities that require more concentration, quality time, and focus versus those that require less.

### Work Mode 1: Focus Work

***Status: Unavailable and unreachable***

This is deep, heads-down work. Focus work encompasses tasks such as strategizing, planning, research, idea generation, or content creation. To produce the best work you're capable of, commit to focus and do your job without distractions. The majority of your time should be allocated to doing deep work.

### Work Mode 2: Deep Collaboration

***Status: Unavailable and unreachable except for those who are part of the experience***

This is similar to focus work but in a team setting. Unlike most meetings and team interactions, there's no room for distractions and multitasking. Deep collaboration is vital to advance new ideas and projects–it's the most complex, yet rewarding, type of collaboration.

The benefits of deep collaboration include fostering creativity, aligning team members, accelerating decision-making, increasing big-picture thinking, and integrating diverse perspectives. This type of collaboration works best in the same physical space.

### Work Mode 3: Regular Collaboration

***Status: Available at your own pace/discretion or within shared collaboration time.***

Regular collaboration mode includes regular meetings, team huddles, and process and response–the work generated by work. In this mode, you are in continuous interaction with others, which drives the work forward. Regular collaboration is necessary, but if not carefully monitored, it can bog your team down in busywork.

This is an excellent opportunity to default to asynchronous collaboration. Let people respond at their own pace but set clear rules of engagement. Tell staff what the best medium is for which type of issue and the expected response time of each. One good option is to block out a standard time for collaboration, making it easier to prevent interruptions.

### Work Mode 4: Learning

***Status: Always open to learning; formal training must be scheduled.***

This work mode is about acquiring new knowledge or skills via education, experience, or observation and may include mentorship, show and tell, experimentation, book clubs, and role-switching. It is vital for acquiring, transferring, and applying new ideas. Companies need to make space to encourage and reward learning, which can happen at both an individual and collective level.

### Work Mode 5: Casual Collaboration

***Status: Spontaneous availability–make it optional for people to participate.***

This mode of work includes small, impromptu interactions that help build interpersonal relationships and spark new ideas. The benefits of serendipitous encounters are exaggerated–there is no evidence that they boost innovation. However, casual encounters play a significant role in most teams by strengthening bonds and shared values that enable trust and teamwork.

### Work Mode 6: Unplugged

***Status: Unavailable and unreachable***

This mode of work is when your mind, brain, and body take a break. Working remotely has added to our anxieties, stresses, and workload, with burnout the frequent result. Relaxing, reflecting, and recharging are vital for creating the energy that allows us to tackle focus work and deep collaboration. Unplugging doesn't just mean taking a break from work but making sure you're disconnected from distractions such as email, chat, or social media.

## Step 5: Release Agility

***This step covers how to increase speed, adaptability, and decision-making. Examine how your team makes decisions, revisit norms and rules, and explore how to release agility.***

Engagement alone doesn't guarantee exceptional work–autonomy is actually more effective for driving innovative, groundbreaking behavior. Location of work is not the reason why people produce better results–choice is. Hybrid appears to be the model of choice. Not only do people report better results than in-office-only workers, but it also provides flexibility.

The benefit of schedule flexibility results in better life balance, reduced stress, and more convenience for caregivers. To succeed in a hybrid workplace, you need a culture of freedom and accountability. Creating this culture requires

getting rid of limiting rules and rethinking how decisions are made so teams can act faster and smarter.

### Define Your Hybrid Work Model

There are five basic types of hybrid and remote work models. Each comes with its own pros and cons and there are implications when subscribing to a particular model.

1. Remote-Friendly or "Office First": In an "office first" model, there may be some flexibility around working remotely, but employees are expected to spend most of their work time in the office. There are rules for which employees can work remotely on which days.
2. Fixed Hybrid or "Buckets": The organization determines a set of categories in this scenario, and employees work according to the one they fall in. Leadership usually defines these buckets with little or no input from employees. The downside of this model is that some people have a lot of freedom and flexibility while others have none.
3. Partly Remote or "Collaboration Days": In this setup, employees are expected to work on site the majority of the time but have the flexibility to work remotely a few days each week. Unlike the remote-friendly model, team members can choose the days they work remotely. The problem with this model is that it's still office-centric. Although it provides more flexibility to teams, it's based on the assumption that people need to be together to do great work. Most importantly, collaboration is structured around a schedule rather than a project or different modes of work.
4. Flexible Hybrid or Flexible Schedule: Employees can choose both their working hours and location in this model. It provides agency for teams to organize around work, integrating individual and collective preferences.
5. Remote-First or Virtual-First: In this model, remote work is the default mode for all employees. The company may retain office space for special occasions, such as events or design sprints, but all employees are expected to work remotely most of the time–and the leaders are, too.

The culture that got you here won't get you into the future. Creating a strong workplace culture is not office-dependent. Your workplace culture is a collection of choices.

Make sure your decisions consider gains as well as pains. Include people in the process. Understand their expectations and needs, inviting them to come up with new ideas and solutions. Most importantly, remember that the more agency you give people, the more accountable they become.

Whatever model you end up choosing, keep one thing in mind: don't erase all the progress made when your team was forced to work from home. Avoid the temptation to go back to normal simply for its own sake.



Gustavo Razzetti is the CEO and founder of Fearless Culture, a culture design consultancy that helps teams do the best work of their lives. For more than 20 years, Razzetti has helped leaders from Fortune 500s, startups, nonprofits, and everything in between on every continent but Antarctica. Gustavo is also the creator of the Culture Design Canvas, a framework used by thousands of teams and organizations across the world to map, assess, and design their culture. In addition to his consulting work with clients, Gustavo regularly speaks with leaders and teams about culture change, teamwork, and hybrid workplaces.

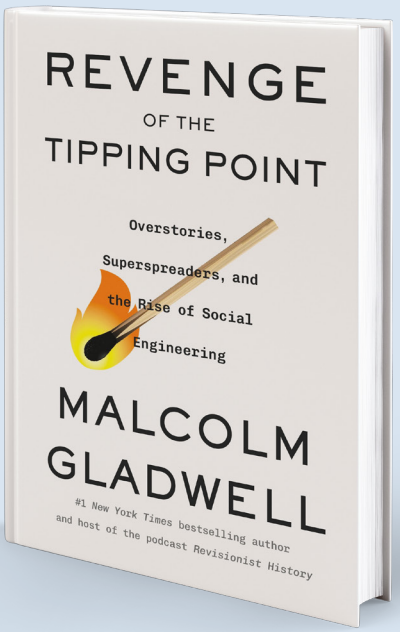
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# Revenge of the Tipping Point

Malcolm Gladwell

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Revenge of the Tipping Point

**Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering**

*By Malcolm Gladwell*

**Malcolm Gladwell** has been a staff writer at The New Yorker since 1996. He is the author of *The Tipping Point, Blink, Outliers,* and *What the Dog Saw*. Prior to joining The New Yorker, he was a reporter at the Washington Post. Gladwell was born in England and grew up in rural Ontario. He now lives in New York.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Take the Tipping Points Seriously

Malcolm Gladwell opens up his book, ***Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering***, with a discussion of the opioid crisis in America although the reader does not know that this is the crisis he is writing about until much later in the book. He details court trials where corporate executives attempt to evade responsibility for the role they and their company played in the epidemic, in part by using the passive voice. In order to evade taking responsibility, even while they are seemingly accepting responsibility, they use phrases such as "our product…. Despite our best intentions and best efforts, has been associated with abuse and addiction." Gladwell claims that this use of the passive voice permeates all three and half hours of testimony. Gladwell will later end his book with a discussion of the same crisis and explain the factors that played most prominently in its destructive nature in different parts of the country.

Gladwell uses the opioid epidemic, racial housing policies, and Covid superspreaders to expand upon ideas he first introduced in *The Tipping Point* years earlier and to explain how the people with real power in the world are those who "know when and where to push" the lever, activating the tipping point. He states that his book "is an attempt to do a forensic investigation into social epidemics." He believes that everybody needs to take accountability for the ways in which they help create epidemics.

## Presenting Three Puzzles

Gladwell details the exploits of bank robbers, Caspar and C-Dog. During their heyday in the early 1990s, there was a large upswing in car robberies in Los Angeles. Gladwell claims that a decent number of these carjackings were actually facilitated by Caspar and C-Dog. These partners would find someone to steal a car, rob a bank, and then use that stolen car as their getaway car. The person actually stealing the car was not the only person on their payroll. They would hire people to actually perform the bank robberies as well. These were often very young teenagers who likely got very little profit from performing the robberies as they had to give almost all of the money to Caspar and C-Dog. The two ended up with the cur-

rent bank robbery record of 175, beating the previous record of only 72. On one day alone, they facilitated 5 bank robberies. Soon, other criminals replicated their method of getting other people to actually rob the banks for them. Robbing banks was profitable and simple because it would take authorities many hours to investigate a crime that took mere minutes to perpetrate, leaving authorities always steps behind. These bank robberies, Gladwell explains, were a contagion. Each new robber did not independently devise the idea to hire others to do the dirty work. They learned it from Caspar and C-Dog. This is typical as "social epidemics are propelled by the efforts of an exceptional few – people who play outsized social roles."

Gladwell notes a puzzle in the case of Caspar and C-Dog. The bank robberies they inspired occurred in Los Angeles but did not spread to other cities. This is unlike epidemics that are not known to respect boundaries. To explain this puzzle, Gladwell turns to physician John Wennberg. Wennverg noticed that medical spending in different towns varied greatly depending on where a person lived. This spending did not correlate with the income of residents. The conclusion he came to was that "How your doctor treats you, in many cases, has less to do with where your doctor was trained, or how well he or she did in medical school, or what kind of personality your doctor has, than with where your doctor lives." Eventually, it was determined that small area variation such as described above has to do with contagion. Just as the contagion of bank robberies did not spread, neither does the contagion of overspending on medical care.

Gladwell then turns to his next puzzle. He discusses the shockingly low vaccination rates of students who attend Waldorf schools. He states that while some parents do send their children to such a school to join a community where relatively few vaccinate, this is not generally the case. Rather, people pick up anti-vaccination stances after joining the Waldorf school. Gladwell explains how Waldorf schools promote independent learning as well as intellectual curiosity. Vaccinating parents, on the other hand, tend to defer to authority because they do not completely understand how the vaccines work. They trust medical professionals to advocate for what is best. Gladwell believes that the Waldorf community, by encouraging people not to default to outside expertise, tends to veer parents away from vaccination. Despite the fact that these Waldorf parents associate with non-Waldorf parents as well and also hear the advice of authorities, and despite the fact that their children sometimes then get these vaccine-preventable illnesses, the pull of Waldorf's ideals is strong enough to help them maintain their stances.

Gladwell then explains the concept of overstory. An overstory is "not something explicit that's drilled into every inhabitant. The overstory is made up of things way up in the air, in many cases outside of our awareness." Overstories are often overlooked by people who are focusing on what is in front of them, but Gladwell believes they are powerful enough to explain situations like Waldorf schools' vaccination track records.

Gladwell then turns his attention to a real school in the pseudonymous town of Poplar Grove. The town is described as being an upper middle class that centers around family, and many see it as an ideal town. Children who grow up in this town tend to do well throughout their lives. The problem with Poplar Grove is that a disproportionate number of successful teenagers have taken their lives, and Gladwell uses the example of this town to ask how much the members of a community are responsible for the spread of contagions.

To explore what happened in Poplar Creek, Gladwell turns his attention to zoos. When zoos tried to breed cheetahs in captivity, they had abysmal success rates with poor fertility in general and then poor outcomes from the offspring. Upon further investigation, they learned that far more than other species, the genetic makeup of cheetahs is incredibly uniform. They are so uniform, in fact, that cheetahs can accept skin grafts from other cheetahs without worry of their bodies rejecting the tissue as foreign. Incidentally, they believe there must have been a large kill off of cheetahs sometime in the past. Only a few survived, and those few are the ancestors of current cheetahs.

Cheetahs and the students at Poplar Grove are part of monocultures, and monocultures are very prone to contagions. In Poplar Grove, kids all have very similar expectations placed upon them whether they want to meet those expectations or not. Schools like the high school in Poplar Grove will have the same types of cliques that other schools do such as jocks and skaters, but students in all of those groups tend to be high achieving and popular. Even outsiders are high-achieving. The problem with this uniform culture, Gladwell maintains, is that it tends to diminish resilience. In a typical community, a contagion can infect one group, but the groups are different enough that the contagion does not spread outside of the confines of that group. Because everyone at Poplar Grove is so uniform, however, there is nothing blocking the spread of a contagion, in this case suicide, from infecting all of the groups. Gladwell claims that "The best solution to a monoculture epidemic is to break up the monoculture." The parents of Poplar Grove could have sent their children elsewhere, but they did not because they actively wanted the high achieving atmosphere of the Polar Grove school. He labels Poplar Grove as iatrogenesis which is a medical term that refers to when an intervention actually causes an illness.

## The Social Engineers

Gladwell turns his attention to Lawrence Lane in California. When this 25 lot street was created, it had rules in regards to the racial makeup of the area that were put into place to limit white flight. It all is centered around the concept of a tipping point. In this case, the tipping point refers to the percentage of non-white people who can move into a neighborhood before white people start moving out. To explore where that actual tipping point is, Gladwell quotes numerous statistics. Washington D.C.'s head of public schools said that "once a school hit 30 percent black, it went to ''99 percent in a very short time.'" This analysis as well as multiple others makes Gladwell state that the tipping point usually occurs when previous outsiders begin to make up between a quarter and a third of the makeup of a group. He refers to this as the magic third, and he believes it is so important that it can be considered "a universal law."

> *Gladwell believes that schools like Harvard give student athletes an advantage because of the Magic Third rule, and this is a type of social engineering.*

This magic third is what governed the housing rules at Lawrence Lane. One third of homes were meant for white people, one third for Black people, and one third for Asian people. This was meant to keep all three groups in proportion and was meant to stop the white flight that would happen if any other group began to make up more than thirty percent. The problem came when a white person wanted to sell one of the vacant lots to a Black family, relatives of current Lawrence Lane residents. It was hard for Black people to find housing in the area at the time, so the family really needed this property. The residents had to decide whether maintaining their ratios and doing what was better for the community was worth denying this family housing. This was a difficult moral decision, but in the end, they decided to resist the sale. Because of the difficulty of such decisions, Gladwell writes "It's no wonder, then, that when most people attempt to play games around tipping points, they do so on the sly."

To further explore the issue of tipping points, Gladwell turns to women's rugby at Harvard. Rugby, Gladwell notes, is not a particularly popular sport among American women in part because of its violent nature. Recruiters often had to search hard to find recruits for Harvard's Rugby team. Gladwell explains that there are two tracts for admissions to Harvard. The first is the traditional track for highly intelligent students. The second consists of athletes, legacy students, and other students of special interest, and this second group comprises approximately 30% of Harvard admissions. It is much easier for someone in this second group to get into Harvard, and they can do so with fewer academic qualifications. The saying is that "The athletes always get in." Gladwell believes that schools like Harvard give student athletes an advantage because of the Magic Third rule, and this is a type of social engineering.

He turns to the story of Columbia University where many Jewish students eventually enrolled. Harvard's president in the early twentieth century was Abbot Lawrence Lowell, and he, along with other college presidents, sought to limit Jewish enrollment in their schools. Students were actually ranked for admissions based upon the likelihood that they were Jewish. Still, by 1925, Jewish students came close to making up a third of the student population. In response, Harvard moved to a more subjective system for accepting candidates that gave the decision makers more power to turn people away. The goal was not to eliminate Jewish students but rather to limit them.

Gladwell believes that Harvard began using sports as a way to keep certain types of students under the Magic Third. What many of these athletes have in common is that it takes a tremendous amount of money to get these athletes to the place where they are competitive at a college level. Gladwell believes colleges like Harvard use athletics as a way to ensure that certain minority communities never get above the Magic Third.

Rugby is important because of who it keeps out. Because of this, Gladwell states that "social engineering has quietly become one of the central activities of the American establishment."

Having discussed the importance of overstories and monocultures, Gladwell goes on to explain the importance that a few key players can make in a contagion. To investigate this, he looks to the role of emissions testing in lowering toxic chemicals. He notes that a small handful of vehicles actually account for the most emissions in an area. Routine checking of all vehicles does little to solve this problem. What would be more effective would be to have detection devices set up around a city with police officers pulling over those who create unusual amounts of emissions. Gladwell says that "Urban air pollution is a perfect example of a problem caused by the Few. But we behave as if it's a problem caused by all of us. No one wants to act on the asymmetry." Focusing on the Few causes many problems. For example, high emissions vehicles could be owned primarily by poorer people. What should officials do if these people cannot afford car repairs? Gladwell claims that increasing technology will make it possible for communities to determine who the Few are in many different scenarios, and society will then have to decide what to do with this information. This is a problem even in science where a very small percentage of people aerosolize viruses far more effectively than others, and as such, they provide a much greater health risk to others. What ought to be done about these people during pandemics or when people are close together? These are all tipping point questions.

## The Overstory

Gladwell turns to the Holocaust in his exploration of overstories as he discusses the Los Angeles survivors' club. The group started talking about memorabilia they had from the Holocaust. These were important items that they wanted saved but that they also did not want in their homes. Their collection formed a memorial of sorts that people could visit, and similar memorials came up around the country. Gladwell asks why it took fifteen years after World War II ended for any memorial of this type to be established. He uses this question to investigate overstories that take over more than just a small area but actually permeate a whole culture or a whole country. He believes there are things people can do to change or affect these overstories.

Gladwell points out how very few references to the Holocaust occur in literature and textbooks in the early years after World War II. Even Jewish people themselves abstained from speaking much about the atrocities that occurred during World War II, and many people in those years may not even know what the word, holocaust, referred to. This changed in 1978, however

when NBC aired Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss. This nine and a half hour program was the first real exposure most people had to the Holocaust, and while activists like Elie Wisel found real fault in the mini-series, it was an important cultural moment that changed the way Americans viewed the Holocaust and even the extent that they knew about it. Such televised moments are hard to come by these days when there are so many viewing options available to people, but it was a significant cultural moment of the time. "That's what storytellers do," Gladwell writes. "They can change the overstory."

Gladwell then goes on to say how people are often surprised by these social contagions when they come on, and he uses the example of gay marriage to explain this. Back in the 1980s the thought of gay marriage ever becoming legal seemed far out of the realm of possibility. Many people at the time believed the narrative that gay men were not interested in commitment with one person and that they even questioned whether homosexuals could even ever be happy. Even in 2005, many people believed it could take upwards of 25 years for gay marriage ever to become possible. A made for tv movie came on in 1992 called Doing Time on Maple Drive where a young man comes out as being gay. Gladwell quotes Larry Gross as saying, "It's not the media pushing this button to get that effect. It's the media creating the cultural consciousness about how the world works… and what the rules are." The problem with this movie was that the character's homosexuality is at the center of who he is and is at the center of the narrative. It is a problem that can be solved. It is not an incidental fact, and because of this, the film did not change the public's feelings about homosexuality or gay marriage.

Years later, however, Will and Grace came along. This was a television show about gay characters, but one of the gay main characters, Will, did not "seem too gay." Because gay people were a key part of the story and because their homosexuality was not presented as something to be solved, this show did start to change people's opinions. Gladwell thinks that many people are surprised when tipping points occur because nobody really knows how close they are to having 25% of people buy into a concept. Therefore, when this 25% is breached, it comes as a shock. Had people known how close they were creeping to that number in regards to gay marriage, the tipping point may have been more predictable.

## In Conclusion

Throughout his book, Malcolm Gladwell works to explain the factors that contribute to tipping points and also the ways in which these tipping points can be manipulated. He is careful to explain that such manipulation can bring into question some serious ethical issues. His careful use of extensive examples helps his reader understand his concepts more fully. As the world becomes even more technologically advanced and as people begin to understand sociological principles more clearly, these questions of intervention will become ever more prominent.

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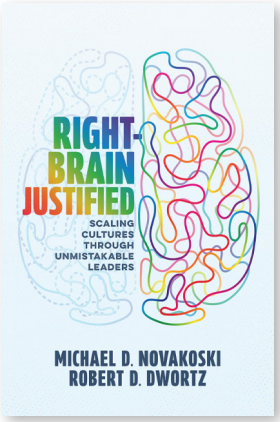
# Right-Brain Justified

Mike Novakoski & Rob Dwortz

Executive Book Summaries®

# Right-Brain Justified

## Scaling Cultures Through Unmistakable Leaders




*by* **Mike Novakoski and Rob Dwortz**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What makes some companies truly unmistakable? How can organizations tap into their people's full potential, creating spaces of trust, connection, and belonging, rather than relying solely on data, metrics, and output?

The answer, according to ***Right-Brain Justified: Scaling Cultures Through Unmistakable Leaders*** by Mike Novakoski and Rob Dwortz, lies in adopting a "right-brain-justified" approach to leadership. This means cultivating creativity, empathy, and authenticity as core business practices – not soft skills, but essential ones.

Drawing from neuroscience and decades of experience in cultural transformation, Novakoski and Dwortz offer a practical roadmap for building companies where people matter as much as performance. Their methodology centers on helping leaders "toggle right," using both emotional and analytical intelligence to foster psychological safety, trust, and connection. Tools like their uMap™ manager upskilling platform and the Become Unmistakable (BU) framework offer tangible ways to drive engagement, retention, and productivity by putting people at the heart of business strategy.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Explains how emotional intelligence and brain science can elevate leadership impact.
- Teaches leaders how to build cultures where employees feel seen, heard, and valued.
- Describes the multiple ways in which the uMap™ platform can equip managers with relationship-based leadership tools.
- Invites managers to create psychologically safe environments that unlock innovation and performance.
- Shares real-world stories and exercises to develop your own unmistakable leadership style.

## Introduction

In the Pixar film *The Incredibles*, Robert Parr, a.k.a. Mr. Incredible, toils away as an anonymous cubicle worker while he secretly possesses some amazing superpowers.

That's a pretty apt metaphor for the professional lives of many working people today. Most companies have yet to fully unleash the superpowers of their employees. Instead, they toil in almost cartoonish fashion – in black and white, down bleak, gray corridors in soulless cubicles or in faceless, interchangeable positions.

This disconnect between human potential and workplace reality is what inspired us, the authors, to create a different kind of company culture – one that celebrates and nurtures the whole person, including what we call the "right-brain skills" that make us truly human, and one that can be scaled.

We're Mike Novakoski and Rob Dwortz, cofounders of Become Unmistakable (BU), a software platform and training company designed to build confident managers and unmistakable teams.

What we discovered along the way was remarkable: We could actually train people in human skills and people management, the right-brain skills associated with empathy and creativity. And the more we "right-brain justified" our workplace with these right-sided skills, the greater our success.

Old models of business management where employees are simply a tool or an asset that we plug and play clearly aren't serving today's workforce or businesses. Let's embark on a journey together – to embrace a right-brain-justified approach that enables leaders to develop people, and the organizations they're involved with, to their full potential.

## Chapter 1: Identifying the Problem

## THE UNINSPIRED ORGANIZATION

The first challenge many businesses face is a pervasive sense of disconnection and a lack of inspiration in the workplace. This lack of inspiration manifests in several ways.

### Employee Recruitment and Retention Issues

Companies struggle to attract and retain top talent in a competitive market. What makes an organization a place where people clamor to work? If there *is* a secret formula for this, can it be replicated?

### Underperformance and Average Results

Employees often operate in a myopic manner, focusing solely on their assigned tasks without engaging with the broader goals of the organization. Companies that empower employees and respect their autonomy attract and retain exceptional employees.

### Missed Opportunities for Innovation and Collaboration

A lack of trust and vulnerability prevents employees from sharing ideas, collaborating effectively, and contributing their full potential.

The more we studied the brain science and our own data, the more we understood that these issues are often rooted in traditional, left-brain business models that view employees as mere assets or numbers rather than as individuals with unique needs and aspirations.

### Making the Shift

We often encounter companies who feel great about their chosen business-operating system, who feel really good about how they are running the business side of their company, but who don't know what they're missing on the human side of operating culture. They don't know that they have not really leveraged the energy of their people yet. They have not found a way to create the active engagement that BU facilitates.

The solution lies in embracing a right-brain-justified approach. Creating that space involves shifting from a solely data-driven, KPI-focused mindset to one that prioritizes:

- **Meaningful connection.**
- **Engaging employees beyond their core tasks.**
- **Empowering managers as relational leaders.**

By adopting these principles, companies can create a work environment that is not only more fulfilling for employees, but also more productive and successful in the long run.

Mike's company, EV Construction, serves as a compelling example of the transformative power of right-brain justified. The company has implemented dozens upon dozens of initiatives that foster connection, including Mike's favorite – the ice cream truck, a Future Builders program, and other innovative but heartfelt and personal ways people at EV connect.

### Right-brain Justified: A Platform for the Future

Right-brain justified is not merely a set of feel-good initiatives; it's a comprehensive platform for building a sustainable

Companies that empower employees and respect their autonomy attract and retain exceptional employees.

and thriving business. By integrating this approach with existing "left-brain" systems and industry-specific software, companies can create a holistic and powerful operating model.

This involves:

- **Recognizing the limitations of traditional "left-brain" systems.**
- **Using right-brain principles to bridge the gap.**
- **Investing in training and development.**

By embracing this holistic approach, companies can transform their workplaces from cold, transactional environments to vibrant communities where employees feel valued, inspired, and empowered to contribute their best.

## Chapter 2: The Answer

## RIGHT-BRAIN JUSTIFIED

Many businesses operate in a left-brain world, prioritizing profits and shareholder wealth above all else, often overlooking the human element. As a result, many employees feel disconnected, uninspired and unfulfilled in their work, leading to average results, underperformance, and missed opportunities.

The BU approach offers a solution to these challenges by advocating for a leadership style that embraces the right side of the brain. This approach emphasizes:

- **Human-centered leadership:** BU cultivates a culture of trust, vulnerability, and authenticity, transforming the workplace into a joyful and fulfilling environment.
- **Unleashing creativity and innovation:** By encouraging employees to tap into their unique talents and passions, BU unleashes a wave of creativity and innovation, leading to exceptional results, improved performance, and a competitive edge.
- **Building a legacy of success:** By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and deep connections, BU creates a sustainable model for success that extends beyond short-term profits, ensuring a positive impact on the company, its employees, and the community for years to come.
- **Connect, Align, Coach:** Embracing the right-brain approach, we realized, means connecting as authentic people, aligning our goals, and coaching our managers. We upskill leaders.

### Accessing the Right Brain to Become Unmistakable

For us, being unmistakable is tapping into, at its deepest level, an authenticity that cannot be replicated. People have a tendency to believe that psychological safety, authenticity, and meaningful connection cannot be taught. But the science does not support that.

Some people may naturally have high levels of "emotional intelligence" (EQ). However, no one is *all* right brain or *all* left brain – and we can learn, with tools, coaching, and training, how to "toggle" the brain to access more of the right when we need to – which is often when we are leading people.

### The Power of Vulnerability and Authenticity

At the heart of the BU approach lies the power of **vulnerability and authenticity**. By encouraging leaders and managers to share their whole selves, including their struggles, shortcomings, and aspirations, BU creates a safe space for genuine connections and deeper understanding within the workplace.

The characteristic of being unmistakable, of being unforgettable, is founded on the concept that each of us can exceed the norm in our careers, in society, in our marriage and relationships, or in being neighborly – that's the level BU wants to strive for. And then, we want to scale it and train people and teach it.

**We challenge you to think of unique ways that you can meaningfully connect with your stakeholders.** While stakeholder connections often involve grand gestures and formal programs, the true spirit of BU reveals itself in everyday moments as well.

## Chapter 3: We Have a Theory

## THE TRANSITION FROM EV TO BU

Puppets and ice cream trucks are nice. Having meetings where people can own up to mistakes and get support midway through a big project are even better. But could the BU company we founded take the lessons of EV – this special organization with a special leader – and scale them?

What we've found is that when you invest in developing these human skills (psychological safety, authenticity, human potential, meaningful connection, etc.) in your managers, you create a ripple effect throughout your organization, one that is sustainable for years or even generations to come. Remember our initial theory:

**The manager-employee relationship is the most critical in any organization. Relationship skills can be learned, practiced, and measured like any other job skill. With defined process, the manager skill can be scaled and sustained through distance and time. Finally, these critical relationships are the lifeblood of great cultures too.**

### Can a Theory Become a Mindset?

As we really examined what psychological safety and vulnerability in the workplace could do, we saw transformation was possible – and not just at EV Construction, but across many sectors. We developed our uMap™ software, and the process of upskilling managers to become BU leaders entered the equation. The BU transformation, we promise, is trainable, scalable, and infectious.

At the heart of this people-first approach lies a fundamental requirement: creating an environment where people feel safe to be themselves. This is where the concept of psychological safety becomes essential.

### Creating Psychological Safety to Ignite Unmistakability

"Psychological safety" is the belief that one can take risks, express ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences in a team or social setting. This encourages open communication, innovation, and collaboration, as people are not afraid of being judged, punished, or embarrassed. Psychological safety is critical in fostering learning, engagement, and high performance, especially in complex or high-stakes work environments.

### Formalizing Care and Creating Trust

Human skills associated with connection come naturally to some, but others can learn them as long as they are provided with the right roadmap. By teaching managers to model behaviors, such as leaning into vulnerability to encourage others to open up and share in return. We train managers to share about themselves and uMap™ gives them a platform for doing so. Leaders always go first, modeling these behaviors to set the tone for vulnerability and create a safe, open environment for their teams.

## Chapter 4: BU's Story

## THE FORMULATION OF THE PROGRAM

In the first *Become Unmistakable* book, we shared the concept of uMap™ – a tool for building meaningful connection. Over time, and with the help of the talented team at BU, uMap™ has evolved into a manager upskilling platform.

It combines management training to elevate human skills with the information managers need about their people to apply those skills to formalize care. This care is delivered through regular feedback sessions about employee development and performance utilizing a repeatable process that enables managers to consistently connect, align, and coach their people to success.

While we knew our approach was working, we hadn't yet realized the scientific foundation that made it so effective. One of the most powerful frameworks we use to understand workplace behavior and emotional responses is the SCARF model, which helps leaders recognize and manage social threats in the workplace.

Coined by NeuroLeadership Institute (NLI) founder David Rock, the SCARF model measures the social drivers of people – and their vulnerabilities or triggers, depending on which of the SCARF elements is most important to their sense of self: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness.

### Connect. Align. Coach.

How do we scale the BU vision? How do we help companies continue to improve – months and years down the road?

We do this by preparing the leaders and managers in the organization with the skills and process to deliver the culture consistently at scale. The foundation of our approach to upskilling managers can be described in three simple words:

- **Connect:** It all starts with connection, and nothing breaks barriers and creates connections like a good story. Storytelling begins with the leader.

The best results for your organization will not come from having people live within their very narrowly defined job descriptions, but from allowing them to use all of their talents to get the best outcomes.

- **Align:** Aligning around definitions of success is the key to any relationship. We at BU encourage managers to discuss success at both professional and personal levels, so they can support the whole person.
- **Coach:** Once managers and employees connect and align, coaching to successful outcomes comes naturally. Giving feedback is complicated and most organizations struggle with performance evaluations. So how do we create this really connected, aligned, and human feeling around performance management? We do that by first focusing on the strengths and development needs of the individual, and then we move into objective success measures like individual and team goals.

*When individuals and organizations align around definitions of success, they can work together to achieve outcomes where both win!*

## Chapter 5: It's All About the Employees

## CONNECTION AND VULNERABILITY AT SCALE WILL SUPERCHARGE YOUR COMPANY

Part of your job as a leader is to ensure your employees are getting to use their talents – that they feel free to bring their ideas and have those ideas valued on their very first day. To unlock this potential and create an environment where employees can truly be themselves, psychological safety becomes the foundation.

### Psychological Safety for Employee and Human Potential

Psychological safety is the belief that you can take risks, express ideas, ask questions, be vulnerable, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences in a team or social setting.

Harvard Business School professor, Amy Edmondson, has done extensive work on the topic of creating the four quadrants of psychological safety and the five steps to creating psychologically safe environments.

The four quadrants:

- Learning safety
- Challenging safety
- Collaborating safety
- Inclusion safety

### A Place to Be Authentic

How and where do organizations provide the space for teammates to express their authenticity? Organizations need a platform where teammates can share what is unmistakable about them and a culture that supports authenticity. The platform includes a physical place – team meetings, break rooms, jobsites, all-hands meetings, etc. – and a virtual space where information can be shared so we can learn about each other. Consider both to create an environment that lasts.

### Leaders with Skills to Encourage Authenticity

Transparency in teams doesn't happen by accident. It takes human skills to build relationships and encourage candor. With a platform for sharing, people can practice connecting with others. Through deliberate practice and the right tools, managers can learn to create environments where authenticity flourishes.

### Psychological Safety as an Operating Standard

All organizations have an operating culture they seek to consistently apply. You can add psychological safety to standard operating processes like performance management and employee development with relative ease.

### Measure Effectiveness and Continously Improve

Human skills can be measured just like any other operating metric. Trust building, employee engagement, feeling supported and heard – these sentiments and more can be measured with various survey tools offered at intervals. Measuring manager skills, effectiveness, and confidence is where we focus, because we believe that managers hold the keys to scaling and sustaining psychologically safe environments.

### Reward the Behaviors You Seek to Create

Of the organizations we observe, those with the greatest levels of psychological safety (which is highly correlated

with organizational success) create manager development programs that build the human skills necessary to drive positive culture. They also value these qualities in succession planning. Reward managers who build trust in their teams and develop future leaders who can do the same.

## Chapter 6: Company Impact

### HOW THE RIGHT BRAIN IMPACTS RESULTS

Up to this point, we've talked a lot about connecting through uMap™ and how managers leverage the exercises we facilitate to create deeper connections among their teams. Let's turn our attention to why and how the emphasis on relationships leads to organizational results.

The more we explored and delved into the brain science, the more we realized that not only was this a powerful motivator and something transformative for organizations and their people, but it was also a force multiplier on the bottom line. The platform created an undeniable ROI. The right-brain toggle triggered left-brain results.

#### Why BU Companies Work

What BU makes clear is you must create an environment of trust and safety in order for your people to feel an exponential sense of energy about where they work and what they do. With that trust and psychological safety, people can fully develop themselves into superstars devoted to your organization and its mission.

But can the results be measured? In "The Neuroscience of High-Trust Organizations," Paul Zak states: "The effect of trust on self-reported work performance was powerful. Respondents whose companies were in the top quartile indicated they had 106 percent more energy and were 76 percent more engaged at work than respondents whose firms were in the bottom quartile. They also reported being 50 percent more productive."

#### Moving From Right to Left

On the flip side, for many, servant leadership focuses solely on that servant leader and not how to scale it, how to make it sticky, or how to prove it yields real results. In the end, you have a business or organization to run. When you formalize care, you make the difficult conversations easier. You head off problems sooner, you own them together, and you push for results, but in a way in which the teamwork is so much stronger because you've already invested in the right-brain side. You have invested in the *trust* space.

Remember, the best results for your organization will not come from having people live within their very narrowly defined job descriptions, but from allowing them to use all of their talents to get the best outcomes. That raises both performance and outcomes. That's the theory behind the WHY of the right brain—and how it impacts results.

## Chapter 7: The Toggle Toolkit

### HOW TO MAKE BU'S IDEALS "STICKY"

Many of us remain left-brained in our tendencies (and this is OK). We knew this as we developed the tools to sustain the BU approach.

In fact, being left-brain justified can be exactly what organizations need in many critical situations, as these scenarios require strength in things like finance, risk management, planning, and operations.

But how do we recognize those situations in which a brief (or sustained) lean to the right is needed to make good things great? That's where the Toggle Toolkit comes in handy.

The Toggle Toolkit combines learning with software to deliver culture consistently at scale in organizations. Sustainable distribution depends on manager relationships and managers' ability to deliver the type of support that creates psychologically safe environments. The training elevates managers' human skills so they can do just that – the technology delivers the skills smoothly across organizations regardless of size or industry. The microlearnings and automated communications create nudges to keep managers on task with their people. It is completely mobile so people can connect in any environment.

## Chapter 8: Inspiration

### WHERE PEOPLE MEET CULTURE

EV Construction was the incubator for testing the ideas of BU. We saw managers learn to right-brain justify and become leaders who inspired the best in others (and who stretched and learned a lot about themselves in the process). We got to see our ideas transform the lives of the people EV's team cared so much about—as EV itself soared. As we launched BU and further refined the brain science, the platform, and the training, the BU teams also got to see

what these ideas did for organizations with hundreds and thousands of employees. We got to see it up close and personal in our own lives!

When a company is fueled by BU, the results can be pretty amazing. Certainly, there are measurable elements—but again, those intangibles have a ripple effect through the organization, the lives of its people, and the stakeholders and broader community they serve.

## Conclusion: Right-Brain Justified

### UNLEASHING THE POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTION IN BUSINESS

In a world obsessed with metrics, KPIs, and automation, we've often forgotten the most powerful asset of any organization: its people. The BU mindset shift empowers leaders and managers to tap into the often-overlooked potential of authentic human connection.

#### Revisiting the Promise of the Big Six

Let's revisit the big six problems that BU can solve for organizations:

- Meaningful connection
- Build versus buy
- Upskilling manager talent
- Creating enthusiasm unknown to mankind
- Consistent delivery of culture
- Unleashing human potential

Companies that embrace BU see:

- **Increased employee engagement and retention:** People who feel valued and connected are more likely to stay with an organization, reducing turnover costs and creating a sense of continuity.
- **Improved productivity and performance:** Teams that trust and respect each other work more effectively, collaborating more readily and achieving higher levels of output.
- **Stronger customer relationships:** Happy and highly engaged employees are more likely to provide exceptional customer service, building loyalty and driving positive brand perception.

BU is a lifelong pursuit that requires ongoing commitment and a willingness to embrace vulnerability and growth. It's about constantly challenging ourselves to become better leaders, better communicators, and better human beings.

We encourage you to take the principles outlined in this book and make them your own. Adapt them to your unique context, experiment, and be bold in your pursuit of a more human-centered workplace. The world needs more unmistakable leaders—and it starts with you.





**Mike Novakoski**—also known as Mike Nova—is the president and CEO of EV Construction, EV Group, and Become Unmistakable (BU) Consulting. With 36 years of experience in the construction industry, he is known for his innovative leadership, culture building, and motivational approach. An accomplished author and international speaker, Mike addresses topics like organizational culture, innovation, and right-brain leadership. He is an active member of the Young Presidents' Organization, where he contributes globally through training and program development. Mike holds a BS in construction management, an MBA in finance, a certification in Innovation Management, and is a Harvard Business School alumnus.

**Rob Dwortz** is the CEO and cofounder of Become Unmistakable (BU), a former bank CEO, and the creator of the uMap™ platform and BU training programs, which help organizations drive cultural transformation through right-brain-justified leadership. With a career spanning roles as CEO, founder, board member, and advisor, Rob combines leadership experience with brain science to help leaders foster meaningful, people-centric workplaces. He specializes in large-scale manager development and speaks on topics such as connection-based leadership, brain science, and the future of work. A University of Michigan and Ross School of Business graduate, Rob is also a YPO member and currently serves on the boards of West Michigan Community Bank and Grand Rapids Label Company

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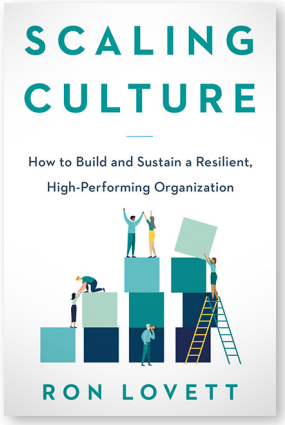
# Scaling Culture

Ron Lovett

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# Scaling Culture

## How to Build and Sustain a Resilient, High-Performing Organization




*by* **Ron Lovett**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Culture is present in every company – even if you didn't intend for one to be. This culture is at the very core of your organization; you can't leave it up to chance – you must scale it and create a plan with actionable steps that create alignment and generate a results-driven team of employees and stakeholders.

In his book, ***Scaling Culture: How to Build and Sustain a Resilient, High-Performing Organization***, Ron Lovett provides insight into the key components necessary to create an organization that is successful and lasts. Founders and other members of executive leadership are given the strategies and framework needed to build an organization that thrives in the future. It is apparent to most that culture is valuable in any organization, but it often seems more like a moving target as opposed to the drive that creates the fundamentals of any great organization. This book is the perfect guide for anyone looking to use their company culture to their advantage instead of sweeping it under the rug, creating potential dismay.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How your company's culture is indicative of your organization's future.
- How to formulate the core values necessary to address your organization's purpose.
- The strategies necessary to build warm, authentic relationships that nurture success.
- The ways to change management and innovation with specific processes to make them work.

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## Introduction

Your company's cumulative personality can be defined by your corporate culture, which is also the foundation (ground zero) of acceptable behaviors to drive business results. Many leaders don't know how to embrace culture in a way that works in their favor; instead, they leave it to chance, creating an unstable, volatile, and unpredictable environment.

For any organization looking to scale the company, culture must also be scaled. Culture in an organization is critical in creating a resilient and high-performing organization. For this to occur, though, there must be passionate stakeholders in the mix. These are the stakeholders that not only bring their A-game to the table but they are also the cheerleaders who express their loyalty to the organization with every chance they are given.

## What Is Corporate Culture And Why Is It Important?

In the beginning, I didn't think much about corporate culture – only considered it a distraction from real business. Having several remote offices, I centered my focus primarily on the people directly in front of me, policing their actions and not paying any mind to the other offices' behaviors or expectations. It wasn't until I visited these remote offices that I realized ignoring the corporate culture of all the offices across the board was a mistake. Without a clear definition, behavioral guidelines, and expectations, I had allowed every location to have a different culture – which was not conducive to the organization's success.

As previously stated, every organization has a culture, whether planned or not, and this culture is either a product of design or default. Core values are what guide the team's behaviors – they lay the foundation for how people should behave, and culture in a perfect world is how those values come to life. When you have a culture by default, they are often competing cultures within the organization. These can result in aggressive, risky environments and cause a lot of instability within the structure. On the other hand, culture by design creates more harmony and keeps everyone on the same page. That is what needs to happen if you want your business to grow, and everyone has to live with the organizational values for it to succeed – even when you are not watching.

## Create Core Values

Before I was a believer in culture, my company was in a bad place; upon reflection, so was I. After reading ***Nuts!*** By Jackie and Kevin Freiberg, I learned how Herb Kelleher at Southwest Airlines created a culture that his whole staff was in alignment with. I was so intrigued by the story that I even approached a Southwest Airlines employee and asked how they liked their job – it rocked me when he said it was the best company on the planet to work for. This encounter boosted my spirits that maybe culture was not nonsense after all.

In order to get in line with what it takes for a cohesive culture, it requires core values to be implemented. These values are the words and clarifying language that describes behaviors and expectations for your team. Your core values are what drive your team's accountability and allow you to praise or coach them according to a very clear set of standards. One of the best exercises you can do with your employees is creating a company eulogy – what would someone say about your organization (especially ex-customers and former employees)? Use this to help shape and develop the core values you want to be instilled in your business and employees.

## Core Value Activation: Strategies For Any Leader

If, at first, you don't succeed (I didn't), try again. The first time I tried to roll out the values in our company, it was a total disaster. Part of the initial rollout included a checklist of our core values to go over during the onboarding process – it lacked the "experience" necessary to make the culture a reality.

As a leader, you have to address everyone at once when you want to implement something new. Everyone needs to be on the same page, and they need to know that you are behind the words you are saying. If you are introducing your core values like you mean it, your employees are going to feel more empowered to do the same. Leaders have to take charge – talk is great, but the action has to be equally visible. Your team's most powerful motivation is when they see your own transformation and enforcement of the culture. Identify and deploy culture champions to be involved in the bigger picture and help identify the next leaders.

## Culture-Based Screening And Onboarding

Core values are something that cannot be force-fed during the onboarding process. Culture is not something that can instantly be activated company-wide, not without a nurturing drive behind it. Just because someone is a great hire on paper doesn't mean that they will instantaneously fall in stride with the culture you have cultivated within your business.

Shifting to a culture-based screening of employees can help ensure that those you onboard are more in line with the company's current culture. Something to consider when promoting your job vacancies is The Employee Value Proposition. The Employee Value Proposition puts you in the shoes of the potential candidate with the question – "What's in it for me (the candidate)?" You can use this model to think about what might be more important for your candidate beyond the salary requirements. This is your opportunity to stand out to the best client and reflect on what your company offers to the potential clients you interview.

Consider the three levels of employees that create your environment:

- A-Players – Your passionate shareholders – those who see the company's purpose from 10,000 feet away and understand where your organization is headed and how their roles function inside of it.
- B-Players – These players understand the company's purpose, values, and goals and work toward them intelligently. These employees are resourceful enough to overcome obstacles in their role and bring creative thinking and innovation to the job. Not everyone was made to be an A-Player, but the B-Players should not be underestimated.
- C-Players – Those who fall into the C-Player category require direction on what to do and when to do it. That stays the same no matter how well aligned the company is, and ideally, you have to screen out these players or manage them out if they already exist – they do not function with autonomy.

Even though there is diversity, it doesn't equal inclusion. It is part of it, but if you only focus on that, it won't get you all the way there. You have to foster it by including safety and trust, building up listening skills, increasing vulnerability and empathy, and also creating a space with no judgment.

## Building And Strengthening Relationships

Accomplishing anything with culture in your organization requires you to take the first step and build a relationship with your people. Much like your culture is the foundation of your company, your relationships with your employees are the core of accomplishing anything in your organization.

In *Unleashed*, Frances Frei outlines a beautiful process for building trust. She says that everyone has one of three areas where they struggle (wobble) on trust-building, including authenticity, logic, and empathy. If you take a look at yourself and your relationships with your team, where do they find you wobbly? There are some obstacles when approaching trust – interruption, speaking too quickly, humor and jokes, dismissing, rescuing, and asking the wrong questions. Remember – everything you do in dealing with another person will either bring you closer together or create distance between you. You can strengthen your team by using a format centered on intention, outcome, and experience.

## Coaching

Coaches have an incredible impact on our lives. They believe in us, see the possibilities that we can't see, and encourage us to push our limits and go further than we would have on our own. They enable sustained change, and if someone is setting goals or resolutions that do not stick, then the coaching strategy is not working as intended.

It is important to remember:

- A coach is not a friend, consultant, therapist, counselor, mentor, trainer, or teacher
- A coach is not a manager
- A coach is not a guru

## Operating As A Team

When a team is a top performer, it can be a life-changing experience. This only works when the team works together – they have to put the team's success ahead of their own desires to shine or dominate others. There is a unification within their purposes. The creation of peer forums creates a bond among team members. The benefits of these forums include relationship building, revealing gaps in team systems, raising issues quickly, creating trust and belonging, saving time, identifying your company's future

leaders, finding the internal experts, transferring information, and fostering inclusivity.

## Organizational Alignment

Being aligned in your company's culture is a hard task to accomplish. As you evolve in your understanding of cultural alignment, you will realize that you have to make big changes. There is a need for clear and direct communication – transparency that requires strategic input from everyone involved.

There are three things that you must communicate with every person in your organization:

1. Your Core Values
2. Your Purpose
3. Your "BHAG" – big, hairy, audacious goal

Alignment happens on several different levels – ranging from individual to global levels. The goal is to create transparency on all the levels necessary to achieve the alignment you require in your culture.

## Change Management

Although I love change, there is a pain in change management. There are always ways to change and improve things – keeping with the mindset "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" is only a path that will lead you nowhere. Change this adage to "even if it isn't broken, break it apart, and put it back together better than you found it" and tackle the entire idea.

As a leader, you need to decide when change needs to happen. Once you decide, present why it needs to happen and begin working on it from the ground up. You can build change into your values and implement them throughout your whole organization. Use your A.B.C's – "always be changing." Change will become a force that empowers your people to grow and be empowered.

## Learning And Innovation

As leaders, many of us tend to push what works best for us onto others. Each person has different ways of learning, and for many of us, not using the right learning techniques for the individual can hinder everything. I am a visual learner – if something isn't visual, I'm toast. The same types of things happen with your employees – you have to be able to grow, change, and adapt to your organization's learning needs. As a leader, there is a time to invest in pushing your team to learn and think creatively. You should provide support for innovation and lead by example. Expect your team members to lead innovation because you can't scale it by yourself.

## Conclusion

No matter how far you have come in creating the cohesive culture you want in your organization, it is important to remember not to stop because you are comfortable. Always look for ways to change things, improve them, and more. Your organization will thrive in this type of culture, especially if you want to implement strategies and techniques that build the warm, authentic relationships you need and the ability to coach the people in your life when you want to succeed. The bottom line – just don't stop.



**Ron Lovett** is an entrepreneur and globally recognized author, speaker, and corporate culture thought leader who is passionate about change. He transformed the physical security industry when he founded Source Security, a national firm that grew to more than 3,500 staff and enabled Ron to exit at a 24x multiple. His unorthodox leadership style is characterized by going back to the drawing board, disrupting the status quo, and acting swiftly on new information. He lives in Nova Scotia with his wife and their three children.

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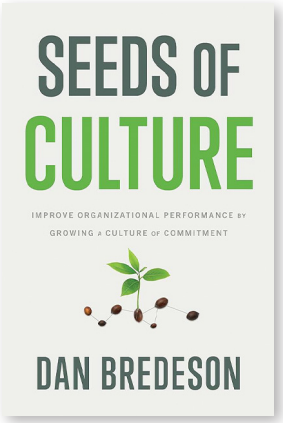
# Seeds of Culture

Dan Bredeson

Executive Book Summaries®

# Seeds of Culture

## Improve Organizational Performance by Growing a Culture of Commitment




*by* **Dan Bredeson**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Culture can make or break an organization. Whereas a positive culture bears the fruits of meaningful work, commitment, and a shared goal, a toxic culture leads to a poor climate, lack of commitment, and slower organization-wide progress. This is why it's vital to get your cultural design right from its very onset.

The book ***Seeds of Culture: Improve Organizational Performance by Growing a Culture of Commitment*** reveals which "seeds" leaders must plant to grow a culture of commitment, and how they can properly nurture the growth of those seeds throughout their lifecycle.

Author Dan Bredeson shows leaders how affinity, priority, energy, authenticity, credibility, and integrity become vital players on their journey to "growing" a successful culture. His "seeds of culture" philosophy deep-dives into the importance and implementation of effective communication, ethics, psychological safety, diversity, generosity, autonomy, and mutual accountability for a thriving culture.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How organizational culture is directly linked to performance.
- What makes a great culture farmer.
- To sow the seven seeds that create a thriving culture of commitment.
- How to keep cultivating these seeds throughout their lifecycle.

## Introduction

Winning leaders don't build culture, they grow it. Culture is an organic process. And much like my dad planted seeds of corn, leaders need to plant seeds of culture. Reflecting on my upbringing on a small dairy farm in southwest Wisconsin provided me with the "aha moment" that was the spark to write this book. Here, we learn which seeds you should plant to grow a culture of commitment, and how you can properly nurture the growth of those seeds throughout their life cycle.

Whether you lead an organization or not, I think you'll find a few grains of truth in the seeds of culture. I hope they help you achieve outstanding results and experience the joy that comes from working with like-minded individuals in a culture of commitment.

## Part 1: Lay of the Land

### Chapter 1: Defining Culture

How do you define culture? If you're new to an organization, your coworker's behavior will tell you "How we do things around here." Stick around long enough to see how the members of a culture dress, speak to one another, speak to customers, speak to stakeholders, resolve disagreements, handle failure, handle success, interact with leadership, and interact within their industry. In other words, how things in the organization really get done.

Culture can be a hero or villain. It can be a friend or foe, poison, or anecdote. Culture's versatility is matched only by its omnipotence. If culture is powerful enough to determine the success or failure of an organization, then it would seem prudent for leaders to understand how it works. Don't put up the toxic culture. Change it or get out. It's not worth it to stay.

Mission statements don't define culture either. Think about it: how do you describe your workplace? Do you quote the company's mission statement? Are you inspired to work hard because your job "helps deliver a competitive and sustainable rate of return to shareholders?" The way you answer questions about your job has more to do with culture than it does with any "big picture" goals the organization may have.

### Chapter 2: Why Culture Matters

Four million. That's the number of Americans who quit their job from April 2021 through January 2022 (The Great Resignation period).

Most of the conversations surrounding the great resignation position it as a win for employees who finally took control of their professional destinies. While employees may have won, employers most definitely lost. Why? Because turnover is hella expensive. It costs you roughly 33 percent more to replace an employee than it does to keep them on the payroll. When good people leave your organization, they take experience, knowledge, and performance with them.

More money. Flexibility. Enjoying the work. Relationships with coworkers. Avoiding burnout. Mental health. All these contributed to the Great Resignation. If any one of these factors is missing from a job, it's powerful enough to force a person to resign. If several are missing from a job, it's a toxic cocktail (or should I say toxic culture?) powerful enough to force millions to resign.

Toxic cultures are rife with hostility, cliques, gossip, mistrust, and selfishness. They are a breeding ground for struggles, manipulation, abusive leadership, finger-pointing, poor communication, and horrible performance.

A better culture must go with better pay if you want to keep your team intact. If the economy is booming, a good culture will keep people from going to the competition and will attract more people to your cause. If the economy is a train wreck, a good culture will improve your organization's performance and help you stay afloat.

### Chapter 3: Culture and Performance

Organizations that win and organizations that lose both have a culture, but there's obviously something different going on in the two organizations. What is it about the culture of a winning organization that influences its members to make choices that improve organizational performance? The answer: commitment. There's an emotional weight with commitments that goals don't have. A goal is something you achieve if everything comes together. A commitment is a promise you keep, even if everything falls apart. Teams with a culture of commitment are ready when a storm of adversity blows through.

Culture is an organic process. The four CP Life Cycle describes how culture farmers influence the seeds of culture to improve organizational performance. The stages of the 4CP Life Cycle include:

- Culture: "How we do things around here."
- Climate: "How we feel about the culture."
- Commitment. "An individual choice based on how I feel

A positive culture leads to a good climate, which inspires commitment to the organization. . .

about the climate." Organizational commitment is an individual's psychological attachment to an organization.

- Community. A group of people committed to each other and the organization.

A positive culture leads to a good climate, which inspires commitment to the organization, which manifests itself in the behaviors of members who are devoted to the success of the community where they work.

## Part 2: Traits of Successful Culture Farmers

### Chapter 4: Think Like a Farmer, not a Carpenter

Both farmers and carpenters utilize tools to manipulate raw materials. But both have a different mindset when it comes to three concepts: control, force, and speed.

Farmers exert influence; Carpenters expect control. If you are a leader who has a thirst for control, quench it with a hobby. But please do anything other than direct your need for control toward the culture you want to grow. A big reason why leaders shouldn't expect control over the results of a cultural change effort is because people, and the culture they'll align themselves with, don't respond well to force. Forcing cultural change into an organization normally leads to one of two results: the organization openly rebels against the changes, or the organization's members verbally agree to the change but quietly conduct business as usual.

Without an effective culture farmer, an organization's culture is at the mercy of human nature. If a leader fails to plant specific seeds of culture, human nature takes over and nobody knows what the crop of culture will look like. Culture also takes time. There are no shortcuts. The growth of culture in your organization must be approached with the patience of a farmer.

### Chapter 5: Affinity

Affinity for people as it relates to growing culture means we find a way to like people, even when they seem to be unlikeable. Maintaining affinity isn't always easy, but it's possible with some intentional effort. If you feel your affinity slipping, try exhibiting 3 qualities I've noticed all great culture farmers have in common: humility, curiosity, and connectivity.

Stay humble or you'll get humbled by the marketplace. Your position on the organizational chart doesn't make you any better than anyone else. Everyone has a fascinating story to tell. Be the type of person who wants to hear it.

People don't leave companies; they leave people they have no connection with. Find ways to connect with people in the organization. Build a personal connection that goes beyond business etiquette but never crosses professional boundaries.

### Chapter 6: Priority

There's no value in waiting to plant seeds of culture. You'll always wish you had done it sooner.

Acknowledge culture's existence. Openly discuss the importance of culture so it stays top of mind. Respect culture's influence. Once culture has taken root, it wields tremendous influence. Avoid changes to policies, processes, and procedures that run counter to cultural principles unless, of course, you're trying to change the culture.

Give culture space to grow. Most things planted in a garden need a little space to grow. Seeds planted on top of one another end up fighting for resources. Culture is no different. People need space to move freely and interact with other members of the organization.

### Chapter 7: Energy

Just like a farmer, anyone interested in growing a culture must expend their physical, mental, and emotional energy to ensure the seeds of culture take root:

- Physical energy: A leader who is too exhausted to be present won't have much success growing culture.
- Mental energy: The mental energy to grow culture is a combination of your current knowledge and your

willingness to learn every single day

- Emotional energy: Think of emotional energy as a team with an offense and a defense. Enthusiasm is your offense; Resilience is your defense.

Culture farmers rarely ever take a day off. The seeds of culture aren't going to plant themselves. Be prepared to expend a lot of physical, mental, and emotional energy. Every. Single. Day.

### Chapter 8: Authenticity

First impressions are overrated. Culture farmers must focus on lasting impressions instead. Don't "fake it till you make it." Instead, just remember "being real has great appeal."

Building authenticity as a culture farmer begins with self-awareness and sincerity. Self-awareness is knowing who you are and who you are not, before asking people to commit to your vision. Sincerity is staying true to who you really are. Gather the courage to ask yourself, "What is my reputation?" Then, ask the same to someone you trust, and who cares for you enough to be honest with you.

### Chapter 9: Credibility

Credibility is the reason people will start listening to you. The credibility you have with the team is in direct proportion to the value you deliver to the organization. If you offer some helpful advice or deliver on a promise, those are deposits in your credibility bank. If you are the reason a project goes sideways or you mishandle an important customer, those are withdrawals from your credibility bank.

Always bring value and make more deposits than withdrawals. Be sure to surround yourself with credible people. If your inner circle is filled with people who don't bring value to the rest of the team, your credibility as the leader will suffer.

You can earn credibility and you can lose it, all depending on your actions. So, keep working on your skills and abilities. Get better at what you do so you can help everyone around you get better at what they do.

### Chapter 10: Integrity

Credibility is the reason people will start listening to you. Integrity is the reason people will continue listening to you. Be courageous enough to start acting with integrity and stubborn enough to maintain it.

Culture farmers don't operate in the dark. The team is watching how you do everything. Your personal integrity is imprinted on the organization by the actions you take, the decisions you make, the things you celebrate, and the behavior you tolerate. So do the right thing, even when it's uncomfortable.

Optimism promotes winning more than cynicism prevents losing. Mustering the cynicism necessary to assume everyone is out to screw you over is exhausting. Sure, you've been burned a few times, but who hasn't? Instead, believe that optimism promotes winning more than pessimism prevents losing.

## Part 3: Seeds of Culture

### Chapter 11: Before You Plant

Seeds of culture are affected by the Weather (external environment) and Soil (internal environment). Culture farmers can't control the Weather, but they need to react quickly and adapt to it. Similarly, no organization is airtight. The outside world will always find its way in.

There isn't a bad time to plant seeds of culture and it shouldn't take long to check the Weather and Soil. A good culture farmer can learn a lot about an organization in a matter of weeks. The history of an organization will provide a lot of clues about its culture. Understand how the past influences the present if you want to grow a culture of commitment in the future.

### Chapter 12: Effective Communication

Effective communication is rooted in clarity, transparency, and consistency. You need this first seed of culture before planting the others.

Clarity is the difference between simply receiving information and knowing what to do with it. Don't speak to be heard, speak to be understood. Understand what your audience wants to know. Regardless of the type of communication you have with the team, your audience wants answers to the following questions:

- What exactly are you asking me to do?
- Why are you asking me to do it? Why should I care?
- Who can I go to for help?
- How do I begin?

Transparency follows clarity. Remember, the cover-up is worse than the crime. When you screw up, tell the team you screwed up. Apologize. Tell them you'll do better in the future, and then make sure you actually do. Have the cour-

When you screw up, tell the team you screwed up. Apologize. Tell them you'll do better in the future, and then make sure you actually do.

age to be candid because the story people make up on their own is always worse than the truth. Finally, develop the discipline required to stay consistent. Consistency is finding a cadence of communication that suits the purpose of the message you're trying to deliver, putting that cadence on the calendar, and then sticking with the schedule.

### Chapter 13: Ethics

In an increasingly connected world, it's becoming more difficult for unethical organizations to hide their transgressions. People today don't commit to organizations they can't trust. Don't try to cover up your transgressions in a world where everyone records everything and can broadcast it to the entire world in real-time.

Doing the right thing isn't always the easy thing to do. The way to encourage the growth of ethics in an organization is for the leader to model a strong ethical code.

As a culture farmer, define the ethical standards for the team and make a deliberate display of ethics. Avoid the slippery slope. There is right, and there is wrong. Choose right. Yes, people will think you're being uptight about the rules, so what? You are the person who will get called on the carpet if the organization falls into an ethical abyss, so hold your ground.

### Chapter 14: Psychological Safety

Psychological safety creates an environment where people can create, innovate, share opinions, and make mistakes without fear of reprisal, embarrassment, or blame.

People won't commit to an organization they are afraid of. Psychological safety promotes dialogue based on trust, which leads to more effective solutions and greater performance. The professional candor that comes with psychological safety reinforces expectations and allows teammates to collaborate and challenge each other in the right way.

Planting psychological safety starts with leaders setting the tone from the top, setting clear expectations, encouraging participation, and reacting appropriately.

### Chapter 15: Diversity Is a Good Start

Diversity includes differences that are visible and not visible. Equality means treating everyone equally and giving everyone access to the same resources. Equity means treating everyone fairly and giving everyone access to the resources they need to compete, based on each person's circumstances. Inclusion refers to the perception that everyone's unique contributions would be appreciated.

In other words, Diversity is being invited to the party. Equity is getting a ride if you don't have a car. Inclusion is being invited to dance and feeling free to show off all your dance moves. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) should matter to culture farmers because diversity is inevitable. The world isn't going to be less diverse five years from now. Embrace the diversity that is inherent in our increasingly global and remote work environment, or you'll be run over by it.

### Chapter 16: Generosity

When I'm on the receiving end of generosity, the warm, fuzzy feeling I get inspires me to be generous with the next person I meet. And that person pays my generosity forward, and so on. Viral generosity inspires organizational commitment. Generous acts with no strings attached prove to the team that you care about them.

To plant generosity, make empathy your default mode. People will care about the team if they know the team cares about them. Be generous with your time. Reach out to members of the organization when you don't have a reason to. Be generous with your money. Spending money on your current team costs less than finding their replacement if they quit. Be generous with your praise. Praise is a renewable resource, after all. Be generous when giving credit to your team.

### Chapter 17: Autonomy

Autonomy is the freedom to do a job in the manner you see fit. It is not freedom from consequences if you do a bad job.

If you've planted effective communication, the team should know how to do their jobs. If you've planted ethics in the organization, illegal ethical breaches shouldn't scare you. If

you've planted psychological safety, the candor you've encouraged to grow allows you to quickly rein in anyone who goes beyond the pale. Plus, psychological safety removes the stigma of failure when experimenting with new ideas, but you have to let people go out on their own and experiment!

Don't be afraid to give up control. You never had it in the first place. Reframe autonomy as an opportunity for team members to build self-efficacy (a belief in one's own ability based on previous success).

### Chapter 18: Mutual Accountability

Heavy-handed accountability may get you compliance, but you'll never get commitment. Why? Because people who are truly committed to something don't need to be held accountable for doing it.

Far too many leaders, managers, and supervisors use accountability as a guise for micro-management. It's a tough spot for a leader. If they ignore accountability, mediocrity will creep into the organization. But if they try to force accountability, the team will resist it. What's the leader supposed to do? The answer: become a good culture farmer and plant the seed of mutual accountability.

When team members embrace accountability from leaders and each other, the organization has reached a state of mutual accountability.

## Part 4: Life Cycle of Performance

### Chapter 19: Cultivating Performance

Planting seeds of culture is the first stage in the Life Cycle, but it's not the last. There's work to be done to cultivate those seeds and encourage them to influence performance. Understanding the factors in play during each stage of the four CP Life Cycle will increase the likelihood that a culture farmer's efforts will lead to improved performance.

One concept I haven't discussed but can't ignore is subculture. Most organizations will have different teams, departments, or work units. Each of these groups may develop its own subculture if the members share common tasks and history and the team has a stable membership. Respect their influence because they have a greater impact on performance than the large organizational culture.

Leadership and transformational practices set the cultural tone. Management and transactional practices determine the climate. Each team member chooses their level of commitment based on the climate. If they like it, they'll commit. If they don't, they won't. Effective commitment (the want to type of commitment) will yield the greatest results. Finally, a sense of community will grow when a group of individuals choose to commit to each other and the organization.

### Chapter 20: A Final Lesson for Aspiring Culture Farmers

If given the choice, why would someone choose a life of physical exertion, mental exhaustion, emotional vulnerability, and economic uncertainty? My dad could have made a living in any number of different ways. Why did he sign up for the life of a farmer? One day I decided to ask him. The answer he gave is the final lesson I'll pass along to all aspiring culture farmers out there. My dad answered my question with one of his own:

"Why would I ever want to do anything else?"

That's the mindset you need if you want to be an effective culture farmer. You have to want it, no matter what. My dad knew that the most difficult challenge led to the most satisfying victories. He enjoyed the challenges. He embraced the grind. Culture farmers need to have the same attitude.

## Conclusion

Growing culture isn't as hard as farming, but that doesn't mean it's easy. If it were easy, then everyone would do it. Planting seeds of culture will probably be the most difficult thing you do in your career, but that's what will make it so rewarding.

There will be days when you question yourself. Keep going there will be days when you want to quit. Don't stop. There will be days when you're humiliated. Laugh it off and show up the next day. The people around you will see your effort. They'll see the work you're putting in, day in and day out. And when the performance starts turning around, and I guarantee it will, they won't have to ask how you did it because they've been watching you do it every day. The question they'll ask instead is "Why did you do it?" My hope is you'll answer the same way my dad did: "Why would I ever want to do anything else?"



**Dan Bredeson** is an organizational cultural and leadership consultant with over twenty years of experience. Throughout his career, Dan has garnered a unique perspective on culture by interacting with and observing every level of the organization in hundreds of different businesses and nonprofit organizations. He has firsthand knowledge of how leadership decisions made in the C-suite impact the culture and, ultimately, the performance of an organization. Dan combines his professional experience with academic research, and then looks at it through the lens of his upbringing on a farm to offer a new paradigm for organizational culture.

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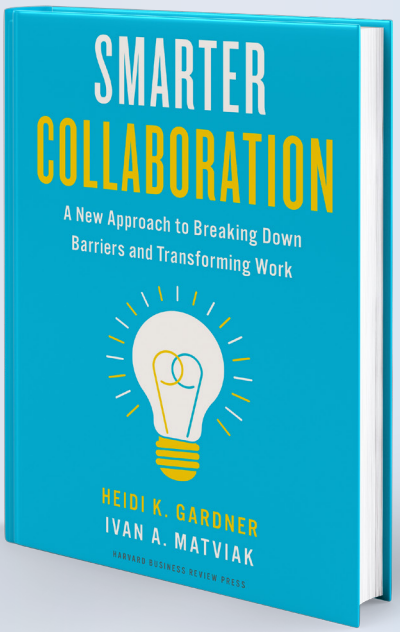
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# Smarter Collaboration

Heidi K. Gardner

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Smarter Collaboration

**A New Approach to Breaking Down Barriers and Transforming Work**

*By Heidi K. Gardner*

**Heidi K. Gardner** is a Distinguished Fellow at Harvard Law School and a former professor at Harvard Business School. Previously a McKinsey consultant and Fulbright Fellow, she is the author of Smart Collaboration: How Professionals and Their Firms Succeed by Breaking Down Silos, a Washington Post bestseller. She was named by Thinkers50 as a Next Generation Business Guru and is cofounder of both the research and advisory firm Gardner & Co and Smart Collaboration International.

## Modern Businesses Must Collaborate to Get Ahead

In today's fast-paced, increasingly remote business climate, the stakes for effective collaboration are higher than ever. For-profit companies are looking for ways to serve their customers better, engage in more profitable work on a more consistent basis, and get ahead of the many challenges facing businesses today. Non-profit organizations are simultaneously looking for more effective ways to carry out their missions. Through this culmination of challenges for non-profits and for-profits alike, collaboration has understandably become a topic of interest for many sectors and industries. However, the biggest challenge lies in getting implementation right to avoid falling into a collaboration trap.

Collaboration works when it's done right. Harvard Law School Fellow Heidi K. Gardner, wrote this sequel to her first publication, *Smart Collaboration*, to showcase the profound transformation of many organizations that embraced the concepts laid out in that book. ***Smarter Collaboration: A New Approach to Breaking Down Barriers and Transforming Work*** is the culmination of research involving thousands of executives worldwide. Its aim is to help today's businesses thrive through effective collaboration. "By design, this book asks and answers practical questions. What are the barriers to smart collaboration? How are they overcome? And those answers, again, come directly from the front lines. Throughout this book, we'll use three lenses to explore smarter collaboration: The WHY, The WHO, The HOW." With an updated plan of action that combines practical advice, new empirical research, and rich stories, Gardner illustrates the fundamental dynamics of collaboration "now expanded to reflect our work in such diverse industries as financial services, health care, biotech and pharma, consumer products, automotive, technology, telecoms and media, energy, government, and higher education. But *Smarter Collaboration* goes much further, with a new emphasis on the who and how."

## Part 1: The Business Case for Smarter Collaboration

No matter what industry you're in, every business owner strives to run an innovative business with low risks, loyal customers, and a diverse team of highly engaged expert employees ready to tackle the most challenging problems.

No matter how you define your bottom line, smart collaboration is good for it. Collaboration makes fast and effective innovation possible. It helps businesses build customer loyalty and minimize risks. All of this contributes to attractive outcomes and enhanced profits and revenues.

"More than mere teamwork, smart collaboration creates a virtuous circle through its elements of why, who, and how." Why collaborate? To give everyone involved a sense of meaning and purpose while focusing on transformational goals. Who benefits from collaboration? People with varied experiences and expertise can draw strength from their diversity. How is collaboration effective? By creating highly engaged employees who work with their teams to lean into challenging problems. Once it's done right, the cycle works so well that it becomes self-reinforcing.

Gardner begins by "showing how smarter collaboration enhances engagement, which is a much-vaunted element of talent management but currently under serious strain." She explains how smart collaboration directly affects the mental and physical well-being of all people involved and can help organizations reach their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals. "And since today's most dynamic companies no longer even try to get lifers, we wrap up with a new twist on hiring: showing how smarter collaboration with today's employees can improve your chances of making them "boomerangs," who return later as employees, brand ambassadors, or future customers."

While smarter collaboration can help a business on all fronts, increase its chances of satisfying an alumni network, and make its DEI initiatives more likely to succeed, your company must purposefully link its strategy to its collaboration to enjoy these benefits. And that is the focus of the second part of this book.

## Part 2: Assessing Your Collaborative Starting Point

It's common to find business leaders whose views about collaboration are disconnected from their organizational reality. Gardner explains how "research in social psychology confirms that people's views change when they attain greater power," meaning that a leader's views about collaboration are often skewed as a result of their relatively lofty position as a leader. However, the challenge is more than mere perception.

There are several reasons why a leader's experience of collaboration genuinely differs from those of others in the organization. "First, leaders often are long-tenured within their company, meaning that they have had ample time to build broad-reaching, productive networks of colleagues. Second, many were promoted to senior leadership in part because people trusted them along the way—and as we'll explain later, trust is a critical foundation for collaboration. Finally, few people say no to an executive's request to collaborate." The upside, Gardner explains, is that a leader's positive experience, which is reinforced daily, "creates a chasm between their perception of collaboration in the organization and everyone else's reality," which creates fewer obstacles for them when it comes to collaboration.

Businesses looking to thrive through collaboration must first implement a "strategy of smart collaboration." This strategy must include the practical steps an organization must take to get from here to there. The first step, Gardner explains, "is to design and conduct a rigorous, data-driven, smart collaboration diagnostic."

The organizational diagnostic outlined by Gardner in this section "presents a set of methodologies for judging the strength of your collaborative foundations." This powerful approach helps companies assess their collaborative opportunities and prioritize their actions to deliver a return on their efforts. She "presents a new way of looking at the behaviors underlying smarter collaboration so that every person can understand how to use their natural way of operating as a strength to contribute to collaborative teams."

This section also explores how team dynamics and individual attributes contribute to understanding collaborative strengths and using them in business. She explains the seven behavioral dimensions of smart collaboration on an individual level, issue-centered and group-centered behaviors, how to identify your own behavioral tendencies accurately, how to understand and use collaborative strengths on a team level, and how to get and keep great people.

## Part 3: How-To's and Use Cases for Smarter Collaboration

Even when all parties enter a collaborative effort with enthusiasm and motivation, things can disintegrate if there's no strategy to help things gain momentum. It's not uncommon for an organization to bring people on board who lose interest or aren't aligned with or inspired by the company's core values, and their enthusiasm fizzles out, or they move on to a new endeavor that catches their eye.

This section of the book "explores the challenges of integrating talent—both those new joiners whom you hire on their own and those who join as part of an acquisition—and how a focus on smart collaboration can help." It "provides a holistic approach to the who and how of collaboration." Gardner begins by showing how collaboration helps solve a major organizational dilemma: how to ensure that the people you bring aboard actually stick around, become profitable, and thrive.

In an effort to motivate people to engage in collaboration, many of today's businesses have tried (to no avail) to incentivize people to collaborate. However, as Gardner points out, "If paying people to collaborate worked, this chapter—and even this book—could be quite short. You'd just have to point people in a collaborative direction, put money on the table, and wait for things to sort themselves out. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way."

For this reason, she has created a "comprehensive three-part system that combines aspirational goals and performance metrics, discussions aimed at performance improvement and development, and a revamped annual compensation review."

No matter how well your collaborative efforts are going, an

> No matter how well your collaborative efforts are going, an organization won't see results overnight."

organization won't see results overnight. "Even the most motivated performers need strategically aligned structures to help them take full advantage of their collaborative efforts." Transformative efforts also require "significant ongoing vigilance and leadership." Gardner "tackles the challenge of supporting collaborative efforts over time" by laying out a practical approach to embedding collaboration into a company's culture so that it takes root and thrives in the long run.

## Part 4: Troubleshooting Collaboration Challenges

Diversity and inclusion are hot topics in the business world today. Gardner begins the final section of this book by explaining how "collaboration can create the appearance of diversity without real inclusion." She argues that mismanaged collaboration can actually marginalize certain workers, especially if it's used to "provide a veneer of diversity."

When collaboration is truly "smart," it's inherently inclusive. Gardner explains how "Organizations that practice smarter collaboration are more likely to call on the right people at the right time, regardless of their place in any formal hierarchy. They are more likely to encourage diverse inputs, recognize a broader range of potential solutions to challenges, value unorthodox contributions, and give more types of people opportunities to engage in higher-value work."

She goes on to give us a closer look into these types of "traps." She explains how to avoid setting them by suggesting ways for companies to engage in truly smart collaboration, a collaboration that fosters inclusion, in turn making it more engaging and productive. In Gardner's words, "It's a virtuous cycle that requires leadership and intentionality."

On the other hand, as previously mentioned, mismanaged collaboration can strain individuals and teams to such an extent that trust is destroyed, and the collaboration becomes a weak link for the business. This doesn't only happen when a dramatic turn of events causes pressures to build and dysfunctional behaviors to surface. The same outcomes can be seen even after everyday performance pressures arise, such as a client demanding a defective product be fixed immediately; the team working on an important project, the outcome of which many people are waiting for and counting on; or a situation in which a new boss becomes anxious and scrutinizes every move the team makes, effectively transmitting their anxiety to the team; In this section, Gardner shows us how to "sustain a collaborative culture during crises, which can help separate your organization from the pack and set you up for a strong post-crisis rebound."

The best teams can handle any pressure when it arises and maintain their efforts to collaborate effectively when it's most important to work together. The first step to maintaining this level of composure is for the leader to understand their behavioral tendencies and how they've manifested themselves under pressure in the past. Keeping these patterns in mind can help leaders remain alert to certain reactions that can "unintentionally undermine collaboration." These possible pitfalls should be discussed openly, and a plan should be made for how cross-silo work should play out in a crisis. "Remembering that the go-it-alone urge tends to arise under pressure, you need to identify specific ways that people, departments, and even the board will be able to tap into resources to help them navigate."

While some organizations have trouble building collaborative efforts, others tend to go overboard. Gardner explains how "Some companies throw teams non-strategically at every problem, on the assumption that if some collaboration is good, more must be better. But spreading resources too thin and overusing teams for routine work leads to bottlenecks and burnout." She goes on to describe the "steps that can be taken on three levels—senior leader, teams, and individuals—both to head off overcommitment and to manage it when it arises."

Each team member is obligated to help build an organization's culture through the stories they tell, the ways they engage with others every day, and the accomplishments they choose to celebrate. Smart collaboration begins at an individual level, and smarter collaboration is meant to be the means to an end. "That end," Gardner maintains, "is your strategy."

Implementing the who and how of collaboration is the key to successful collaboration. Gardner believes that "smarter collaboration should be at the top of every senior leader's agenda, because it is essential for addressing the highest-value challenges and opportunities in today's complex, data-rich, war-for-talent setting. At the end of the day, collaborative success hinges on leadership focus and strategic execution."

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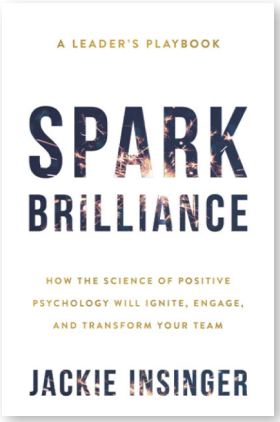
# Spark Brilliance

Jackie Insinger

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Executive Book Summaries®

# Spark Brilliance

## How the Science of Positive Psychology Will Ignite, Engage, and Transform Your Team




*by* **Jackie Insinger**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What is brilliance? It's many things— performance, alignment, understanding, connection. It's what any organization is capable of when great leaders amplify the abilities of great people.

In ***Spark Brilliance***, Jackie Insinger teaches from her over two decades of experience to introduce an approach to leadership and team management that's transformative when it comes to productivity, employee fulfillment, optimism, creativity, and much more. The result? Better results— and clearer definitions of what those results are meant to be.

It all begins with Positive Psychology, an often undervalued approach that dismisses negativity and 'doom & gloom' thinking with psychological principles that inspire an optimistic view of the future— and just so happen to be true. When you shift your perspective to embrace Positive Psychology, you'll not only transform your own leadership and the performance of your team; you'll also skyrocket results for your entire organization. You'll see higher performance in innovation, collaboration, employee engagement, and ultimately revenue and profit.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The Platinum Rule— the key secret to extraordinary leadership in any setting.
- Why psychological safety can enhance your team's performance or derail it.
- How to take tactical risks in order to supercharge growth.
- How build a culture of authentic connection at any organization.

## Introduction

The method you'll learn here is simple, and it works. But it's not always easy, and it takes time. It takes commitment. Eventually, it will become a mindset shift. The perspective you choose creates emotional contagion. It ripples through your team, person to person. As the leader, you set the culture with your perspective; you can choose a mindset and outlook that travels like a spark, leaving brilliance in its wake. You can spark connection, creativity, and joy in your team. You can choose your perspective moment by moment, and it will become second nature. It's going to require extra effort now, but that extra effort will pay passive dividends in the future. It begins with you.

## Discover

As a leader, your job is to support, nourish, and empower the potential and performance of the people you lead. According to Salesforce Research, people who feel seen and heard by their leaders are over four times more motivated to do their best work and perform to the best of their abilities. With this information, you can tailor interactions you have with them to how they want to be treated. They'll feel seen, validated, and deeply fulfilled; their confidence and performance will skyrocket. Their brilliance will spread.

Most importantly, their trust in you as their leader will be strengthened exponentially. They'll be more likely to open up to you about what they need in the future— which means you, as their leader, will be able to do your job that much better.

This isn't where your job ends, though. You're the sparkler that lights all the other sparklers. The mindsets and behaviors you want to see in your team begin with you. As leaders, we're so often focused on the people we serve that any focus on ourselves often falls by the wayside. Of all the hundreds of clients at Platinum Leadership, the percentage who had taken the time to truly think about and understand how they wanted to be treated before we began is remarkably small.

## Understand

To create a team culture built on great communication, all voices need space to be heard. Sure, each person has a responsibility to speak up. But take a moment to think about the environment you foster in the team you lead— are you making space for all those different voices? Or are a few of the loudest ones taking up all the space?

Amplifying all voices is active, not passive. Instead of leaving it to each person to speak up, actively create opportunities for all voices. Ask the quieter members of the team what they think. In front of everyone, bring up the insights a more gun-shy team member shared with you. Or just sit with the silence; often, the best nuggets of wisdom and connection lie in the moments of silence between the talking.

A great communication culture is one where every person on a team is secure in the value of their contributions, and is certain that their leader wants to hear and understand them. If you build it, they will speak.

## Align

50 percent of managers don't set effective employee expectations. Half of all leaders out there are trying to drive results with a team that isn't clear on what they're supposed to be doing. Yet, hardly do you hear from leaders that the people they lead aren't "meeting expectations." The word "expectations" usually comes up in a positive context: "I have high expectations for my team." Typically, when expressing dissatisfaction, leaders are more apt to say that they "aren't seeing" results, behaviors, or actions they want to see from their reports.

The question is: Are you sure they know what you're looking for? It's entirely possible (and common) for leaders to believe they're being crystal clear with expectations, while employees feel those expectations are murky at best.

Success, like everything else, is a matter of perspective. Without a leader who clearly states what they're looking for, employees are left to determine what success looks like via their own perspective and background of experience. This is a quick road to employee disengagement; and with disengagement comes reduced performance, missed business goals, and ultimately, stagnation.

## Connect

Authentic connection in teams makes them stronger— and leads us to greater business outcomes across the board. An authentic workplace is a top desire of engaged employees, with 75 percent saying they want their coworkers to share more about their true selves. Teams that report a strong sense of connection correlate to vastly higher employee engagement ratings; organizations that score highest on employee engagement are an average of 21 percent more

profitable. The vast majority of an individual's engagement at work is driven by their manager. The connection of the team is a crucial piece of the puzzle, too. People who report having friends at work consistently rank higher in both happiness and performance. Great relationships make us happier and better at our work, but on a deeper level they help us thrive as humans.

Leadership is connection. The key differentiator between approaching connection the right way and wrong way is authenticity. The authenticity in you as your team's leader will unite your team. How can you reveal your truest self to your team? What makes you you? Answering these questions is the beginning of a long investment, one that yields huge returns in true connection, and ultimately, a brilliantly connect, brilliantly performing team.

## Brilliance

Our society tends to place a high premium on status, accomplishment, and praise—and it starts when we're young. Raise your hand if you were ever deemed an "overachiever" as a kid. Many of us are trained from a young age to chase after those gold stars, tick off the next goal, never stop moving, driving, pushing toward the next big win. In all that pressure and drive, it's easy to mix up the high we feel from getting the wins with the actual spark of joy that comes with doing something we truly love and are passionate about. And often as I've experienced with many of my clients-we're so busy climbing the ladder faster and faster that, when we get to the top, we might look around and realize suddenly, uh oh— do I actually love this view?

As a leader, finding your spark and focusing as much time and energy into that place where you're uniquely passionate and productive is of paramount importance. The spark of each of your team members begins with you— and by finding yours, you can help them find theirs, too.

## Trust

Trust in leadership is one of the strongest indicators of a high performing, engaged organization. Study after study shows that when employees don't trust their leaders, their productivity, happiness, and commitment to the company plummet, and happiness, their likelihood of looking elsewhere for employment rises precipitously.

Trust doesn't happen by accident. As a leader, you have the ability to directly create and impact trust with your team members. It begins with you, and like all other aspects of Platinum Leadership psychological safety is a direct result of your actions, practices, and communication as a leader.

Your best tool for creating psychological safety with your employees is to show them that you trust them— to model the safety and trust you want to create. The following practices are foundational to creating such an environment:

- Cultivate a judgement-free zone
- Share your mistakes
- Redefine feedback
- Follow through on feedback
- Promote autonomy
- Trust is essential. The sooner you begin cultivating it, the better.

## Grow

Growth happens best in a psychologically safe environment. So why do so many leaders work against psychological safety by pushing their employees into an uncomfortable and fearful state in the name of growth?

The process of growth and learning definitely involves nudging yourself toward the edge of your comfort zone, but it doesn't require entering a fear state. In fact, when we're in a fear state, it's harder to learn and grow. In that state, our brains are flooded with stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. The amygdala, the part of the brain that governs emotions, becomes hypersensitive to threats, ready at any moment to tell the hypothalamus to activate a fight-or-flight reaction. Your brain's watchman is on high alert, seeing every shadow in every direction as an army of bears that threatens your very existence.

Growth doesn't need to mean getting completely out of your comfort zone. It's possible to have both-the strengthening effect of bumping up against discomfort and coming through it, and the safety of a calm, rational mind that can soak up new information and learn the lessons it offers.

The trick is to push yourself into discomfort while staying in the optimistic part of your brain where you can still see possibilities, overcome challenges, and make progress. That's the sweet spot.

## Win

Big goals are great, and the sweet victory of finally achieving them after years of hard work is definitely cause for massive celebration. Good things come to those who wait, and the buildup of energy and anticipation in waiting for a long-sought-after win does indeed feel amazing.

But how do you keep motivation, morale, and excitement high throughout the entire waiting period? How do you keep the energy up today, when the goal line is years in the future? The key is smaller incremental celebrations as you move toward the goal-defining wins as not just the big thing that happens at the end, but as everyday successes and positive moments that create the sensation of forward progress. Because It's progress, no matter how small, that has the biggest psychological impact on motivation.

## Play

Fun primes our minds and bodies for better communication and connection among coworkers. It bonds us, lightens the cognitive load, builds trust, and helps us understand each other better. Fun makes the workplace feel safe, happy, and motivating.

Professor and behavioral scientist Jennifer Aaker, MBA, and executive coach Naomi Bagdonas, MBA, created a popular Stanford Graduate School of Business course called "Humor: Serious Business." For six years, they ran studies involving more than 1.5 million people worldwide, pored over research, interviewed hundreds of leaders and comedians, and more.

"If there's one thing our research makes clear," they write in their 2021 book, "it's that we don't need to take ourselves so seriously in order to grapple with serious things." On the contrary, their work suggests teams that laugh together are more bonded, creative, and resilient. Their authentic connection is powerful.

## Practice

Adult brains can not only learn new things, they can change and rebuild their structures, for better or worse. This creates an enormous opportunity. By changing our environment and our behavior, and by choosing to think differently, we are able to form new connections and pathways in the brain. We are able to fundamentally change how we see and react to the world. We're not aiming for perfection. We always have more room to grow; there's no endpoint to our spark.

## Conclusion

As a leader, your job isn't to make people happy. Your job is to lead. To nurture, to inspire...to spark brilliance. But isn't it nice to know that, in engaging in Platinum Leadership, in seeking to discover the way each person wants to be treated, you might also stumble upon what makes them happy?

With the methods and practices you've learned in this book, you have a whole toolkit for knowing people. You have a framework for building connection, fulfillment, and joy that will ripple outward far beyond what you yourself can see. You have what you need to create the spark.

Begin.



Throughout her career, **Jackie Insinger** has brought her expertise in Cognitive Psychology and Interpersonal Dynamics to the business world as a sought-after Executive and Team Dynamics Coach. Using her research-based, action-oriented methodology, Jackie helps leaders and teams focus on unique strengths and authentic connection in order to increase performance, results, and fulfillment. Her Positive Psychology-led framework, Platinum Leadership, has been a game-changer for thousands of people and businesses throughout the world.

***Spark Brilliance: How the Science of Positive Psychology Will Ignite, Engage, and Transform Your Team*** by Jackie Insinger © 2022 by Jackie Insinger. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Lioncrest Publishing. ISBN 978-1544527109. Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® Copyright © 2022 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. *44SS09C*

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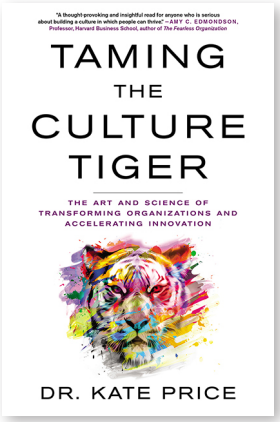
# Taming the Culture Tiger

Kate Price

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Taming the Culture Tiger

## The Art and Science of Transforming Organizations and Accelerating Innovation




*by* **Kate Price**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Change can be scary for both the organization and its people. When not brought about accurately, change can trigger a vast sea of resistance and the organization ends up taking the fall for it.

By peeling the informative layers that constitute a successful innovation culture, ***Taming the Culture Tiger - The Art and Science of Transforming Organizations and Accelerating Innovation*** puts forth the best strategies to drive a powerful and positive cultural change. It helps the reader understand what makes someone a trusted leader who is capable of understanding everyone on an individual level.

To send the message across loud and clear, Dr. Kate Price divides the book into three critical parts. From understanding the challenges that plague an organization-wide culture transformation to dissecting the elements of successful innovative cultures, to finally preparing for cultural change – we eventually learn to become trust leaders, capable of setting our organizations up for success.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- About organizational culture and the challenges of transformation.
- About the expectations and elements of successful innovation cultures.
- How to prepare for cultural change.
- How to become a trusted leader.

## Introduction

This book is for life science leaders who are ready to harness the power of workplace experience to optimize business results. It is divided into three parts, with each part designed to help you throughout the process of driving cultural change within your organization.

Part One builds knowledge by examining what organizational culture is, and explores the complexities of humans present for achieving transformation.

Part Two explores why every change process should be unique because your organization's path to change won't the same as anyone else's. It discusses how a simple one-size-fits-all cultural change model will not work and how you can consider the underlying elements of a successful innovation culture as you develop your vision.

Finally, Part Three focuses on why it is necessary to become a leader who can inspire change in others, the necessary prerequisites to beginning cultural change, and how to approach them.

## Part One: Culture and the Challenges of Transformation

### What Is Culture, and Why Should You Care?

Simply put, culture is your company's personality. This personality is from the small things people within think, say, and do each day. At the same time, culture is nebulous which makes it hard to define. This, in turn, prevents people from tackling change, based on their lack of experience and knowledge. Leaders rarely have training or experience in understanding people and their motivations.

But culture has a huge impact on employee engagement, satisfaction, productivity, and well-being, it affects recruitment, reputation, retention, and the financial health and success of your organization.

To bring about a positive and successful change in culture, it's important to apply the same discipline to the "human elements" of your organization that you apply to technical and strategic aspects. To overcome resistance to a change of culture, you must understand how people think, act, and make sense of the world.

Bringing about cultural change takes time. It is a gradual evolution in the minds and hearts of each person and each group within the organization.

### We All Resist Change

Since birth, our subconscious has been wired to protect us from fear or discomfort. Change, especially the kind that is imposed on us, triggers uncertainty and fear. This causes resistance and undermines change initiatives.

Fear provokes a stress response in our bodies. Now, our body has not changed in the last millennium. As a result, the fear that emerges from change, puts our body in survival mode, impacting our health and cognitive abilities and unleashing our unconscious defenses. When our brains fail to function at their optimum level, it impacts our ability for creativity, innovation, and collaboration.

We're all exposed to stress in modern life. When bringing about change, what organizations can do is create environments that support, rather than hinder, the cognitive abilities and well-being of employees. To drive organizational change, it is critical to work thoughtfully to overcome individual and unique fears, enabling employees to engage with, rather than resist, change.

As a leader, you must acknowledge your own humanity and the humanity of those you lead.

### The Power of Social Groups

Humans have evolved to be social animals. We all belong to groups because they ensure our survival. We constantly evaluate what others think of us, and we want to fit in. This can lead to us conforming to group norms. Why? Because rejection triggers the same intensity of pain as a physical injury. We are motivated to avoid it because it warns us we may be excluded from the group.

However, social groups are often bent on maintaining harmony and their status quo, which can result in decreased cognitive diversity. Every group comes with its own culture and there can be many groups within an organization that interact to create common understandings. This, in turn, can influence your organizational culture as a whole.

To drive change and engage people, leaders must reduce the threats, utilize the influence they have within a group, and enable others to take the lead as and when circumstances demand it. Behavior has a solid influence on culture. To ensure success, organizations must design environments that heavily consider the social motivations of the people within them.

### How Our Brains and Beliefs Limit Change

As humans, we create neural networks during childhood. These end up forming the basis of our beliefs, understanding, and assumptions about the world throughout our lifetime. Sadly, our beliefs and assumptions are often inaccurate because we formed them when we were children and lacked the ability to reason about our experiences.

Our brains also automate several beliefs and processes to both help us efficiently make sense of the world and preserve energy. This, in turn, leads us to form stereotypes. We are predisposed to seek out confirmatory evidence for our existing beliefs. We often act on flawed data that we rarely question. Our desire to meet our needs, preserve our self-image, and belong causes us to form beliefs and assumptions that can lead us to self-sabotage.

These unconscious beliefs can be tackled when we become self-aware. For change to arrive, we must make sense of the complexity within each employee. We must work with, rather than against, our human tendencies.

## Part Two: Expectations and the Elements of Successful Innovation Cultures

### What to Expect on the Journey Ahead

Cultural change is complex. It requires us to consider societal and interpersonal issues alongside the underlying individual neuropsychology. It is always better to be proactive rather than reactive to create a culture that helps your company and employees adapt to changing circumstances.

Because change occurs on an individual level, small steps directed to change as a whole will reduce resistance and foster sustainability in ways that outperform large-scale initiatives. Successful cultural change is an inclusive process because here, everyone is required to engage and commit to experience.

During the process, you might feel like giving up. But knowing how your unconscious mind acts as a saboteur will help you stay committed to your vision. To drive innovative and sustainable culture, you must develop yourself as a leader and create a solid team capable of leading a transformation.

### A Unique Adventure

A lack of knowledge and not knowing how to go about the process are two major obstacles to cultural change. To ensure success, take the time to understand how change affects culture and build a solid will to drive the transformation yourself.

Acknowledge that as a leader, you are unique, your team is unique, and your organization is unique. Harness the courage to follow your own path and develop a culture that is effective for your organization.

Remember, people will only follow those they trust, those who have knowledge and experience in the organization, and those who care about their people. To tame the culture tiger, coordinate your efforts across the organization and recognize that culture is a part of everything you do.

### Envisioning a New Environment

Innovation is a mindset. It is a way of thinking and behavior that fosters diversity, collaboration on ideas, and a willingness to take risks. Modern corporate environments tend to create uncertainty and anxiety that impacts our ability to innovate.

For innovation to arrive, we need to be in a psychologically safe environment to overcome our unconscious and evolutionary fears. To be cognitively flexible and able to cope with change, both the organization and its individuals must be resilient. The goal here is to focus on the development, engagement, and well-being of individuals because they are the ones to determine the organization's culture.

Aside from resilience, psychological safety, well-being, and accountability, it is also important to focus on the impact of our communications, structures, processes, and procedures on how individuals engage with cultural change.

## Part Three: Preparing for Cultural Change

### Becoming a Trusted Leader – It Starts with You

You are your self-awareness. Self-awareness enables us to better understand ourselves and others and interact more effectively. It allows us to recognize our unconscious limitations and prevent self-sabotage. Through self-awareness, we feel encouraged to be authentic and honest in our relationships. This, in turn, trickles down the ranks, inspires others to follow up and impacts business results.

To lead more effectively, you need to remain curious, comprehend how others perceive you, and commit to modeling behaviors and attributes that you want others to embody. It

can feel uncomfortable to be vulnerable. But vulnerability brings great learning and rewards for those around you.

Sure, personal development and change are difficult. But that's okay. It's difficult for everyone and you are not alone.

### Building a Leadership Team

To bring about cultural change, you need a cohesive leadership team, rather than just a team of leaders. They must be committed to the idea of change and willing to participate fully. Your role as a leader is to:

- Create the culture that you want for your organization within your team first.
- Lead members the way you want them to lead and inspire them to develop themselves.
- Be empathetic in understanding the challenges they may face in transitioning to a leadership team mindset.
- Co-create a vision for change and culture and ensure your team holds accountability and ownership toward it.
- Help them dissect the external perceptions of the team and how this affects their influence.
- Support the development of your leaders and the culture of the team by holding them accountable for "walking the talk."

### Setting the Scene for Engagement

Cultural change must be addressed systematically on three important levels – individual, group, and organizational. Remember, when there is a lack of ample context or relevance to individuals' lives and work, the changes you propose will create fear and uncertainty. This, in turn, will cause resistance.

So, instead of imposing a vision for culture change from the top down, engage people with your ideas as they take shape and develop. Neuropsychological priming allows for the introduction of new ideas and concepts without provoking uncertainty, fear, or resistance.

When you model the change you're creating and remain fully inclusive, you create trust in new concepts and your leadership, ultimately giving people the opportunity to experience positive change. Identify small influencers within your organizations to elicit support and demonstrate your commitment to inclusion.

Here's what's important to remember – the first steps toward cultural change will ultimately depend on the engagement of each individual, their attitudes and beliefs about the perceived change, and their willingness to make psychological and behavioral changes within themselves to become a strong part of the greater whole.

### Understanding the Current State

The first step toward driving change or solving a problem is to understand the realities of the daily thinking and work lives of your employees. To extract a wealth of knowledge that will aid you in driving organizational change, you must deploy a process of eliciting honest feedback by asking the right questions.

If you want people to speak up and put their issues on the table, you must prove that you can listen and create effective feedback loops. Never miss a chance to demonstrate that you hear people. Be transparent in your learnings, and feedback, and have the willingness to adjust course based on their responses.

Culture change takes time and you must use communication to fuel the process. Moving on too quickly without an explanation of how the ideas are connected can trigger "change fatigue" and reinforce negative perceptions of both the leadership and the organization.

### A Scientific Experiment

Cultural change is psychological and a scientific process that demands innovation. This knowledge can guide us in our approach to designing and implementing change. We need to distill the knowledge of culture and human behavior across every (minutest) level of the organization. We need to collaborate to develop a solid foundation of cultures that will offer timeless support to our goals.

Putting the focus on developing individuals and acknowledging that everyone contributes to the organizational culture will help us in driving a successful culture change, innovation, and of course, business success. As we trust others to play their part, we must become more flexible, resilient, and open to experimentation.

When on your journey, feel free to take risks, and be willing to fail. But admit your mistakes and learn from them. To transform culture, your organization needs to put itself on a learning journey.

## Conclusion

If, as an innovation leader, you are serious about tackling culture and recognizing the role it plays in business success,

then you must start with yourself. Understand and acknowledge that not everyone will have your mindset.

Advocating for change alone can be very uncomfortable. It positions you as an outsider. It means that others may judge you, and you are potentially taking a risk that will reflect on you and the way you are perceived. You will need to have faith that it is worthwhile. But more than that, you will need to have faith in yourself and your strength to see through a process that is not a quick fix but a long-term strategy and solution.

To be successful, you must see cultural change through to the end and not give up in the face of challenges. As you enter the journey to become a better leader, stronger team player, and more innovative change-maker, your power must come from knowing yourself and your ability. So, stay true to yourself, love what you do, and inspire the same transformation in others.



**Kate Price** is passionate about improving people's lives with her unique brand of psychological and science-based methods. From the NHS in the UK to startups and Fortune 500 companies in the US and globally, she has worked for nearly three decades to bring a human-centered approach to effective and sustainable culture change. Trained as a clinical psychologist, she believes that understanding complexity is essential to designing simple solutions that transform people's experiences of the workplace.

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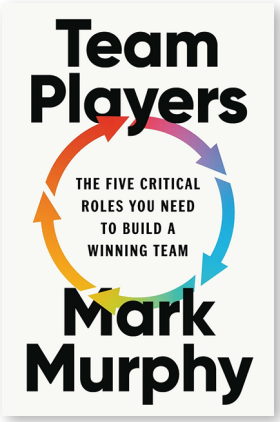
# Team Players

Mark Murphy

Executive Book Summaries®

# Team Players

## The Five Critical Roles You Need to Build a Winning Team




*by* **Mark Murphy**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Conventional wisdom about teamwork tends to repeat the same themes: focus on trust, create psychological safety, avoid hierarchy, and aim for consensus. While these principles sound valuable, they leave out an essential truth. The strongest teams don't succeed because members think and act alike. They succeed because each individual plays a distinct part that, when combined with others, creates balance, momentum, and resilience.

In ***Team Players: The Five Critical Roles You Need to Build a Winning Team***, Mike Murphy challenges the idea that team building is about uniformity. Instead, he argues that the real secret lies in intentionally assembling people with different strengths and allowing them to step fully into those strengths. Too often, organizations rush into team-building activities before ensuring they even have the right mix of talent at the table.

Drawing on decades of research and hands-on experience, Murphy reveals five roles that consistently appear in high-performing teams. Each role contributes something unique and indispensable—and when even one is missing, the group risks stalling out, fracturing, or failing to achieve its goals. By identifying and leveraging these roles, leaders can transform teams from simply functional to truly exceptional, capable of tackling challenges with clarity, creativity, and lasting impact.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn the five roles vital to team success and performance.
- Curate a team intentionally through analysis and selection of key team member talents.
- Discover why "hierarchy" is not a bad word and has a place on teams.
- Apply roles to team decision-making for better outcomes and team harmony.

## Introduction

On the best teams, "team players" aren't cookie-cutter replicas, molded to fit arbitrary standards of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Greatness in groups comes from leveraging everyone's unique talents so that each member adds something important and valuable. Hard-nosed decision-makers, tireless doers, meticulous planners, diplomatic peacekeepers, and bold visionaries don't always fit the cliché definition of "team player," but make no mistake, their diverse talents and personalities are vital for team success.

## The Five Team Roles

Over the past few decades, thousands of teams were studied, from executive teams and boards to task forces and project teams. And in any high-functioning group, five roles nearly always emerge:

The Director assumes a leadership role within the team, guiding its direction and making important, difficult, and even unpopular decisions.

The Achiever immerses themselves in the details of accomplishing tasks and getting things done, with a keen eye for delivering error-free work.

The Stabilizer keeps the team on track with meticulous planning, processes and procedures, clear timelines, and organization.

The Harmonizer brings collaboration and camaraderie, builds relationships, and resolves conflict.

The Trailblazer brings innovation, creativity, and out-of-the box thinking, along with the courage to challenge conventional wisdom.

Team success requires a specific mix of roles; it's a balanced ecosystem that brings together differing talents and perspectives. When critical roles are absent, however, the results can be disastrous: innovation is stifled, conflicts simmer unaddressed, and priorities can swing wildly without a steadying hand. Teams lacking this balance often fail, not because of individual incompetence, but because key perspectives are missing or drowned out.

## The Director

Whenever you walk into a team meeting room, whether it's an executive team, board of directors, project team, or what have you, the Director is typically easy to spot. Maybe it's the tap-tap-tap of their pen impatiently hitting the conference table; it could be the tension in their shoulders as they lean forward primed for action; or if they're leaning back, it might be the hint of a furrow in their brow that says, "If we could get this done ten minutes ago, that would be great."

Directors are decisive; they're not looking for hours, let alone weeks, of deliberation. They want decisions made, and they want them made yesterday. In simplest terms, Directors make decisions, especially the kinds of decisions that stymy or vex others.

Psychologically, the Director role typically attracts individuals with strong, assertive personalities—people who naturally gravitate toward leadership positions. They thrive on making decisions, taking charge, and steering the course for others.

They have a higher-than-average drive for power and influence, and they enjoy having the ability to affect outcomes and guide others. Directors are typically quick and decisive in their decision-making, relying more on facts and logic than emotions. They're often goal-oriented and focused, with a talent for seeing the big picture and developing strategies to achieve objectives.

If you've ever felt agitated, frustrated, or even enraged by a group's inability to decide, you understand one of the biggest benefits of having a Director on your team. They make decisions swiftly and with confidence, and in doing so, they keep the group moving forward and avoid stagnation.

One final thought about Directors. Too often people think that what distinguishes a Director is making the speediest decisions. But there are cases where the difficult decision is the slow one, not the fast one.

## The Stabilizer

Stabilizers are the people on your team who bring order, planning, and predictability. Firmly convinced that careful planning leads to better outcomes, they'll be the ones to ensure your group makes and adheres to both short-term and long-term plans. If you've ever been on a team that failed to hit its deadlines (like half of all teams, by the way), it's probably because there wasn't someone creating and ensuring adherence to schedules, processes, details, and "dotting the i's and crossing the t's."

Psychologically, Stabilizers tend to have high levels of conscientiousness, attention to detail, and a strong need for

Stabilizers are the motivational force behind strategy tools like scenario planning.

order and structure. Their innate drive for consistency and reliability manifests in their meticulous approach to tasks and adherence to established processes. Sometimes that adherence to precedent can show up as risk aversion.

Not only do they derive satisfaction from maintaining stability and predictability, but they've often got a heightened sense of responsibility to ensure nothing goes wrong. The tech startup ethos of "move fast and break things" that sometimes gets bandied about is about as far from the Stabilizer personality as you can get. Of course, that's precisely why smart teams make sure there's a Stabilizer present.

Cognitively, Stabilizers excel in systematic thinking and have a strong capacity for long-term planning. They possess a natural inclination toward analytical problem-solving and are adept at identifying potential issues before they arise. Put more simply, Stabilizers are the motivational force behind strategy tools like scenario planning.

This is a crucial aspect of the Stabilizer role that often goes unrecognized: the emotional burden of being the team's anchor. On the one hand, anchors keep ships from drifting out to sea and provide stability. On the other hand, an anchor can be a weight that holds us back and limits progress. Stabilizers often need to find a balance between providing structure and allowing for flexibility.

By recognizing their own stress levels and when the emotional labor feels overwhelming, they can better modulate their approach. And, it's important for Stabilizers to communicate the reasoning behind their cautious approach; helping team members understand that their goal isn't to stifle progress but to ensure sustainable success.

## The Trailblazer

With a natural flair for creativity and a penchant for thinking outside the box, Trailblazers often spearhead new ideas and unconventional solutions to problems. Not bound by traditional approaches, the Trailblazer is willing to take risks and experiment with different strategies. They have a visionary quality and are able to anticipate trends and see possibilities that others might overlook. Trailblazers aren't afraid to challenge the status quo; they're instrumental in driving change and transformation. But as wonderful as that sounds, if a team doesn't intentionally seek and enable Trailblazers, it's not uncommon for them to experience resistance.

When a team needs innovation, adaptability, and creative problem solving, Trailblazers shine. Their ability to think differently makes them excellent when a team requires developing new solutions to complex problems. In the most severe scenarios, the Trailblazer can knock a team off-kilter and focus its energies on one wild goose chase after another. But the epitome of the Trailblazer unlocks opportunities that would remain hidden to groups without such an innovative thinker.

Psychologically, Trailblazers typically have high levels of openness to experience, creativity, and a higher tolerance for risk. That also correlates with their generally strong need for novelty and stimulation, seeking out new challenges and unconventional ways to solve them. Their thinking style is divergent and nonlinear, which helps drive their ability to make unexpected connections and generate innovative ideas. Trailblazers typically score high on measures of curiosity and have a natural inclination toward exploration and experimentation.

While Trailblazers have a high tolerance for risk and a willingness to challenge the status quo, it's their ability and willingness to push forward despite widespread doubt that really sets them apart. Their ability to swim against the current and take frequent stands in the face of strong opposition is often coupled with a deep intellectual curiosity and a genuine excitement for innovation.

It's often this combination of traits that allows them to not only generate groundbreaking ideas but also to advocate for them persistently, even when faced with years of rejection. And for teams in general, bear this in mind: Trailblazers are just as essential as all the other roles. To put it bluntly: Trailblazers are necessary to ensure the success of every organization.

## The Harmonizer

The Harmonizer plays a crucial role in team dynamics, serving as the social glue that binds members together. They're adept at fostering collaboration, building relationships, and maintaining a positive team atmosphere. Harmonizers excel in creating an environment where team members feel comfortable, valued, and understood.

Harmonizers are often driven by a high degree of emotional intelligence and empathy. They possess an innate ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others, allowing them to navigate complex interpersonal situations with skill and sensitivity. This emotional acuity enables Harmonizers to anticipate potential conflicts, mediate disagreements, and promote understanding among team members, even those with drastically diverse perspectives and personalities.

Psychologically, Harmonizers are driven by a strong need for social connection and group cohesion. They enjoy fostering positive relationships and maintaining a harmonious team atmosphere. This motivation often manifests as a willingness to prioritize others' needs over their own, sometimes to their detriment. More than a few Harmonizers have struggled with setting personal boundaries; taken too far, this can cause varying degrees of emotional exhaustion. Harmonizers typically score high on personality measures of agreeableness. They're generally skilled communicators, particularly when it comes to active listening and interpreting nonverbal cues.

At its best, you'll see the Harmonizer's impact in the strengthened relationships between other team members and the positive atmosphere that permeates the group. Their influence manifests in increased camaraderie, mutual support, and even communicative effectiveness (a fancy way of saying that everyone else becomes a more tactful and empathic communicator).

## The Achiever

Characterized by a hands-on mentality and an unwavering commitment to excellence, Achievers thrive on immersing themselves in the details of tasks, focusing intently on producing high-quality, error-free results. They're not looking to run the team or wield significant power; they're generally driven by the satisfaction derived from a job well done.

This intrinsic motivation stems from a deep-seated need for personal achievement and a relentless pursuit of excellence. Achievers tend to set high standards for themselves and derive satisfaction from surpassing expectations, often going above and beyond what is asked of them.

Driven by a strong preference for autonomy, Achievers are most comfortable when they can concentrate on their tasks without the distractions or responsibilities of managing others. They prefer to work independently, honing their expertise and digging deep into the nitty-gritty.

There are fantastic minds on teams with zero desire to be in charge; instead, they want to burrow into the details of a project. Achievers' thorough analysis and precision make them particularly effective in projects requiring creative problem-solving and meticulous execution. Fighting for control of a team? That's not them. But doing the detailed work that makes the project possible? That's where they shine. Achievers are the people who ensure that the team's goals are not just conceptualized but actually realized with a high degree of excellence and precision.

Data from more than a million professionals shows team members are nearly three times more likely to be Achievers than Directors. Achievers are the most populous role on teams, and unlike some of the other roles, when teams are overloaded with Achievers, the group is less likely to suffer negative consequences. It can be hard for people in other roles to understand, but it's not uncommon for Achievers to resist taking on leadership roles, even when their expertise would seem to make them ideal candidates.

## Curating Your Team

The first task in unlocking your team's potential is creating an appreciation for the diversity of roles and talents that drive a group's success; your team needs to grasp the importance of Directors, Stabilizers, Achievers, Trailblazers, and Harmonizers. Ideally, your team should think like quarterbacks who value their offensive line, not like the star stock analysts who believed too strongly in their own self-sufficiency. Explain the concept of the five roles to your group. Once they've got a handle on the five roles, conduct the following exercise:

### ROLE APPRECIATION

Ask everyone on your team to answer these three prompts:

1. Describe a time when you worked with someone amazing in each of the five roles (think of the best Harmonizer you ever worked with, a great Stabilizer, etc.).

The first task in unlocking your team's potential is creating an appreciation for the diversity of roles and talents that drive a group's success.

2. For each of those roles, describe how that person helped you or the group achieve success.
3. Describe what the team would've been missing without someone fulfilling that role.

The goal here is simply getting everyone on your team to start appreciating the importance and value of Directors, Stabilizers, Achievers, Trailblazers, and Harmonizers.

Once your group starts appreciating the value of the different roles, you're ready to assess the roles currently represented on your team. Before we start, there are two critical points to bear in mind.

First, you could be part of wildly different teams, and you need to figure out the role you (and others) play in each of those potentially disparate groups. You'll want to conduct this exercise for each team; for instance, you might be on a team where you're the one making all the tough decisions while simultaneously participating on a team where you're the designated peacemaker.

Second, people often struggle to objectively assess themselves, but they evidence good insight into how others view them. For instance, one study asked employees to rate their own job performance and then predict how their supervisor would rate them. The researchers then compared both types of employee ratings to the supervisor's actual ratings.

Employees were generally inaccurate when rating their own performance, especially for things like teamwork and going above and beyond their core job duties. However, when asked to predict how their supervisor would rate them, employees were literally twice as accurate.

Armed with those two insights, you can now take stock of your team.

### CHARTING YOUR TEAM'S ROLE COMPOSITION

This "Team Role Map" will help you identify your team's strengths and potential gaps. Here's how to make the map:

1. Gather the role assessments from each team member.
2. Draw six columns on a large piece of paper or whiteboard. Label the rows with team members' names and the columns with the five roles.
3. For each team member, place a checkmark in the column corresponding to their primary perceived role. This is the role they believe others see them fulfilling most often.
4. Use smaller dots to indicate any secondary roles that team members would like to fulfill or develop.
5. Finally, step back and look at your completed map Are all roles represented? Are some roles overrepresented while others are lacking? This visual representation can quickly highlight your team's composition and potential imbalances.

## Learning To Think Like All Five Roles

In an imperfect world, however, you might find that it takes an extra step to curate the ideal team. There's another approach that helps teams thrive, even when they can't achieve the perfect role balance: teaching everyone on the team to think like each of the five roles.

### ROLE-THINKING EXERCISE

1. Start by choosing a decision or challenge the group is facing.
2. Introduce the concept of the five roles: Director, Stabilizer, Achiever, Trailblazer, and Harmonizer. Start with one role— for example, the Director. Provide a brief overview of the Director's typical mindset and priorities (or better yet, take a few minutes and have everyone read the Director chapter).
3. Ask the entire team to adopt the Director perspective and discuss the issue from that viewpoint. Depending on the issue and the stakes involved, this could take five minutes or twenty. Challenge everyone to fully embrace and embody that role's thinking style, regardless of their natural predilections.
4. After the discussion, take a few minutes to summarize key points and insights from the Director perspective.

5. Next, move on to the Stabilizer role and repeat the exercise. Then the Harmonizer, and so on.
6. After all five roles have been explored, you'll want to lead a final discussion where your team members can speak from any perspective they choose. This allows them to apply the insights gained from each role to develop a comprehensive solution or decision.

What you're after here is getting every team member to think from each role perspective. And as you progress through the five roles, you'll notice team members becoming more adept at switching perspectives and seeing issues from different angles. This exercise leads to increased empathy, more creative problem- solving, and a deeper understanding of how the different roles contribute to the team's success. It will also identify potential blind spots in the team's approach and lead to far more balanced thinking about the issue at hand.

## Hierarchy Is Not a Bad Word

Hierarchies feel outdated, maybe even primal or primitive; they're millions, if not hundreds of millions, years old. You've probably never seen someone jump up in a modern-day office and exclaim, "We need more hierarchy!" Hierarchy is one of the least appealing words in the English language. Humans have evolved beyond the need for pecking orders, right? Not quite.

Humans are wired for hierarchies. Toddlers can spot hierarchies with incredible accuracy. Boards of directors and NBA teams perform better with hierarchies. But, humans perform at their best with a hierarchy that's much more evolved than a barnyard pecking order.

That's where adaptive hierarchies come in. Adaptive hierarchies deliver the clarity and order of traditional hierarchies while moving faster, producing better results, and harnessing the unique talents of everyone on your team.

Adaptive hierarchy has a clear structure, but it's not static. Simply put, the hierarchy adapts so that the right person takes the lead.

## Making Better Decisions on Your Team

In theory, teams make decision-making easier and more effective; they bring together diverse perspectives, expertise, and experiences. In practice, however, decision-making in teams can be both challenging and fraught. That's why it's pretty typical to see some cynicism about group decision-making.

The first step in unlocking your team's potential decision-making prowess is recognizing that not every decision should be made by a group. Sometimes group decision-making gets a bad rap simply because we're asking a team to make a decision that should have been made by a single person. We need to save group decision-making for situations where the benefits of the group's insights outweigh the time and effort required.

Some choices have far-reaching consequences that affect multiple departments or even the entire company. Some decisions deal with complex, high-stakes situations where there isn't a clear path forward. There are plenty of situations where you need innovative and novel solutions, insights outside your area of expertise, or buy-in from multiple stakeholders. In any of those scenarios, you will absolutely want to involve your team in the decision-making process.

On the other hand, there are plenty of decisions that are far more routine and familiar. These are decisions that get made every day regarding recurring issues that don't have an especially wide impact, aren't particularly high risk, where the inputs and outputs are well understood, and that aren't all that politically sensitive. In those cases, it's usually more efficient to delegate the decision-making to a particular individual.

## The Science of Great Meetings

### STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

Recent survey shows the startling fact that 90+ percent of meetings fail to produce an identifiable achievement.

The reason why so many folks are sitting in meetings with no idea why they're there is because they lack a clear objective. That's what a Statement of Achievement is. It's one sentence that says, "As a result of this meeting, we will have achieved _____ ."

The blank can be anything; it's your meeting. But before you can proceed with that meeting, you have to be able to fill in that blank. Once you've got your Statement of Achievement, share it with the people who will be in the meeting. You can do it in an email prior to the meeting or include it in the meeting agenda so people have a chance to prepare. Alternatively, you can stand up before the meeting

Writing a Statement of Achievement will tighten up your meeting.

starts and say, "Hey folks, as a result of this meeting, we will have achieved _____. And once we achieve that, this meeting is over."

### RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE ROOM

Writing a Statement of Achievement will tighten up your meeting. It will also force you to answer an all-important question: "Given what I need to accomplish in this meeting, which people and roles need to be in attendance?"

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT NUMBER OF PEOPLE

When you're picking people for your meeting, this is your balancing act. You're always trying to find the sweet spot between having enough people to bring diverse perspectives and skills to the table and keeping the group small enough to maintain efficiency and engagement. This sweet spot isn't a fixed number—it can vary depending on the nature of the task, the complexity of the problem at hand, and the specific individuals involved.

### AGENDAS

Agendas and start times are two of the least sexy topics when it comes to meetings, yet the problems that plague them remain so pervasive that each warrants a mention. There are innumerable agenda formats, but as long as yours is crystal clear about what participants should have completed as prework or must bring to the meeting, you'll be in good shape.

### END-OF-MEETING RECAPS

If you find that the to-dos coming out of your meetings aren't getting accomplished, or they disappear into some kind of accountability black hole, you ought to try an end-of-meeting recap.

Before your meeting ends, ask each person in attendance to answer this question: "What are you personally going to achieve and by when?" Document the responses and distribute them to all meeting attendees. Don't bury those accountabilities in a lengthy minutes document; make it a standalone list with each item clearly outlined.

## Selecting New People To Join Your Team

There will inevitably come a time when you'll need to bring a new member onto your team. In an ideal world, that new member will fit perfectly and give your group exactly what it needs.

When you're bringing a new member onto your team, it's tempting to focus solely on their resume and technical qualifications. However, attitude should be at the forefront of your selection process. The right attitude can make the difference between a hire that merely fills a position and one that transforms your team.

In the event you need to bring someone new onto your team, remember that it's not just about technical skills; it's about finding individuals whose natural inclinations align with the Director's decisiveness, the Trailblazer's innovative spirit, the Harmonizer's diplomatic skills, the Achiever's attention to detail, or the Stabilizer's organizing prowess. Pay attention to the language people use, their past experiences, and their approach to challenges. When you find the right attributes, you'll get a team where each member complements the others and elevates the group as a whole.

## Conclusion

When Directors, Stabilizers, Achievers, Trailblazers, and Harmonizers work together and balance each other, there's no limit to what you can accomplish. Each role brings unique strengths and perspectives that, when properly leveraged, create a whole that is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

As you embark on this journey, be patient with yourself and your team. Change takes time, and there may be bumps along the way. Celebrate small victories and learn from setbacks. Keep the lines of communication open, and always be willing to adjust your approach based on what you learn. Remember also that, as a leader, you set the tone for your team.

Model the behaviors you want to see. Be willing to adapt your own role as needed, appreciate the contributions of all team members, and foster an environment where diverse perspectives are not just tolerated but actively sought out and valued.

The strategies and actions outlined in this book are not just theoretical concepts—they are practical, actionable steps that have been proven effective out in the real world. By consistently applying these principles, you can transform your team into a high-performing unit capable of tackling any challenge.



**Mark Murphy** is the author of the New York Times bestseller Hundred Percenters, founder of the research and training firm Leadership IQ, and a senior contributor to Forbes. His work on leadership and workplace culture has been featured in The New York Times, Harvard Business Review, Time, and The Wall Street Journal. He is also the author of Hiring for Attitude.

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# The 5 Disciplines of Inclusive Organizations

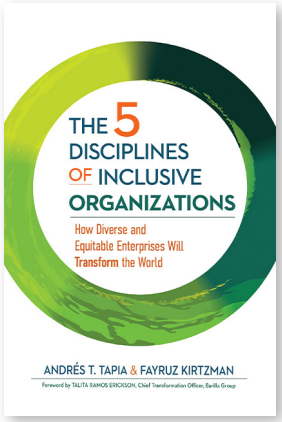
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# The 5 Disciplines of Inclusive Organizations

## How Diverse and Equitable Enterprises Will Transform the World

*by* **Andrés Tapia and Fayruz Kirtzman**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Organizational diversity, equity, inclusion are not simply an end in themselves, they are a means to achieving comprehensive sustainability for customers, communities, all while still satisfying shareholders focused on profitability. For too long, companies' ledger sheets have not accounted for their hidden cost of the environment, society, and people's well-being, all of which have combined to create structural inequities in our societies and organizations.

This acceptance of responsibility for the full cost of providing goods and services is a paradigm shift, and requires a different type of organization. One that embraces a broader set of responsibilities for its actions, evaluates its people as valuable assets, and believes in the richness that diversity brings to their culture, their innovation, and their business results. One that we call an inclusive organization. In ***The 5 Disciplines of Inclusive Organizations: How Diverse and Equitable Enterprises Will Transform the World***, co-authors Andrés Tapia and Fayruz Kirtzman leverage their decades of direct work and data to show how to make your organization a systematic, process-oriented engineer of change for the full range of stakeholders.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How organizations can progress from Basic to Leading Edge.
- Each of the five disciplines of inclusive organizations.
- Structural and behavioral indicators for each discipline.
- Maturity measures that exemplify the achievement of each discipline.

## Introduction

Get ready for a connect-the dots journey to becoming an inclusive organization, discipline by discipline. In each of the following sections, you will learn how organizations can progress from Basic to Leading Edge both from a structural and behavioral perspective.

## Discipline 1: Manage the Risk

### Maturity Measure: The extent to which an organization effectively manages DE&I-related risk.

Much is at stake when the DE&I-related risk is not managed in an organization. US Soccer paid dearly in the form of millions in litigation fees, lost sponsors, lost fans, and a bruised reputation when the women's team sued over their vast gender-related wage gap, and won. That organization joined a long list of the most iconic corporations in the Fortune 500 that failed at managing DE&I-related risk. In 2021 alone, there were at least 1,607 workplace class action suits in the United States, totaling a record $3.62 billion in damages. This is a far cry from having it under control. Why does this keep happening?

The thousands of global, national, and local laws protecting the most vulnerable employees from these acts show how much societies have progressed. At the same time, they have increased the risk for companies, since they are now rightfully accountable for what happens within their walls–to their employees and because of their employees. And so they keep being sued.

But avoiding litigation is just the starting point. Inclusive organizations know that managing the risk is key to staying competitive as an employer and as a provider of goods and services. Beyond litigation avoidance, there are other risks to consider, such as losing existing customers, not gaining new customers and stifling growth, high attrition among highly skilled employees, or not attracting that highly skilled workforce in the first place.

To manage the risk, inclusive organizations must focus on both the structures in place (policies, systems, and safeguards) and the behavior being exhibited (mindsets, skill sets, and relationships) as they evolve on a scale from Basic to Progressing to Advanced, and finally, to Leading Edge.

#### BASIC

From a structural perspective, an organization that is at a Basic level of Manage the Risk is usually focused on compliance and litigation avoidance by having solid anti discrimination policies in place. The responsibility for inclusion may even tie with the legal team, with a mandate to "not get in trouble."

Leaders at the Basic level of managing DE&I-related behavioral risks get caught off guard when major incidents occur. The organization may have basic compliance training in place and therefore leaders and managers–and in fact all employees–may be focused only on what this training is telling them. Often it will be, "Oh, now I cannot say or do this anymore," accompanied with an eye roll. Clearly, this is not going to set an organization up for success around DE&I risk management or even to avoid illegal discriminatory practices.

#### PROGRESSING

As an organization moves to the Progressing stage, either the CEO or the board–or both–have started to pay more attention to DE&I. They may have faced some outside pressure from investors or the media and are now aware that they must "do something," although more often than not they are not sure what that is. They may conduct adverse impact analyses to root out discriminatory practices that appear fair but are actually biased against one or more groups in actual practice.

Behaviorally, an organization moving into the Progressing stage will have a greater focus on creating a respectful workplace for all employees. This is the stage of "good intentions" and of greater awareness of what might be disrespectful or even discriminatory behavior. People managers are more aware of what the rules and policies around equitable and inclusive people management means and are applying policies and rules with more consistency.

#### ADVANCED

In the Advanced stage, what was once a simple compliance exercise starts being considered through a broader risk management lens. The organization really starts to consider the reputational risk of doing either the right or wrong thing. This is where leadership becomes more forward looking and considers how it wants to be known in the market as well as among its own employees.

Behavior shifts from the Golden Rule of treating others the way you want to be treated to the Platinum Rule of treating others the way they want to be treated. In an organization at the Advanced level, employees feel empowered to speak up with their ideas as well as their concerns, without fear of negative consequences if these ideas are opposed to the

As an aspirational goal, Leading Edge is the stage companies must strive toward.

ones suggested by the leader. There is psychological safety, and the culture is one of trust and encouragement.

### LEADING EDGE

Very few organizations have achieved Leading Edge maturity in any discipline. As an aspirational goal, Leading Edge is the stage companies must strive toward. It is attained when DE&I is fully integrated in the larger risk management discussion. At this level, the risks of not expanding into new, underrepresented markets, developing products for marginalized groups, and not having diverse perspectives at the table must be actively monitored, assessed, and mitigated by leadership, HR, and the DE&I function.

## Discipline 2: Explode the Awareness

**Maturity Measure: The extent to which an organization's leaders and employees are aware of and committed to the value of DE&I.**

Spiritual leaders, psychologists, philosophers, addiction counselors, and leadership experts all concur on where all transformation work must begin: self-awareness. This brings us to the second discipline of inclusive organizations: the ability and commitment to Explode the Awareness. Until organizations acknowledge that there are inequities within their culture, meaningful change will not happen.

Awareness begins with two key questions: What? and Why?

1. *What* is not working well within the organization? Is it representation in leadership, people feeling like they don't belong, or higher turnover for underrepresented talent?
2. *Why* is this happening? Is the cause unconscious bias, outright discrimination, or stereotyping?

These questions are not easy to ask, and few commit to sticking around to hear the answers. Self-awareness begins with the realization that there is inequity in the environment and that inequitable results for different groups are evidence that the organization is not living up to its values.

Unfortunately, leaders often have a limited understanding of the intersection of various issues inside and outside the organization that cause the inequities that harm the bottom line. Inclusive organizations exercising the Explode the Awareness discipline begin to invite voices from the outside to help educate them on why these inequities exist. They take actions to raise the awareness of the sociological realities that are contributing to the inequities both outside and inside the organization.

This explosion of awareness will, in a good way, shake the foundations of the organization as those in power realize–through their collective unconscious biases–that they have been perpetrating the inequitable processes that course through our broader societies.

### BASIC

At the basic level, an organization will create initiatives to raise awareness of what DE&I is. It may publish and communicate its unique definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion and focus on celebrating diversity.

Most organizations start out not knowing what they don't know. Usually, an entity, such as human resources initiates the awareness building and begins to bring that awareness to the rest of the organization.

### PROGRESSING

As organizations progress from Basic to Progressing, they will be bolder about their commitment to DE&I. There may be a diversity statement on its website and have a DE&I council established that sets the overarching DE&I strategy. Affinity Groups for genders, ethnic, or racial groups may develop into employee resource groups (ERGs) that offer support for the recruiting and retention of members and act as beacons to continually surface issues that arise.

At this stage we see more action and teeth behind that desire to do the right thing. For example, unconscious bias training will be focused on skill building. Leaders are enlisted to play their part as the business benefit of a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace has crystallized for them. Employees, too, start taking an interest in hearing their

leaders talk about the subject more.

### ADVANCED

In the Advanced stage, organizations speak of diversity in its broadest form, encompassing the full range of human differences and similarities. ERGs broaden from the initial focus on gender, race, and ethnicity to other shared identities and causes, such as ERGs for parents, caregivers, health and wellness, immigrants, and many others.

The focus shifts from a DE&I passion to do the right thing to DE&I competency as a business imperative. It is seen as a critical skill so leaders become willing to learn how to move from bystander to upstander, embracing the concept of allyship.

### LEADING EDGE

In a truly Leading Edge organization, the integration of DE&I as a core value of the organization is complete. Executive leadership and the board all recognize the importance of DE&I to their business and make it a priority in all business decisions. DE&I is woven into the fabric of the organization. DE&I goals, metrics, accountability, and progress are a standard part of the organization's annual report, not as an afterthought, but rather a strategic pillar.

## Discipline 3: Maximize the Talent Systems

**Maturity Measure: The extent to which an organization has integrated DE&I into the talent management life cycle.**

Various companies who are considered the best of the best when it comes to DE&I have intriguing and energizing design twists to the tried and true, filling leaders' heads with big dreams and great expectations of what they might do for their own companies. But do these efforts, in the end, truly make a difference in transforming organizations into being more diverse, equitable, and inclusive? The answer for companies, unfortunately, has been no.

The authors' diagnostic and root cause research consistently surfaced performance ratings that are inequitable for people of color as well as for women. No surprise, then, that promotions and turnover were also inequitable.

To bring transformational change in the most vexing DE&I issue of equitable advancement, organizations have to look at their structures and determine whether they have the systems in place to allow all employees to develop and advance. They must turn to the very machinery that manages how people are hired, onboarded, evaluated, coached, developed, promoted, and identified for bigger and better things. They must Maximize the Talent Systems.

Inclusive design principles can be applied within organizations to create talent systems that are inclusive of all human differences using these four core principles:

1. *Define equality.* Begin with an explicit, self-reflective exploration and declaration of what kind of equality the organization stands for and how it manifests itself in talent management.
2. *Unearth inequities.* Discover the "faults in the default." Examine the data and explore the experiences of different talent groups.
3. *Learn from diversity.* Be curious about people's vast differences and consider the needs, wants, and aspirations of even the most excluded user.
4. *Solve for one, benefit all.* When we make something work for the exception, we will end up with a better design for all. Specifically address the needs of the overlooked users–those whose experiences, mindsets, and visibility are in the minority.

### BASIC

Organizations at the Basic level see a focus on DE&I as a stand-alone initiative. There is no integration of DE&I in HR and talent processes. HR professionals are not enabled or encouraged to apply an inclusive lens when looking at the design of talent management processes.

The HR and DE&I departments of an organization begin to address the most obvious–yet still quite common–gaps. For example, they catch, address, and course correct problematic manager behaviors, which might include giving feedback with stereotypical tropes, such as commenting on the "emotional" nature of a female direct report or opining that members of certain racial or ethnic groups are "undisciplined."

### PROGRESSING

As organizations progress on their journey, the realization settles in that more of their talent processes will need to be reviewed for inclusion. Many embark on a full inclusive talent management audit, and the findings are often overwhelming. They know that their talent processes need revamping to become more inclusive, but they often

Oscar-night-worthy high-end product rollouts get all the attention. Yet it's logistics that almost always saves the day.

have neither the funding, the resources, nor the executive support to accomplish this.

### ADVANCED

At the Advanced stage, DE&I initiatives become better resourced and true change starts to happen. Inclusion becomes a lens through which all talent management processes are viewed. Feedback loops are built into everyone's performance management to facilitate continuous improvement. DE&I metrics are put into place that measure the success of talent processes.

HR, DE&I, and senior leaders work hard to enable their middle managers to make equitable talent decisions and to lead their teams more inclusively, specifically with regard to development, advancement, and promotions. They become more cross-culturally insightful about unique organizational barriers their talent may face and then take action to remove those barriers.

### LEADING EDGE

An organization that moves to this aspirational stage will be a place where HR and DE&I are fully integrated and work in true partnership with the full support of the CEO and the leadership team. The DE&I strategy is no longer separate from the talent strategy. Any recruiting strategy or succession management program is inclusive by design. Robust talent analytics are applied to inform these strategies, which include not just who gets promoted to what levels but also how long it takes the various groups to get there.

## Discipline 4: Master the Logistics

**Maturity Measure: The extent to which DE&I is integrated with all business operations.**

Inclusive organizations Master the Logistics. They are not just diverse, equitable, and inclusive as an end in itself. They are exceptionally effective at leveraging the DE&I of the organization to get collectively smarter about how to improve processes to improve their bottom lines.

Poor logistics can prevent the most break-through, necessary products, such as COVID-19 vaccines, from reaching the people who need them on time and in good condition. Poor logistics can lead to errors in assembly lines and distribution systems, as seen in the global supply chain meltdowns in the wake of the pandemic. They can lead to dangerous conditions for workers and result in tragedy.

Logistics are not the most alluring part of running a business. So much of the cachet is in slick branding and social media campaigns. Oscar-night-worthy high-end product rollouts get all the attention. Yet it's logistics that almost always saves the day.

### BASIC

Organizations that operate at the Basic stage of Master the Logistics do not recognize DE&I as a driver of business results and will therefore not be set up to seek diversity or leverage the diversity they currently have. DE&I is seen as a topic "handled" by legal or human resources teams and there are no dedicated DE&I resources allocated to logistically critical business functions such as finance, procurement, or quality assurance.

Far from leveraging the diversity of the team to make things more efficient, leaders in organizations at this stage may actually suboptimize their team interactions and dynamics by having an "I treat everyone the same" attitude. They don't believe in different treatment for people who are different.

### PROGRESSING

As organizations progress, they begin to integrate DE&I into select business functions where a link is not initially seen. For example, as leaders become more cognizant of the link between diversity, equity, and inclusion on the one hand and innovation on the other, a business function such as research and development will be tasked with integrating DE&I into its operations.

There is no longer a need to convince leaders that DE&I is necessary. They get that. Where they struggle is in knowing how to do it. It's an inflection point of DE&I maturity reached after the initial steep climb.

### ADVANCED

In the Advanced stage, DE&I becomes integrated into more business functions. That is because more mature organizations are able to make the link between being inclusive and better business outcomes on a whole, even for functions where a direct link to DE&I may not be obvious.

The discipline is applied behaviorally in day-to-day decision making. There is a conscious effort to create diverse teams in every area of the organization which enables it to run most effectively and efficiently. The organization makes skill building through various forms of learning experiences part of the yearly cycle of development for leaders, managers, and employees.

### LEADING EDGE

Leading Edge organizations master their logistics with full integration of DE&I into everything they do. It is embedded within the operational ecosystems, with dedicated resources standing ready to assist leaders within their own functions. Leaders are evaluated based on how they integrate DE&I into their business processes and decisions. Those efforts may include building mechanisms to encourage respectful dissent and to invite and explore different opinions.

## Discipline 5: See the Marketplace

**Maturity Measure: the extent to which DE&I is integrated with markets, customers, and communities.**

When organizations See the Marketplace, it must go beyond seeing just the segment that is most like us and that we feel comfortable with. Seeing the marketplace is about making efforts to see and include groups that have been historically overlooked, such as women or the Black marketplace. That's when we can reap the benefits of DE&I to our top lines.

### BASIC

Organizations at this stage do not take a strategic and culturally competent approach to serving new and diverse markets. While they may be interested in expanding into different regions of the world, or even to different demographics in existing regions, they very much approach these expansions like it is doing more of the same. Very often branching into new markets at this stage involves taking what is currently being done in the core market and simplistically replicating it for the new market.

Leaders and employees at this stage usually have not been very exposed to cultural differences. They may understand that the market is broadening and that there is a benefit to exploring those different markets; however, they do not yet have the cultural competency to approach diverse markets and customers in an authentic way.

### PROGRESSING

As organizations progress, the need for more cultural competency in their core outward-facing functions, such as marketing and sales, becomes clearer. But even at this stage, it's about more than using a few images of different-looking people in ads. Rather, it's about understanding the cultural context in which people operate. There is an increased understanding that in order to grow a presence in different markets one must actually listen to and seek to understand the culture.

Business leaders start to explore how to utilize inclusive competencies to deliver better outcomes for their customers. They may expand outreach into the communities in which they operate. Advertising becomes more adept because of the recognized need to perform relevant market research to understand the culture and then pull together a diverse team that includes members of the target community, for input and collaboration. The emerging ads have authentic story lines and messaging that makes consumers feel seen and heard.

### ADVANCED

Organizations that are advanced seek to expand their relationships with their diverse markets, customers, and communities, to upgrade these from merely transactional. Their go-to-market strategies are intentionally inclusive; in fact, inclusion becomes part of the organization's brand. All advertising is done with an inclusion lens, meaning even ad campaigns for a "local market" shows the diversity in the local geography. DE&I metrics are applied to measure success.

Leaders and managers actively influence change by embedding inclusive and cross-cultural competencies across markets and initiatives and build it into the very function of brand building. They use the very platform of their brand to ask underrepresented talent or groups to share their differentiated lived experience in order to create the most appropriate marketing messages. By tying the brand to the value of diversity, these leaders build trust among new market segments.

### LEADING EDGE

Leading Edge organizations have DE&I expertise distributed throughout all outward-facing functions–marketing, sales,

and customer service– as well as through the functions that only tangentially touch the marketplace, such as legal. DE&I metrics are embedded into all lines of management in all markets, and business outcomes are regularly evaluated to ensure sustainability and to course correct when needed.

The work of DE&I practitioners requires a cold-eyed look at the facts and all the bad things that happen while maintaining hope that can transcend the wrongs caused by greed, indifference, and pride to achieve the greater good. We map out the very brutal realities we face as a species, and yet we choose to lead with the hard-edged optimism that we can change course. Through implementation of the five disciplines of inclusive organizations, we can lead organizations to dream big, leveraging the power of their scale, influence, brand, and people to further diversity, equity, and inclusion to transform the world.





Andrés Tapia is a Senior Client Partner and is Korn Ferry's Global Diversity and Inclusion Strategist. He has been one of the leading voices in shaping a contemporary, next-generation approach to diversity and inclusion. He has over 25 years of experience as a C-suite management consultant, diversity executive, organizational development and training professional, and journalist. Fayruz Kirtzman is an innovator and a thought leader in Korn Ferry's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practice, overseeing Korn Ferry's Global DE&I Diagnostics solution.

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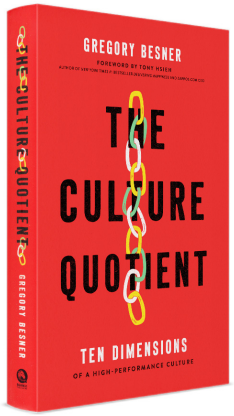
# The Culture Quotient

Greg Besner

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# The Culture Quotient

## Ten Dimensions of a High-Performance Culture




*by* **Greg Besner**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Recent Deloitte research compiled from over 3,000 leaders across 106 countries found that company culture and employee engagement are the most important human capital challenges confronting organizations around the world. Leaders want to achieve a high-performing culture at their companies, but many don't have a framework to define their culture or an effective toolkit to manage it.

***The Culture Quotient*** reveals the 10 essential cultural qualities that can help any organization prepare for and thrive in a constantly changing future. It focuses on helping companies achieve better financial results, increase employee engagement, and improve talent acquisition and retention. Author Greg Besner, founder of CultureIQ, also provides practical takeaways and tips to help readers implement culture programs at their companies.

Business leaders have been seeking a practical yet data-driven solution for managing culture for a very long time. Now leaders have it with the ***The Culture Quotient.***

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The link between high-performance culture and employee engagement.
- Why communication is the most challenging of the 10 dimensions.
- To focus on two key components of an innovative culture.
- To build a supportive company culture.

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## Introduction

Company culture, also known as organizational culture, refers to how and why things get done in your organization. Specifically, your organizational culture reflects your environment, which is made up of the behaviors, values, office rituals, and language of those employed in a workplace.

This simple definition clarifies how culture affects not only employees' relationship to their work but also how they work. In this understanding, it is clear why it is important to factor company culture into business strategy. Defining culture in this way encourages leaders to view it as a business topic rather than only a human resources issue.

A high-performance culture is a set of behaviors and norms that enables an organization to achieve superior results, including high financial returns, leading customer ratings, and the ability to recruit and retain top talent. In other words, it is a culture that drives a high-performance organization, one that remains competitive in the financial and employer market.

What does a high-performance culture look like? Ten dimensions are common to high-performance cultures: mission and value alignment; communication; responsibility; agility; work environment; innovation; wellness; performance orientation; collaboration; and support.

Think of these 10 elements as the key ingredients for creating a high-performance culture, and recognize that every organization has a unique recipe to achieve its desired culture.

### What Is Employee Engagement?

How does company culture drive your desired business results? Employee engagement is a big part of the answer. Employee engagement refers to how employees feel about their company and their work. When workers are engaged, they are more likely to be happy, motivated, and committed to your company. Engaged workers are also more connected to the company's mission, motivated to exceed their goals, proactive about learning new skills, positive in their approach to work, creative in solving problems, and committed to developing their careers at your organization.

Engagement is an outcome of a high-performance company culture. High-performance cultures outline behaviors and norms that are healthy and supportive, ensuring that team members clearly understand their culture and what is expected of them. Employees feel aligned, connected, and supported, and therefore they feel engaged with their company.

Because culture and engagement are so closely tied, it is nearly impossible to separate the results of engagement from those of culture. Let's now learn how the 10 elements address both.

## Mission and Value Alignment

Building a company culture starts with creating your mission and values. Alignment is especially important here. The companies with engaged employees are those that put their mission and values into action every day and across all levels of the organization.

A company's mission or vision statement is a clear and concise definition of its single most important purpose as a business. It should answer, "What do we do, and why do we do it?" Slack's company mission statement is "to make work life simpler, more pleasant, and more productive."

Core values are the guiding tenets of a company. If a mission defines what we do and why we do it, core values express how we do it. Because each organization is unique, there are no universal core values. Instead, a company must decide what principles it holds most important. Ikea's key values are togetherness, cost consciousness, renew and improve, caring for people, simplicity, different with a meaning, give and take responsibility, and lead by example.

### Living Your Mission and Values

Any company can email its core values, post them on its website, and pin them to its wall. That's the easy part. What is harder and less common is applying your mission and values in the day-to-day experience of all your people.

Hiring for mission and value alignment is arguably the most important piece of the puzzle to get right. Share your company's mission and values anywhere a candidate might encounter them—in job descriptions, on the company's "About" page, and during screening interviews—to demonstrate your commitment and give candidates a chance to assess their alignment. Then assess every candidate's ability and willingness to exhibit the values throughout the interview by asking about a time he/she exhibited each value.

After an employee is hired, consider the rest of the employee life cycle—onboarding, promotions, ongoing training, termination—and look for ways to embed your values into those touch points. Every policy, process, and program is an opportunity to link back to your mission and values.

As technology continues to deliver new channels for us to connect, communication in the workplace is becoming both more accessible and more complicated.

## Communication

For something so universal, communication can be awfully hard to get right. In fact, a CultureIQ survey of nearly 30,000 employees from more than 300 organizations found communication to be the weakest of the 10 culture dimensions.

As technology continues to deliver new channels for us to connect, communication in the workplace is becoming both more accessible and more complicated. No longer is it a matter of communicating more; instead, we must focus on communicating more effectively.

What does effective communication look like? In a company with effective communication, people are able to send, receive, and understand one another and any information they share. This relies on two key components: first, a common vocabulary that allows employees to understand others and any necessary information, and second, the proper channels and processes that enable the information transfer—to and from managers and employees, and within and between teams.

As leaders, it's our responsibility to foster an environment where these communication elements exist, align, and function.

### The Impacts of Communication

Communication puts an individual's role and projects into the context of the organization, inspiring workers to feel connected and motivating them to contribute. While increased engagement, retention, and performance each have positive business outcomes, the effects of communication are even deeper on an organizational level.

To start, a common vocabulary builds a shared experience for employees across roles, tenure, and teams. Alignment around communication processes reduces inefficiencies and increases productivity. What is more evocative of human potential than language? People are sensitive to how others around them are using language about their roles.

Further, the success of all other cultural elements and programs hinges on how they are communicated. Consider, for example, that you are rolling out a new performance review process. Managers and employees alike will understand the change, the reasons for it, and the effect for them only if all that information is communicated clearly. Folks will feel comfortable with the change only if they know where to go for questions and answers. And the performance reviews will have the desired effects only if there is mutual understanding of all metrics and terminology.

Create a process for leaders to share important business updates—a weekly meeting, a company blog, and a roundup newsletter are all options. Whatever you choose, make sure it is equally accessible to all employees.

## Responsibility

What is a culture of responsibility? Responsibility measures the level of ownership and autonomy that people feel they have in their role. Companies that value responsibility provide employees the freedom to make decisions regarding their work and encourage employees to hold themselves and others accountable for their actions.

The following equation explains it:

Responsibility = Psychological Ownership + Autonomy + Accountability

**Psychological ownership**. Francesca Gino, a behavioral scientist at Harvard Business School, defines psychological ownership as "the experience of possessing and being psychologically tied to an entity." Research demonstrates that feelings of psychological ownership for an organization, regardless of legal ownership, are associated with positive employee attitudes toward the organization, such as loyalty and job satisfaction, and improvements in work behavior, such as performance and organizational citizenship. Managers have the ability to treat their direct reports' responsibilities as the employees' sphere of control.

**Autonomy**. Researcher Dan Pink has found that autonomy, alongside mastery and purpose, drives employee motivation and often overall business results, too. In order for employees to experience autonomy at work, they need

three things: access to the right resources to get the job done, such as information and tools; a clear understanding of the priorities and decision-making criteria; and (yes, you guessed it) trust from leaders.

**Accountability**. On one level, accountability in the workplace is doing what you said you would do within the time frame promised. On a higher level, accountability is when people demonstrate responsibility for their actions—assigned or not—and the associated results. The most important condition is that employees understand the company's goals and how they translate into what is expected of them.

Employees also need to understand the consequences of not meeting a responsibility. Sometimes social pressure, (e.g., sending an email explaining that you missed a deadline), provides enough accountability. When the stakes are higher, however, the consequences must be more serious.

Employees must feel comfortable having difficult conversations with their peers, direct reports, and managers. Ideally these conversations will catch accountability gaps before they result in more serious consequences.

## Agility

By now we know that change—in the market, within your company, on your teams—is constant and inevitable, and it's certainly not slowing down any time soon. How your organization reacts to that inevitably affects your employees and your business. As famous educator Peter Drucker wrote, "The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence—it is to act with yesterday's logic."

This brings us to the natural question: How do we act with today's logic? Today's logic requires a fundamental shift in how we operate.

An internal group of 50 cross-functional colleagues, known as the McKinsey Agile Tribe, calls for thinking of organizations as living organisms rather than as machines. A machine can move quickly, but if the surrounding environment changes too drastically or frequently, its stability often suffers. Meanwhile, maintaining stability and dynamism within an ever-changing environment is core to an organism's survival. That adaptability is what agility is all about.

Agility is the ability to quickly respond and adapt to opportunities as they arise. What makes agility more important than ever before is that opportunities are always arising, given the changing nature of the future of work.

Consider these four keys to anticipating what organizations need to do in the future:

**Normalize ambiguity**. This means accepting that the future is unpredictable and creating norms so that employees feel stable and prepared regardless.

**Embrace agile mindsets**. Three mindsets support agility, according to the article "Viewpoint: How to Develop an Agile Workforce," by Ryan Gottfredson. They are a growth mindset, an open mindset, and a promotion mindset. A growth mindset, as opposed to a fixed mindset, is the belief that one can improve and develop personal abilities. An open mindset, versus a closed mindset, is one's willingness to listen to and learn from other perspectives.

A promotional, proactive mindset focuses on advancing and improving rather than "not losing."

**Prepare employees for the future through learning and development**. Learning and development programs are necessary to provide employees with the skills and knowledge fundamental to their roles now (stability) and those of the future (dynamism).

**Continuously monitor and respond**. Collect employee feedback to measure and monitor your culture. Collect feedback after key initiatives. Incorporate the norm of having retrospectives after each project, and train project leads on conducting these retrospectives. Build out an HR dashboard, including but not limited to data around your culture, retention, hiring, diversity, and employee sentiment.

## Work Environment

Work environment surfaced as the top driver of engagement, in a CultureIQ survey of nearly 30,000 employees from more than 300 companies. This means that in the journey to improve employee engagement, tinkering with the environment of your office is a high-impact and accessible place to start.

Work environment is physical space, surroundings, and resources that employees interact with at work. In effective work environments, employees feel safe and comfortable in their surroundings, are able to be productive in their work spaces, and have the resources to get work done. The key is to create an environment that facilitates productivity, enhances morale, and aligns with your values as a company.

Consider these factors:

**Office layout**. Open office spaces send a signal of transparency, collaboration, and a lack of hierarchy. However, as introvert advocate Susan Cain brought to our attention in her book ***Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking***, open layouts are not suited for everyone's work style.

If your office, like two-thirds of offices in the United States, has an open floor plan, designate a small nook or corner in the office as a quiet space. You can purchase free-standing dividers to physically separate the area. Employees can go here if they need to recharge from the chaos of an open floor plan.

**Temperature**. We lack a solid consensus on the optimal office temperature. Researchers at Cornell University found that when they raised the temperature from 68° to 77° Fahrenheit, typing errors dropped by 44 percent, and output increased by 150 percent. In 2006 the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Helsinki University of Technology found that 22° Celsius, or 71.6° Fahrenheit, is the optimal temperature for worker productivity. Try to find the optimal range at your company.

**Design**. Companies have written culture stories about offices that are nestled in nature to inspire creativity and connection among employees. The digital marketing firm GetUWired could have put its offices in a suburban office park in Atlanta, Georgia but instead chose to rent a gorgeous cabin in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The cabin isn't a gimmick; it is core to the vision of the agency's founders and a place where staff play Frisbee, jam with banjos, and eat at picnic tables. It's all about the commitment of the founders to putting people first.

If you are not able to move your offices to the middle of the woods, you still have plenty of opportunities to use design and color to inspire and engage your team. For one, you can bring nature inside your office. A study by the University of Queensland found that adding plants to your office can make employees happier and boost their concentration.

They also bring a burst of color, which the field of environmental psychology tells us can influence our emotions.

## Innovation

Innovation is essential to staying competitive in the market, meeting customer needs, increasing internal efficiency, and attracting top talent. Leaders also recognize that to reap the benefits of innovation, you must embrace a culture in which ideas can form, spread, and succeed.

Focus on two key components of an innovative culture: first, an environment that promotes new ideas, and second, employees' ability to implement these ideas within the organization. One without the other is like bread that doesn't rise: all the ingredients are in place, but they're missing a crucial interaction.

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has an open floor plan,
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**The environment**. An environment that encourages new ideas isn't so much a physical space or a defined event but, rather, a combination of conditions that encourage employees to generate and share new ideas.

Researchers at MIT Sloan School of Management call this "adaptive space." After a decade of research and more than 400 interviews, these researchers determined that the most successful innovations occur when companies have "the network and organizational context that allows people, ideas, information, and resources to flow across the organization."

Researchers identified three network roles: brokers, central connectors, and energizers. Brokers are the liaisons from one group to another, ensuring that ideas are spread early and often.

Central connectors organize their subgroups to see an idea through implementation. Energizers are highly influential people who inspire others to act and think boldly, with a contagious effect throughout the organization.

The main takeaway here is to consider how you as a leader are empowering people to fill their roles and creating space for these network interactions to take place.

**The processes**. Once you have the foundation of an innovation-friendly environment, you can layer on the processes and formal programs that enable employees to implement new ideas.

- Do employees know where to bring an idea when they have one?
- Do they have the skills to communicate new ideas, influence accordingly, and drive change?
- Do employees have the time, space, and budget to experiment? This experimentation can take the form of a program or an event, such as company-wide hackathons.

Inspira Marketing in Norwalk, Connecticut, has an annual "Big Ideas" contest in which teams generate innovative ways to have a positive impact on the community, and propose them in a Shark Tank-type competition to the leadership team. What makes this so successful is that a formal space, time, and budget are set aside to execute on the winning idea as an entire company.

## Wellness

Picture this: Your organization has worked hard to recruit and retain the top talent in your industry. These employees are engaging with their work passionately, creatively, and collaboratively. In short, individuals are contributing what they were hired to do and more.

It sounds like a dream, right? This vision is contingent upon one important condition: Employees are physically and mentally able to contribute to their full potential.

Wellness at work refers to the policies, resources, and initiatives that help employees maintain physical and mental health. Employees who feel healthy and have work-life balance are more motivated, focused, and positive. The companies that do this well are those that intentionally embed wellness in their day-to-day norms.

Your wellness efforts should support both the physical and the mental well-being of employees. While the two are intertwined, traditional programs tend to focus more on the physical element of wellness.

Managers can do a lot to integrate wellness into the workplace and position your company as a source of confidence and comfort to employees. Explore the following ways to promote wellness at your company:

**Provide resources**. When it comes to physical health, plenty of ideas are out there. Examples include stocking the kitchen with healthy snack options instead of the usual vending machine fare, and encouraging employees to exercise through gamification, financial incentives, or subsidized gym memberships.

On the mental health front, many health benefit packages have affordable options for employees to take advantage of. Take it a step further, and remove potential barriers by providing workplace counseling or referrals to help locate appropriate resources.

**Lead by example**. Often it's not a lack of resources that causes stress in the workplace; it's a lack of support to use them. After all, a flexible or unlimited vacation policy won't improve employee stress levels if employees feel that it's frowned upon to take paid time off from work. Change has to come from the top down.

**Encourage hobbies and interests outside of work**. Employees who have other interests and who see work as a part of their identity, rather than their entire life, are better able to face stress and overcome challenges.

Although you can't force employees to have interests outside of work, you can create space within the workplace to encourage this behavior. Urge employees to develop a well-rounded life by including personal interests in their yearly objectives and inviting them to share their hobbies and interests with co-workers during work hours.

## Performance Orientation

Performance-oriented companies ensure that people know how to succeed in their roles and are motivated to give their best. In order for that to be the case, the following three conditions must be in place: First, there are clear goals and metrics across all levels. Second, people are recognized for their contributions. Third, employees are supported in their growth areas.

**Goals and metrics**. It's well-known that goals and metrics are critical for a company's performance and organizational alignment, but they also play an important role in employee engagement. Clear goals reduce ambiguity and provide meaning to one's work, which contributes to increased motivation.

Employees should understand exactly what they are trying to achieve and why they are trying to achieve that specific outcome. In order for goals to carry meaning and motivate employees, employees must understand what their work contributes to on a grander level, the big picture. The best way to do this is to make explicit links among an individual's output, the team's goals, and the organization's strategy.

You can check every other box of the culture equation, but if employees don't feel supported by their leaders, you will not have a high-performance culture.

**Rewards and recognition**. We want to feel valued in a group, and recognition is a clear signal that we are valued. What's the secret to creating a recognition-rich culture so that employees feel appreciated, motivated to give their best, and inspired to stick around? There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Focus on four important considerations when designing your reward and recognition program:

- Acknowledge that employee motivation and recognition preferences vary.
- Message it with clarity, meaning, and appreciation.
- Consider the implicit signals your recognition program sends.
- Harness social power to inspire and motivate others.

**Growth and development**. When a company invests in its employees, the employees feel more empowered and appreciated, which increases their loyalty to their current employer. Three ways to do this are feedback, regular manager conversations, and training and resources.

## Collaboration

Collaboration is a measure of effective teamwork. It occurs when people and teams cooperate, share information, and work well together. At a collaborative company, employees feel safe to speak up among their colleagues and excited to contribute their experience or expertise.

While other culture dimensions—especially work environment, communication, and responsibility—are woven within the quest for collaboration, there are clear levers you can pull to increase collaboration in your company.

Consider the following collaboration levers:

**Psychological safety**. Psychological safety, a term coined in 1999 by professor Amy Edmondson of Harvard Business School, refers to individuals' willingness to be vulnerable and take risks in front of others on their team. Imagine how a team's ability to problem-solve and partner increases when individuals feel safe asking questions, admitting mistakes, and taking risks.

**A shared purpose**. A shared purpose is essential to enabling collaboration on a broader level. Your mission should serve as a uniting purpose. Your job as a leader is to remind people of your shared purpose and make the link to their project, team, and individual goals.

**Clear roles**. Taking ownership over your own and your team's work is a universally desired practice. However, in the absence of the proper organizational systems, ownership's less-desirable cousin, territorialism, might sneak in. This happens when people or groups feel a threat to their sense of security, a common occurrence during times of change and growth.

The best way to avoid territorial behaviors or "turf wars" is to establish clarity around one's role and the roles of those around the individual. These guidelines actually grant employees more freedom to collaborate. Role clarity frees employees from internal politics and the need to protect their turf.

**Collaborative behavioral norms**. Lynda Gratton from the London Business School studied 55 complex and highly collaborative teams and identified eight practices that contribute to their success. One such practice is equipping employees with the following skills necessary for collaboration: appreciating others, engaging in purposeful conversations, productively and creatively resolving conflicts, and managing workflow. Get even more specific in understanding what works within the dynamics of your organization. Remember that it's a leader's responsibility to model what effective collaboration looks like.

## Support

There's a well-known adage: "You don't quit a job; you quit a boss." You can check every other box of the culture equation, but if employees don't feel supported by their leaders, you will not have a high-performance culture.

A supportive company culture is one in which employees feel valued by their leaders as people, rather than just a number. This happens when employees have a positive rela-

tionship with their manager, feel confident in senior leaders, and receive the right guidance to succeed.

Let's describe the pillars of a supportive company culture that invests in people, and explore what you, as a leader, can do to make sure they are strong.

**Make leaders accessible**. In 2015, Gallup released a "State of the American Manager: Analytics and Advice for Leaders" report, showing employees are more engaged when they have daily interactions with their managers—through email, face-to-face conversations, phone calls, or other audio and video communication tools.

Regular touch points help individuals feel both supported and acknowledged. Managers should not only make themselves available but also check in regularly with their direct reports between scheduled one-on-ones. Also, create opportunities for employees to build rapport with senior leaders outside of the normal work flow.

**Support those who do the supporting**. We need to invest in training managers to get them to a place where they feel confident engaging and developing their direct reports. Sure, that means less time on task, and this adds more outside work on top of skill training. But ignoring the knowledge gap will cost everyone time and headaches later. Consider creating systems for managers to support and learn from each other.

One idea is to create monthly manager meetups that serve as a space for your managers to share challenges, ask questions, and gather ideas.

**Confidence, clarity, consistency**. According to CultureIQ data, the condition that separates companies with the highest-scoring cultures from the rest is employee confidence in senior leadership. A common complaint across organizations is that employees do not understand where the organization is going, and much less how it plans to get there. It is hard to feel confident in any leader's ability to drive the business forward if you don't know what "forward" looks like.

Enlist the support of front-line managers to reinforce your organization's strategy at any opportunity and across all levels of the organization. One of the best things you can do to build trustworthiness and reliability as a leader is to consistently model what you want to see within your company. Every single thing you do as a leader sends a signal, from the policies you implement to where you sit in the office.

Imagine what signal is sent if you do what you say you will do and act how you ask others to act. In this scenario, employees learn what to expect and to trust what you say.

The 10 dimensions are codes for how to work, cooperate, and compete toward a shared mission and vision. In the context of business, these dimensions are the keys to your competitive advantage. Master these 10 dimensions to achieve a high-performance culture and, ultimately, a high-performance organization.

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- ***Courageous Cultures: How to Build Teams of Microinnovators, Problem Solvers, and Customer Advocates*** by David Dye, Karin Hurt
- ***The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*** by Amy Edmondson



Greg Besner is the founder and vice chairman of CultureIQ, a global company that helps organizations to create high-performance cultures. He founded CultureIQ in 2013, and since then he and his firm have assisted more than 1,000 organizations and millions of employees to strengthen their company cultures. In 2018, Besner was ranked in *USA Today* as the eighth best CEO in the United States among a pool of 50,000 companies. He also was named the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year® in New Jersey in 2003.

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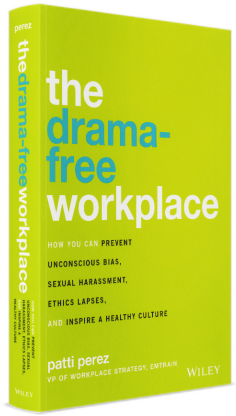
# The Drama-Free Workplace

Patti Perez

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# The Drama-Free Workplace

## How You Can Prevent Unconscious Bias, Sexual Harassment, Ethics Lapses, and Inspire a Healthy Culture




*by* **Patti Perez**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Companies spend millions on legal compliance training and initiatives to eliminate workplace drama and the resulting low morale and lawsuits, but don't always get the results they want. In ***The Drama-Free Workplace***, attorney and HR expert Patti Perez explains the secret to avoiding all forms of drama, legal exposure, and low morale: a healthy workplace culture.

Perez debunks common myths, including the belief that a focus on legal compliance leads to a healthy workplace culture. (In fact, it increases the likelihood of getting sued). She also helps organizations understand the causes of and solutions to problems related to sexual harassment, bias and diversity, and ethics lapses; practice fearlessness, fairness, and freedom; anticipate and prevent situations that give rise to drama; and use emotional intelligence to communicate persuasively about sensitive topics.

The practical tools in ***The Drama-Free Workplace*** will help all your employees feel valued and motivated, and keep drama, disengagement, and lawsuits away.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Root causes of workplace drama and strategies to address them.
- The importance of authenticity for creating true inclusion.
- To use emotional intelligence to keep drama away.
- To design and deliver effective training programs.

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## Introduction

"Workplace culture" has become a familiar term in corporate America. But despite all the talk about how much culture matters, few companies actually do the work required to build and maintain a healthy and productive environment at work. Research validates the fact that a healthy culture drives business results, but little attention is paid to how to actually improve your culture and keep it healthy.

Workplace culture encompasses the beliefs, values, and behaviors that guide your company. There are many components that define and measure the health of a culture at work, including employee engagement, employee satisfaction, happiness at work, compensation, benefits, and other workplace perks. People confuse these individual elements with defining their culture.

A healthy and productive workplace culture is like a pyramid. Like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, you can't get to the top rungs without first satisfying basic needs.

A company that provides the basics—fair pay and benefits, and a generally safe workplace—is at the bottom and has a mediocre culture. People come to work for their paychecks. There is little innovation and profits are flat.

A company that goes a step above and provides additional perks and takes steps to ensure an engaged and connected employee base has a good culture. Their employees understand the company's mission; they feel connected to it and to each other. In terms of employee relations, these companies focus on and follow the law.

Then there are the companies at the top, with fantastic workplace cultures. The secret to these companies' success is threefold:

- They are intentional and relentless about planning and executing a strategy to put culture at the center of everything they do.
- They have leaders who walk the walk and set the tone.
- Because culture refers to the norms that govern how people approach problems and develop solutions, these companies also see preventing, managing, and addressing conflict (drama) as a vital part of their culture.

And the results are undeniable: a cohesive and collaborative workplace that leads to innovation and, as study after study shows, increased revenue and profit.

**PART I: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IDENTIFY, PREVENT, AND FIX WORKPLACE DRAMA**

## How to Blow Up an Organization (and Rise from the Ashes)

Workplace drama takes many forms, but all drama is rooted in conflict and heightened emotions. The drama might involve just a few people (at least initially). But like a progressive disease, the drama spreads if it isn't dealt with swiftly and effectively. And too often unchecked drama ends up infecting an entire department, division, or company. Identifying the problem is vital to ultimately figuring out how to prevent it and solve it.

Will it really take blowing up your organization to identify, prevent, and fix workplace drama? Yes (but not literally!).

So how does drama manifest itself at work? Here's a partial list: harassment, bias—conscious and unconscious, perceptions of unfairness, and ethical lapses.

### Root Causes of Workplace Drama

Just as important as identifying and recognizing drama (preferably early, when it can still be easily addressed) is recognizing its root causes. Any one of these examples—not to mention a combination of them—has the potential to devastate your company:

- Inauthentic leadership.
- Problem-solving deficit.
- Persistent confusion: unfair or illegal?
- Lack of transparency.
- Communication gaps.
- Increased division.
- Culture of complicity.
- Blind spots pop up.
- Wrong solution.
- Unwillingness to admit wrongdoing.

Of all the underlying reasons that drama creeps into our workplaces and ruins corporate culture, a lack of authenticity is the most serious.

We know the drill: Have a policy for everything, make employees sign acknowledgments for all those policies, draft a statement about your company's "commitment to diversity and inclusion," and post it on your company website. Defend every claim of unfairness with your standard statement that your company is "committed to an environment free of ha-

Yes, it's necessary to identify mistakes and root causes of drama. But the most effective way to eliminate bad behavior is to study and focus on good behavior.

rassment" and that you are an "equal opportunity employer."

It's not that any of these are bad, but they are rote responses that send a clear message: "We are an average company who implements average solutions." And what's worse is a company that says these things but means none of them.

Now comes the hard but fun work: blowing up all preconceived notions about how to decrease or even eliminate drama from your workplace. Yes, it's necessary to identify mistakes and root causes of drama. But the most effective way to eliminate bad behavior is to study and focus on good behavior.

## Why Is Sexual Harassment Still a Thing and What We Must Do to Fix It

You've probably read at least one story this week involving allegations of workplace sexual harassment. From banking to entertainment, from media to tech and beyond, powerhouse men in almost every industry have been brought down because their workplace harassment was exposed. As we watch well-known figures fall, questions of "why" and "who knew what, when" swirl.

While the task of taking steps to prevent harassment isn't easy, too many companies have taken an approach that has made it infinitely harder than it needs to be.

In a nutshell, here is the drumbeat of "solutions" we've heard for decades: review and distribute your policy prohibiting sexual harassment; republish your promise of zero-tolerance and a harassment-free workplace; slap together a compliance training session to "teach" managers about unlawful harassment; train managers to document everything, have a witness for everything they do, run every decision by HR; and . . . well, you get the idea.

These "solutions" have failed. Miserably. It's time to explore new ways to solve the issue and reduce workplace drama.

### Are We All on the Same Page? Key Legal Definitions and Clarifications

A crucial issue that has made solving the sexual harassment problem more difficult than it needs to be is confusion and misunderstanding about what "sexual harassment" means and what it doesn't mean.

The generally accepted definition for unlawful quid pro quo sexual harassment is the loss or denial of a job benefit for refusal to cooperate sexually. That means that this type of harassment has a few distinct characteristics: It involves a supervisor/subordinate relationship (since the supervisor has the power to grant or deny some job benefit); it involves a boss asking for some sexual favor ("sleep with me or else"); and it involves the loss of some tangible employment benefit (the "or else" is "you'll lose your job," "I'll demote you," etc.).

A second type of unlawful sexual harassment is "hostile work environment" harassment, which involves unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature (though a plaintiff does not need to show romantic or sexual desire). The behavior could be physical, visual, or verbal. The conduct must be objectively and subjectively unwelcome (this means that the woman, at the time the behavior occurred, found the behavior offensive or unwelcome, and the behavior must pass the "reasonable woman" test, meaning that any women in the plaintiff's shoes would have found the behavior offensive).

The behavior must be sufficiently severe (usually referring to serious physical conduct) or "pervasive" (occurs with sufficient frequency) that it unreasonably interferes with the plaintiff's ability to do her job.

There are numerous root causes of workplace harassment, but research and experience tell us there are three in particular that correlate strongly to the presence of sexual harassment at work: a culture of complicity, male-dominated (or male-only) leadership, and compliance blinders.

### Sexual Harassment: The Cure

Early intervention and early resolution not only shield a company from legal liability, but they also get to the real goal of creating a healthy culture.

A few themes emerge from a careful review of the various causes of workplace sexual harassment. Each one provides insight and ultimately gives us a road map to create actionable solutions to prevent and address workplace sexual harassment:

**Promote a culture of precise communication**. Communicate your values clearly and persuasively. Begin with an authentic message that your company stands for respect, civility, and belonging. Tell your employees and your leaders what you expect in terms of behavior, integrity, and ethics. Be very specific—without specifics, people will interpret "harassment," "inappropriate," "unprofessional," and "civil" in varying ways.

**Cultivate a culture of truth-telling**. Encourage reports. Really. View reports as your best opportunity to deal with workplace drama early, before it becomes too big to solve.

**Foster a culture of equity and inclusion**. Don't just pay these concepts lip service. Do more than develop an employee resource group or expand your recruitment efforts to attract diverse candidates. Hold people accountable—for doing good and for behaving badly. And make sure your practice of accountability is fair, consistent, and even-handed.

## Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging ... Not Just PC BS

The link between diverse organizations and financial performance has been studied extensively, and the conclusion is clear: Diversity provides a competitive edge. This is especially true if the organization has a diverse leadership team.

Hundreds of companies have designed and executed authentic and creative inclusion strategies that make all employees feel a deep sense of belonging, which leads to maximum engagement and loyalty. These companies remain steadfast in their commitment to diversity not only because it's the right thing to do but also because it's the business-wise thing to do.

A foundational issue related to diversity and inclusion is the effect of unconscious bias on our decision-making at work. Although the study of unconscious bias isn't new, it has only recently become well known.

Unconscious biases (also called implicit biases) are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. In English, that means that all humans are wired to function on auto-pilot when necessary and, as a result, we sometimes have to make assumptions. Usually, these unconscious assumptions are harmless, but sometimes they can be damaging or even dangerous.

Two of the most common types of unconscious bias are confirmation bias and affinity bias (sometimes called "like me" bias). Affinity bias is defined as a positive response to people who are similar to us.

Confirmation bias is the tendency to notice evidence that supports our beliefs, preconceptions, and hypotheses, and to miss, ignore, or dismiss evidence that contradicts them. Instead of trying to falsify a hypothesis, we tend to try to confirm it.

### Creating, Executing, and Selling Your Diversity Initiative

Leading companies make inclusion part of their DNA—not just with employees but with customers, suppliers, investors, and other stakeholders. Here are some specific ways they use their commitment to these issues as a key to stave off workplace drama.

**Authenticity**. Too many companies *say* they're committed to an inclusive culture that welcomes diverse employees. The truth is that when push comes to shove, their decisions highly favor the status quo. There is rampant bias—women getting "low-balled" during salary negotiations, diverse employees asked to serve on diversity councils with no rewards for that work at compensation time, high-powered leaders allowed to get away with misconduct, and the list goes on. If your company isn't fully and genuinely committed to diversity (or is lukewarm in its commitment), it's better to be quiet about diversity than to promote it as a core value.

**Trickle-down effect**. Yes, a true commitment to diversity starts at the top, but that authentic commitment needs to flow down to other managers and supervisors. This means leading companies don't focus on old-fashioned metrics like setting numeric goals to evaluate manager performance (quota-setting); they develop fresh ways to teach managers how to create a sense of belonging.

Leading companies teach managers innovative ways to discuss sensitive topics to help employees better understand each other, connect, and build empathy. Leading companies give managers clear information and guidance so they fully understand and are on board with the company's inclusion goals and can clearly communicate those goals to their own employees. And leading companies involve managers in decision-making about the initiative, so they feel a true sense of ownership in the process.

**Creative communication and branding**. Words matter. While the terms "diversity" and "inclusion" should conjure up positive images, they have become politically

charged words, often eliciting extreme reactions. You don't necessarily need to ditch those words altogether, but consider slogans such as "We Are One," "Stronger Together," and "One Team." This and similar messaging that precisely defines the ultimate goal of your efforts—bringing together the entire mosaic of your talent—leads to a win-win for employees and companies alike.

## PART II: HIKING TO THE TOP OF THE HEALTHY WORKPLACE CULTURE PYRAMID

### Reaching the Top of the Healthy Workplace Culture Pyramid: The Three Fs

Making your way to the top of the healthy workplace culture pyramid is much like taking an actual hike up a mountain. To begin our journey, we'll need to explore the three Fs, which are essential to any healthy workplace culture.

**1. Fearlessness**. Sir Winston Churchill wisely stated, "Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision." Organizational courage is an essential component of every healthy workplace culture, but many corporations respond to controversy and challenge from a place of fear because it's easier than exploring what causes that fear and analyzing whether the fear is reasonable.

You're twice as likely to be struck by lightning at some point in your lifetime than you are to be part of an organization where a single incident of harassment becomes an EEOC charge.

And yet, every day of every week of every month of every year, companies make decisions about their employees based on this faulty risk assessment—an assessment based on the probability of becoming embroiled in an employment-related lawsuit. Even worse, by focusing on this fear, too many companies fail to put their energy and focus into taking steps that are actually proven to reduce the likelihood of an employee bringing a claim.

**2. Fairness**. Actual fairness involves facts. Was it fair that your supervisor criticized your performance? If your performance description was accurate, then probably so. Was it fair if others were making the same mistakes as you, but he singled you out for criticism? No, selective fairness isn't fairness. Was it fair that you were chosen for the layoff? If the company established criteria based on their best business judgment and followed that criteria in a consistent and objective way, then yes, it was fair.

But, is it fair if you were passed over for a well-deserved promotion and the position was instead given to the boss's unqualified son? No—this not only sounds like nepotism, it also sounds like a terrible business decision.

That said, fairness doesn't mean treating everyone in the exact same way. In the employment context, factors that influence actual fairness involve consistency and transparency.

**3. Freedom**. In a healthy workplace culture—one in which employees have been vetted not only for knowledge, skills, and abilities but also for emotional maturity and commitment to success—leaders don't use rules as a means to exert more and more control over their employees. In fact, rules in such thriving workplace cultures don't restrict employee freedom—they enhance it.

But what does this kind of freedom look like? How can we let go of our detailed, structured rulebooks that delineate every nuance of what's allowed and what's not and begin to structure rules that enhance employee freedom?

**Step 1: Reinvent rule-making**. First, we must rethink the way we design and enforce rules. Often, the issue isn't with the rules themselves but rather with the failure to design and enforce truly useful rules. Company policies and guidelines are filled with unnecessary, poorly thought-out rules that serve little to no purpose. Before addressing a workplace issue by instituting yet another rule, ask yourself these two questions:

- Does the rule really solve a problem or address a question?
- Are you actually prepared to enforce that rule? If so, how?

**Step 2: Give employees freedom by treating them like adults**. It's time for company leaders to act less like middle-school hall monitors and more like the middle-school teacher who encouraged you to explore and be curious. Yes, there will be people who need more detailed guidance than the official rules provide, but that's exactly what your senior leaders and middle managers are there to do—provide specific guidance and leadership to their teams when needed.

When she became CEO of GM, Mary Barra dramatically changed the dress code policy at the company from a bloated, 10-page policy to two words: "Dress appropriately." This guideline certainly doesn't mean the same thing to every employee at GM—appropriate dress for a GM factory worker will be totally different from that of a GM

business executive. But, instead of mandating exactly what every type of employee should and shouldn't be wearing, Barra left it up to the individual leaders and managers to determine appropriate work attire with their employees.

> Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others

## Reduce Drama Through Precise and Persuasive Communication

Learning to communicate effectively and persuasively, and teaching your employees to do the same, is essential to reach the top of the healthy workplace culture pyramid.

Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships. In their book ***Emotional Intelligence 2.0***, authors Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves identify four emotional intelligence skills that pair up under two primary competencies: personal competence and social competence. Personal competence is your ability to stay aware of your emotions and manage your behavior and tendencies. This includes your self-awareness and your self-management skills.

Social competence is your ability to understand other people's moods, behavior, and motives in order to improve the quality of your relationships. This includes your social awareness and your relationship management.

### Using Emotional Intelligence to Keep Drama Away

What strategies can companies implement to help employees communicate clearly and transparently?

**You are what you say, so be meticulous with your words**. For example, calling diversity efforts "stupid" creates a reasonable and expected belief that a person is antidiversity. If that's the image a person wants to have, then he or she has done a good job being impeccable with the choice of words. But here's the rub: Whoever believes this must face the reasonable and expected consequences of the choice to say these things.

If the person seeks to be viewed as someone whose opinions do not affect their decision-making at work, then he or she must be more precise and less emotional when speaking about these topics.

**Use helpful communication tools**. Provide employees with tangible and easy-to-use tools to strip communication of personal attacks or needless emotion. This doesn't mean you create a robotic workplace, but it does mean that you give employees options to communicate in more-precise ways. HR and compliance company Emtrain uses the Workplace Color Spectrum® for this purpose. This simple communication tool categorizes behavior by color, ranging from green for respectful and positive behavior to red for illegal and toxic conduct.

This tool serves numerous purposes. The first is that it creates an easy and safe way to call out objectionable behavior. And it does so in a way that makes it about the conduct and not about the person. So, "Laura, your insistence that I celebrate birthdays is annoying and discriminatory; you're being a real jerk," becomes, "Laura, I know you like celebrating birthdays, but I've told you I don't and I can't. Your behavior is orange at best and bordering on red. Please stop."

**Seek to be understood: Not everyone will agree with you, and that's okay**. Do your part to fix drama quickly when you can, but your goal should be to clearly and precisely state your point, knowing that people might disagree. Don't let this reality kill your spirit or your commitment to continue to communicate in a respectful and clear way with all your colleagues. This advice is easier to give than it is to follow. But it is possible, and the reward—decreased drama at work—is well worth the effort.

## PART III: A DIY ROADMAP FOR CREATING AND MAINTAINING A DRAMA-FREE CULTURE

## Policies, Schmolicies ... How to Write and Enforce the Right Rules

Though policies are universally recognized as useful tools to prevent misconduct, too many organizations pay little attention to writing and enforcing policies that will have that desired effect. So how can you take a fresh new approach to writing policies? How can you write policies that

In the wake of #MeToo, the issue of harassment prevention training has taken on a life of its own.

become an integral component of your journey to becoming a drama-free workplace?

### Policies Should Set Expectations, Not Restrict Freedom

Should policies be written to give employees the right to do something, or should they be written to encourage employees to do the right thing? The best way to prevent workplace drama is to encourage employees, to promote greater connection and empathy, and to give them a sense of fairness. Here are some examples and ways you can improve your policies:

**Timekeeping policies** shouldn't just be a way to keep tabs on employees. Let employees know that in addition to legal requirements, you have timekeeping mandates because you are committed to making sure everyone gets paid for all the work they do. A well-written policy tells your employees that you value their physical and mental health and want them to work hard when they're working, but to take time to decompress, too.

**Disability policies** should cover more than legal obligations. Yes, your organization is required to provide an accommodation request if, after a good faith interactive process, you find an accommodation that is reasonable and will be effective in allowing the employee to do her job. But a great employer does more than comply with this requirement. Stating the "why" gives you a chance to tell employees that your goal is to make the process a win-win proposition.

**Bullying policies** are often vague and fail to define what is meant by "respectful" or "professional." Does this mean that saying one curse word after stubbing your toe is wrong? Or does it mean that a boss who throws things at employees is behaving acceptably because he's "high spirited?" First, if you think it's necessary to have a policy on abusive or demeaning behavior, give specific examples and be realistic. Follow up by discussing this more during training.

**Policies about evaluations and salary reviews** could help create a more seamless process, but unfortunately many policies make the process more bureaucratic. Inauthentic, canned language sends the message that you only see the evaluation process as a necessary evil and don't really do much analysis when deciding about salary increases. Add language that sets expectations for managers and employees. This might include your organization's commitment to continuous feedback (along with training on what that means), helpful supplements with answers to FAQs, and an offer to help if someone is struggling with how to give feedback.

## Your Step-by-Step Guide to Designing and Delivering Effective Workplace Training

Debates about harassment prevention training are all the rage. Does it work? What's the ROI? Who is best suited to design and deliver training? Will it help us change behavior? Will it reduce the risk of being sued?

In the wake of #MeToo, the issue of harassment prevention training has taken on a life of its own. Numerous state legislatures have passed mandatory training laws. These laws require harassment prevention training, and though they vary in detail, what they have in common is that training, whether you love it or hate it, is seen as a necessary piece in the larger puzzle of harassment prevention.

So what's the best way to design and deliver training that has its intended effect?

### Steps for Implementing a Successful Training Program

The key is to be thoughtful and methodical in planning, designing, deploying, and tracking your work. It will take effort and commitment, but going through these steps will be well worth the journey since training done right will provide you with a critical component in your quest to become drama free.

**Step 1: Plan and set the tone**. It will be vital for you to do some planning up front to make the training program successful. Equally important will be setting the tone so that your program flows with your other harassment prevention

efforts. To accomplish that, you'll need to get buy-in from leadership; collect and analyze information; and coordinate training with other efforts to improve your culture.

**Step 2: Design the program based on what you've learned from Step 1**. Now that you have solid guidance about what you need to emphasize in your training program, it's time to roll up your sleeves and start designing it. Here are the questions you need to ask yourself first: What methodology will you use to train? Who will you train? How will you prioritize training? What other training topics will you cover?

**Step 3: Design the content**. Create the content based on what is required (if you're in a state that requires training), what your workplace needs most, and what other skills will help you achieve a healthy culture.

**Step 4: Map out a detailed plan on how to deliver the content**. Once you've decided on whether your training will be live, online, or a combination of both, it's time to develop an actual calendar and a methodology to track who will be trained and when.

**Step 5: Deploy, track, and celebrate**. Create a training calendar, and start scheduling sessions or rolling out e-training. Stay mindful of deadlines for mandatory training, and deploy it in a way that makes it easy for everyone to be trained on time. Make sure you have a way to track who has attended/taken training.

Not enough companies celebrate training. Set up a system to recognize a job well done. Consider giving a prize to the department that has the highest training attendance.

**Step 6: Collect and analyze data to keep the training loop going**. Track anything and everything related to training. For example, is there a trend in terms of the types of questions employees are asking or issues they express confusion or concern about? If you have a system that asks polling questions, what information do the answers uncover?

The bottom line with workplace training is this: While it's true that decades of designing and deploying bad or mediocre training has done almost nothing to rid our workplaces of drama, you now have a great opportunity to rewrite that script and make training a signature piece of your drama-free workplace puzzle.

Thoughtful training, along with the other proactive strategies discussed above, will help you create a vibrant, healthy organizational culture that is free of drama and where everyone feels safe and respected.

## IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Stop Workplace Drama: Train Your Team to Have No Complaints, No Excuses, and No Regrets***
  by Marlene Chism
- ***Reviving Work Ethic: A Leader's Guide to Ending Entitlement and Restoring Pride in the Emerging Workforce***
  by Eric Chester



Patti Perez is Vice President of Workplace Strategy for Emtrain, a technology-driven HR culture/compliance company, and a frequent speaker around the United States and Latin America on sexual harassment prevention and other workplace issues. She is a licensed California attorney, a professionally certified HR executive, and a specialist in the prevention and resolution of workplace drama.

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# The Insider's Guide to Culture Change

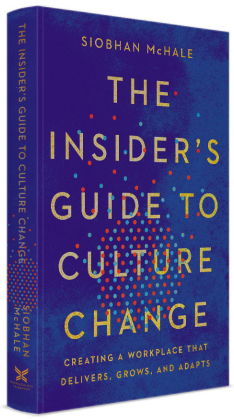
Siobhan McHale

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# The Insider's Guide to Culture Change

## Creating a Workplace That Delivers, Grows, and Adapts

*by* **Siobhan McHale**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

From disengaged employees to underserved customers, business failures invariably stem from a culture problem. Many leaders and managers struggle to get a handle on exactly what culture is and its pervasive impact throughout an organization. Some try to change the culture by publishing a statement of core values but soon find that no meaningful change happens. Others try to unify the culture around a set of shared goals but find their efforts backfire as stressed employees throw their hands up because "leadership just doesn't get it."

In ***The Insider's Guide to Culture Change***, acclaimed culture transformation expert and global executive Siobhan McHale shares her proven four-step process to demystifying culture transformation and initiating positive change. McHale walks readers through the process to culture transformation, including how to analyze where your culture is broken, reframe roles within your company, break deeply embedded patterns, and consolidate gains.

With ***The Insider's Guide to Culture Change***, watch your employees go from followers to change leaders who drive an agile culture that constantly outperforms.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To dispel common myths about organizational culture.
- The four groundbreaking steps of the Culture Disruptor.
- The key difference between behaviors and patterns.
- Compelling stories of companies with winning cultures.

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## Learn the Insider's Secret: The Culture Disruptor

In today's hyperconnected world of instantaneous global communication, massive market disruptions, the expansion of an all-powerful urban consumer class, conflicts within the multigenerational workforce, and increasingly strict laws and regulations governing corporate behavior in some countries, it takes more than pretty words to instill the values that will successfully steer a company through volatile and uncertain times.

If you want a high-performing, agile, market-dominating company that gets results no matter what challenges it faces, you'd better create a culture that will get the job done.

Simple enough, right? No. Actually, it's a whole lot easier said than done. To paraphrase Louis Gerstner, the former chairman and CEO of IBM, turning a bad culture into a good culture is like teaching a herd of elephants to dance.

What, exactly, do we mean by corporate culture? Here, workplace culture is "The patterns or agreements that determine how the business operates." A simplified version is, "It's how things work around here."

No published policy can create a corporate culture. No document outlining an organization's bedrock values can guarantee that people will faithfully practice those values. Culture emerges not from a proclamation or code of ethics but from how people, especially the organization's leaders, behave day in and day out.

Culture differentiates one company from another. Think of it as an organization's personality, the set of unique attributes that give it life, make it stand out from the crowd, and give it an edge over its rivals; or it can undermine an organization's ability to create and sustain a competitive advantage.

### The Culture Disruptor

If your company makes widgets, your competitors can copy your product or even disrupt your market share with something that makes your widgets obsolete. You may jump on every management theory that comes along, from Lean Six Sigma, business process reengineering, total quality management, management by objectives, and so forth.

But no one can easily copy your company's culture. This explains why all those executives surveyed by pollsters cite it as a major priority. This makes culture change one of the greatest untapped sources of performance improvement in organizations. If you get the culture right, the results will follow.

Making culture change happen boils down to activating The Culture Disruptor. This is a four-step model that anyone can use to transform workplace culture. It is designed to help successful leaders continue to be successful, assist those leaders struggling with specific culture issues within organizations, and help those leaders facing fundamental workplace culture challenges in their businesses.

The Culture Disruptor describes the four steps in successful culture change: diagnose what's really going on, reframe the roles, break the patterns, and consolidate the gains. By following this model's four basic steps, you can break out of the old ways to create a culture that delivers, grows, and adapts.

## Understand Workplace Culture: Debunking the Myths About Culture

A popular belief holds that culture boils down to explicit values and behaviors. However, that assumption can get you into a lot of trouble. No matter how hard you try to change a culture by promoting new values ("Be bold! Be innovative!"), and then expecting your people to immediately embrace those values and alter their behavior accordingly, little, if anything, will change.

To create true and lasting change, you must concentrate on the three key elements of workplace culture: mental maps, roles, and patterns.

**Mental maps** are the perceptions, point-of-view, and images you hold in your head about your work. The maps include expectations, thoughts, feelings, assumptions, values, beliefs, and needs. The mental maps that people hold may not be visible to anyone else, but they strongly influence how people think and feel about their work and the roles they take up.

During culture change, you must help people redraw the mental maps that guide their role, so they can better navigate the change.

**Roles** are the part played by a person (or function) in a given situation. Getting different results depends on your ability to shift mental maps and enable people to take up a different role.

All leaders face the same challenge. How do you get people to do the right thing when you're not there to make sure they do? For example, the leaders at Southwest Airlines

People come and go from any organization, but the patterns remain pretty much the same.

invited people to take up the role of "servant leaders" when it came to meeting customer needs.

**Patterns** are the unwritten rules that can capture people as soon as they enter the workplace. People come and go from any organization, but the patterns remain pretty much the same. You must look below the surface to discover these invisible patterns.

Patterns function like software programs that instruct the computer what to do. And like software, they can run smoothly, or they can become infested with bugs and worms and malware. Patterns sit at the collective or systemic level in the organization.

Finally, systems experts say that patterns are cocreated, meaning that it takes two to tango. To discover the key to changing a culture with minimum angst and disruption, you need to distinguish the dancers from the dance, the patterns from the behaviors. Culture is less about what happens (the behaviors) and more about how the workplace functions (the patterns)—these patterns hold the key to lasting change.

## Prepare for Change: Diagnosing Your Current Business Environment

The most successful change leaders carefully examine both the internal and the external environment to determine exactly what's going on inside their own organization and in the marketplace.

Externally, they zoom in on current trends and developments just beginning to appear on the distant horizon. The future may resist accurate prediction, but you can always detect little clues to the internal changes you must make in order to thrive long term.

Netflix co-founder and CEO Reed Hastings put his finger on the pulse of an industry and detected symptoms of revolutionary change more astutely than his competitors. GE's Jack Welch, Apple's Steve Jobs, and Amazon's Jeff Bezos also saw a future others did not. The old phrase "captains of industry" suggests a leader standing on the bridge of the ship, constantly scanning the horizon for threats ahead and quicker routes to the future. At great companies, captain after captain does the same.

### Going Beyond Good

In today's fiercely competitive business environment, good is never good enough. Only excellence will prevail. But how do you determine what excellence means in your industry? To figure out where you stand in relationship to everyone else in your competitive world, you need to look at the cultures that drive their success.

When John McFarlane, of Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ), recognized the need to transform his company's toxic culture, he sent one of his senior executives, Chelvi Satyendra, on a global study tour to visit companies with exceptional service cultures.

Chelvi looked beyond the banking sector for answers, visiting technology, retail, and professional service companies renowned for exceptional customer service. When he brought back the findings, he offered one strong conclusion: The best in class in every industry invested heavily in building strong personal relationships with customers. Relationship building was at the core of these cultures. Managers talked to clients regularly, detected grievances early, and resolved issues immediately.

This feedback opened a lot of eyes at ANZ. Many of its managers sat in the head office all day and rarely spoke to customers. John and his leadership team now knew they would need to shift this pattern, if they were to transform the culture at ANZ into one that compared with the best globally.

### Accurately Assessing Your Business Needs

You don't change your culture for the sake of change, you change it to meet your business needs. That may seem excruciatingly obvious, but leaders can fail to make that connection. As with any long journey, you need to set a series of milestones or benchmarks that tell you where you stand along the path to your final destination. Whatever measuring process you use, you need to apply it to the right variables.

If you want to build a first-rate customer service culture, you might do what Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, did to measure satisfied customers. Zappos achieved tremendous customer loyalty by pursuing Hsieh's goal to "knock their shoes off" with great service. He believed that his company should do whatever it took to keep customers happy, because he held the view that even a seemingly costly gesture will, in the long run, result in profits.

While typical call center managers measure performance in terms of "average time per call," Zappos uses a different metric that tells management how many customers keep coming back to buy shoes.

## Diagnose the Current Culture: Looking for the Big Patterns

The health of a corporate culture requires the correct diagnosis, one that goes beyond symptoms and knee-jerk conclusions to the underlying causes of the problem.

Effective change leaders don't just sit on their perches high in the C-suite; they spend a lot of time walking around the organization, talking to people at every level in every functional area and keenly observing "how things work around here." They bring a good set of eyes and ears to the task, observing the ways of relating and listening carefully to what people say about their work, their colleagues, their department, their boss, and the company.

As you walk around your business, try to see it with fresh eyes and listen with open ears. What you see and hear might surprise you.

One of the biggest pitfalls in culture work: moving to action before you have fully understood the underlying issues. To find those underlying issues, you must talk to a range of people, not just the leadership team. Each human being possesses a unique set of mental maps. No two people interpret reality the same way.

What exactly do people from the C-suite to the front lines see? Successful change leaders ask that question over and over and over, until they gain a full picture of what's really going on in the organization.

### Seeing the Big Patterns

Consider a spiderweb as an analogy for workplace culture. The individual threads of the web are the behaviors, but it is the pattern that connects these different strands. You must see the web (the pattern) as well as the individual threads (the behaviors). Unlike the clearly visible pattern of a spiderweb hanging from a branch in the garden, a culture's patterns are not always so easy to see.

In most organizations, the big patterns have become almost invisible. One of the main objectives of this first step, diagnose, on The Culture Disruptor is to make the patterns visible. Failure to identify the big patterns at this stage can mean that you take a wrong turn early on in the change journey. Once you correctly identify the patterns, you can greatly increase your chances of putting the right solutions in place that deal with the underlying issues (not the symptoms).

## Reframe the Roles: Turning Everyone in the Organization into a Change Leader

The second step of The Culture Disruptor is to reframe your role. Leaders can use the reframing technique to accelerate change during culture transformation.

There are three major influences on how we are wired to behave: instincts, personality, and role. When you decide to change your organization's culture, it is often advisable to avoid trying to tackle hardwired instincts or asking people to change their personalities. Instead, focus on what you can more easily and more quickly change: the roles that guide people's behavior in your workplace.

So where should you begin reframing roles? It usually makes sense to start at the top and then work your way down the levels of the organization:

- Leader (boss).
- Leadership group (team).
- Business units.
- All employees.

When you as a leader embark on a change effort, you must put your change initiative at the top of your daily to-do list. That means devoting at least 20 percent of your time to leading and overseeing the change agenda, especially in the early days.

Also, a key change lesson is that a single, visionary leader cannot carry all of the responsibility for change. Every member of the leadership team must reframe their role to "change leader" in order to deliver the change. Successful

change leaders understand the power of getting leadership alignment when it comes to the change agenda.

### Aligning Employees With the Mission

When the leaders at Nordstrom, the upscale department store, wanted to engage employees in their quest to create a truly customer-centric culture, they also redefined their role. But rather than producing a binder with hundreds of pages describing the behaviors the company's leaders thought would make this happen, they formulated one simple rule. This rule reframed the role that each Nordstrom employee should play in the culture: "Rule #1: Use good judgment in all situations. There will be no additional rules."

This rule of "good judgment in all situations" invited employees to move from the role of "shop assistant" to the role of "business owner." Rather than merely assisting customers with their purchases, Nordstrom's people should own the outcome. This reframed role immediately influenced people to go out of their way to eliminate the pain points for customers.

You hear a phone ringing? Answer it before the third ring. A customer asks where he can find children's clothes? You escort him to that department.

It was not your same old department store. It was the store where customers got personalized service.

Can you craft a word or short sentence that captures the role you want your people to play in the change initiative? Let's say you want a customer service team to replace prepared scripts with a question-and-answer approach tailored to each customer who calls to complain about a product your company sells.

Do you tell shy Cameron to become a more outgoing and curious person? No, you reframe his role to one of "questioner" and then show him how to ask questions that show empathy for the customer and get to the heart of any dissatisfaction with a product. Cameron does not become more gregarious, but he does learn how to replace his old role of "script reader" with the new role of "questioner." Now he behaves in a way that displays his concern for whatever has upset the customer.

## Take Charge of the Journey: Becoming an Inspiring Change Leader

Culture change never happens until the leader steps up to break the prevailing patterns in the old culture. Leaders cannot simply stand on the sidelines and observe the journey. Step into the role of change boss, and you can inspire people to get on board with the transformation. This brings us to the third step on The Culture Disruptor, break the patterns.

Patterns are at the heart of workplace culture. When it comes to breaking old patterns, it helps to study how other leaders have done it.

> Step into the role of change boss, and you can inspire people to get on board with the transformation.

### Learning From Pattern-Breaking Leaders

Mary Barra rose to the position of CEO at General Motors in January 2014. In a few short years, she orchestrated an incredible turnaround in GM's once sagging fortunes, bringing it back from the lowest point in her company's history—its 2009 filing for corporate bankruptcy.

Barra faced a tsunami of criticism in her early days at the helm when, two months after she took charge, GM recalled 2.5 million cars plagued with faulty ignition switches. Company engineers had known about the faulty ignition for at least a decade but had failed to act, a mistake that resulted in 45 deaths and many more injuries.

To her credit, Barra did not duck responsibility for the calamity but publicly apologized and issued a blank check to compensate victims. Barra held the whole company accountable as well. No longer would she allow GM's people to conform to the old pattern of "hiding bad news." From this day forward, she expected that each and every employee would react to problems with complete openness and transparency.

With insight and courage, Barra launched an era of change at GM that transformed the company from a place where fearful people kept their eyes closed and their mouths shut to one where everyone made sure they saw and talked about any issue that threatened the company's success.

The new mental maps, redefined roles, and the emerging pattern got results. Under Barra's leadership, GM went on to become a consistently profitable operation.

### Planning for Change

To convince people to join a change that may involve some personal or business risk, you must build a case for why the transformation is important to your organization. People will not join the change effort unless they have a compelling reason to do so.

Let's assume you have made your case. You've rallied the team. Everyone is eager to create a better future. So, what's your plan? Culture is a complex, adaptive challenge, with no easy answers or ready-made solutions. It requires leaders who can plan a course of action, in the midst of uncertainty and ambiguity, because the change will not happen by itself or simply by publishing a new set of corporate values.

Should you restructure your organization to focus more intently on the customer experience? Would that require a new performance management system that measures the degree to which people take accountability for results? Does that mean you must revamp your training programs to emphasize the new values you want people to honor? What will the changes cost? Your own list should include the unique set of variables your plan must address.

## Engage the Entire Organization: Mobilizing the People Who Do the Work

Purpose. Like culture, it's a simple but elusive word. No matter how you define it, however, it's the fuel that drives every successful company's performance engine.

Everyone who works for a living wants to do something meaningful that might enhance the lives of others. It's a basic human desire. Sure, you want to make money, but money is just the yardstick we use to measure whether or not we are touching people's lives. Do meaningful work and the money will follow.

Success depends on purpose and meaning, but it also depends on the right people doing the right work at the right time.

### Choosing the Right People

Leaders in great cultures work relentlessly to find the right talent for their team. They also weed out those who don't buy into the culture's values and who fail to demonstrate them in everything they do. It may seem a little harsh, but great leaders are prepared to let talented people go if they do not meet the culture expectations. That doesn't mean that the right people always have the answers. No, the right people solve the right problems at the right time.

It turns out that the most creative and often surprising solutions come from those who do the work. The American giants Google and Amazon assign the role of "innovator" to every single employee.

In Google's case, the company topped the Boston Consulting Group's list of the 50 most innovative companies in 2018 with a track record of unparalleled trailblazing services such as Maps, Search, Gmail, and YouTube. How did such innovation come about? Google's chairman, Eric Schmidt, put it succinctly on the company's website. "You have to have the culture and you need to get it right."

Google cascaded problem-solving to every level of its organization with the concept "10x thinking," which encouraged employees to improve what Google offered its customers tenfold rather than the mere 10 percent that would satisfy most companies. Google also adhered to its famous "20 percent" rule, giving employees one day per week to work on intractable problems. Many of the company's greatest innovations have come from this day of innovation, including Google News, Gmail, and AdSense.

## Gather Change Momentum: Enabling the Change to Spread Rapidly

In scientific terms, a tipping point represents a threshold at which an infectious disease spirals out of control and runs rapidly though a community. In culture terms, it is that point at which the new culture begins to take on a life of its own, spreading like wildfire as it captures an increasing number of employees, customers, and community leaders until it becomes "how things work around here." The change has gone viral. Nothing can stop it now.

In the third step of change, your aim is to break out of the patterns that no longer serve you, and reach that crucial tipping point. To reach this point where the game changes completely, leaders must first deal with the change blockers.

### Dealing With the Blockers

Assumptions prevent individuals and organizations from changing. These assumptions, held at the collective level, can show up as resistance to change: "That's not how things

The old saying "You get what you measure" holds true for culture change.

work around here." Tackling these assumptions is vital in order to accelerate change during the third step.

You can't just tell people to do the right thing; you must tackle their underlying assumptions. These assumptions can be hard to detect.

### Hidden Assumptions at BuildItPro

Ever since its founding by an Italian family in the 1950s, global infrastructure company BuildItPro had attracted clients with its can-do approach to business. That attitude sprang in part from the founders bringing whole families from their native town in southern Italy to support the company's rapidly expanding business. These immigrants, grateful for their new homes in America, eagerly joined BuildItPro's extended family. The company's culture centered on reciprocal loyalty and a fierce esprit de corps.

These strong relationships helped employees to survive in a new country and to get the job done on challenging construction projects in far-flung locations. Another assumption developed in this family culture, that "you need to fit in and be liked around here." This assumption ultimately led employees to value their relationships at work more than their performance on the job.

The business suffered as a result. People were taking shortcuts, letting standards slip, and ignoring the industry's rules and regulations. But managers did not want to fire people they viewed like their brothers and sisters. Somehow, they needed to reframe roles from "family members" to "work colleagues."

During workshops, managers were encouraged to question the old assumptions and to determine whether they still made sense. It began to dawn on the managers that you do not do employees a favor by ignoring their poor performance.

That idea set the stage for a new assumption: "In this company, everyone must carry their weight." The workshops reframed the role of managers and helped overturn the old assumptions that were blocking change. The managers stepped up to break the old pattern and started to hold people to account for performance outcomes.

### Employing Powerful Symbols to Reinforce the Change

Symbolism is the art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. People more easily grasp abstract ideas when they can picture an example in their mind's eye. Organizational symbols can help you gain change momentum because they help people remember the new cultural traits and break out of the old ways. Symbols take many forms, from the famous white-shirt-and-black-tie dress code IBM employed in its early days, to the US Marine Corps' memorable slogan "Semper Fi."

Try making a list of the cultural traits you want your people to embrace. For each of them, create in your mind's eye a picture of that abstract quality. You want positivity? Install a bell that's rung every time your team has a major win. You want teamwork? Create a high-profile collaboration award. You want customer focus? Implement a new rule: "We talk to three customers every week."

## Consolidate Gains: Embedding the Emerging Culture

Any leader intent on building a successful culture must also embed the culture, the fourth step on The Culture Disruptor, consolidate the gains.

One of the biggest issues during culture transformation is that leaders can lose momentum on the journey. After an initial burst of energy, you may lose some of your passion for the change and fall back into the old ways of doing things.

If that happens, you might take a cue from successful professional sports teams. The New England Patriots, when they dominated the National Football League, worked hard to consolidate their gains. Coach Bill Belichick and quarterback Tom Brady understood the need for a rallying cry that would help teammates dedicate themselves to doing whatever it took to win championships: "Do your job."

### Measuring Your Progress

The old saying "You get what you measure" holds true for culture change. While some executives think you can't quantify something as amorphous and hard to grasp as culture, successful change leaders continuously collect and evaluate culture metrics. For example, for a customer-centric culture, you might measure the behavior of "meets customer needs" by looking at a net promotor score, satisfaction ratings, and retention rates.

For an innovative culture, you might measure the behavior of "solves problems creatively" by looking at the number of new products launched and the revenue generated by new products. If you don't measure it, you will lose it.

### Remaining Resilient Through the Change Journey

Culture change is not for the faint-hearted, and the journey is full of unexpected twists and turns. Those who prevail possess resilience: They have the ability to bounce back from the setbacks that they invariably encounter along the way.

The marketplace shifts, presenting the leader with a business challenge—respond to the market demands, or face the risk that the business will go into decline. She also knows that the culture must also change to meet the new conditions in the environment and to unleash the full potential of the business. The change requires courage, dedication, patience, and adaptability. You cannot let the naysayers, blockers, cynics, bystanders, or critics keep you from reaching the outcomes you are seeking.

Nokia once dominated the smartphone industry. Its downfall ruined more than a few stock portfolios. It almost destroyed the economy in the Finnish city of Oulu. Many of the city's 200,000 residents had worked at Nokia's key R&D facility there. When the phone maker sank, 5,000 people in Oulu lost their jobs.

Despite the fact that the city's unemployment rate topped 16 percent, the residents and officials of Oulu applied the Finnish philosophy of "Sisu," which means "never give up." They launched an all-out effort to tell potential employers all over the globe about the city's wonderfully skilled high-tech workers.

The strategy worked. By 2018, Oulu had become a global center for tech innovation in a range of industries that included medical equipment, wearable devices, and driverless cars.

The Culture Disruptor is designed to help you wherever you happen to be on your culture change journey. It can help leaders continue to be successful, help those who are struggling with specific culture issues, or support more radical workplace change.

On any journey, always keep in mind that culture is less about the explicit values and behaviors and more about the mental maps, roles, and patterns. Dealing with these key elements will give you the greatest leverage during any culture transformation.

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Siobhan McHale has worked across four continents, helping thousands of leaders to create more agile and productive workplaces. She also has been on the "inside" as the executive in charge of culture change in a series of large, multinational organizations. One of these inside jobs was a radical seven-year change initiative at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ) that transformed it from the lowest-performing bank in the country into one of the highest-performing and most admired banks in the world.

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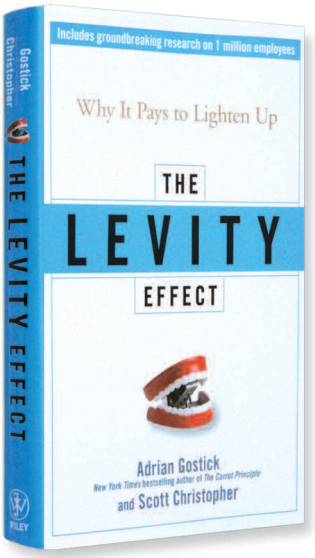
# The Levity Effect

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# The Levity Effect

## Why It Pays to Lighten Up




by Adrian Gostick
and Scott Christopher

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you think work is no laughing matter, the joke's on you. *The Levity Effect* uses serious science to reveal the remarkable power of fun and humor in building a productive, engaged and loyal work force … and a more successful you.

If you doubt levity is good for business, consider this: Lighthearted leaders earn more on average than their more dour peers; entertaining workplaces breed more loyal employees and happier customers; and employees who are considered humorous are vastly more likely to get promoted — especially to senior positions.

The benefits of the levity effect are built on extensive research and case studies from some of the world's most successful organizations. Authors Adrian Gostick and Scott Christopher provide examples of leaders from Virgin, Boeing, Marriott, Nike, KPMG, Zappos and other companies, all of which prove that lightening up leads to real business results.

This summary also presents extensive research on the subject — including compelling data from the Great Place to Work® Institute's 1 million-member database — that reveals that great companies consistently earn significantly higher marks for fun.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How the levity effect improves workplaces, presentations and relationships in many powerful ways.
- How the levity effect helps to build an engaging, productive work culture and a more successful career.
- How a fun and engaging workplace leads to better business, more focused employees and satisfied customers.
- How engaging your employees in a positive environment is the secret to good business.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE LEVITY EFFECT**

**by Adrian Gostick and Scott Christopher**

**The authors:** Adrian Gostick is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Invisible Employee* and *The Carrot Principle*, as well as the *BusinessWeek* bestseller *A Carrot a Day, The Integrity Advantage* and *The 24-Carrot Manager*.

Scott Christopher is an author, speaker and regular columnist for *Workplace HR* magazine. He is the author of the book *Lighten Up*, as well as a film and television actor.

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For additional information on the authors, go to http://www.summary.com.

## PART 1: THE CASE FOR LEVITY

So what is levity? In short, it means being light, buoyant even. The problem is, buoyancy doesn't sound very desirable in the business world.

But levity doesn't mean silly or inane. It doesn't mean distracting. Levity is a way to improve a workplace, a presentation or a relationship in ways that can change our work and our lives for the better.

The word itself is derived from Latin, *levitas*, the same root for the word levitate. And that's the secret to levity. It raises things. While in a business setting, some people may distrust it, but when things get tense, drab, slow, stressful and boring, a fork-full of levity can mean the difference between working cohesively toward a goal and being hindered by contention.

## Levity Is a Funny Thing

An increasing body of research demonstrates that when leaders lighten up and create a fun workplace, there is a significant increase in the level of employee trust, creativity and communication — leading to lower turnover, higher morale and a stronger bottom line.

The research also shows that managers who have taught themselves to be funnier are more effective communicators and better salespeople, have more engaged employees and earn a lot more than their peers.

### Fun Not Funny

Researchers Lawrence J. Peter and Bill Dana say, "A sense of humor is deeper than laughter, more satisfying than comedy and delivers more rewards than merely being entertaining. A sense of humor sees the fun in everyday experiences. It is more important to have fun than it is to be funny."

If you can somehow develop a true *sense* of humor and not worry about just being funny, you'll achieve much more than managers who force comedy on an unwilling/unsuspecting audience.

### Leading With Levity

Leading with levity is the willingness to laugh and find humor even in the most difficult situations. Abraham Lincoln once interrupted a meeting to read an amusing story in the hopes of dispelling a black cloud that was hovering over his staff. With the tragic Civil War unfolding before their eyes, no one so much as smiled at the president's attempt at humor. Finally, Lincoln stiffened and said, "Gentlemen, why don't you laugh? With the fearful strain that is upon me day and night, if I did not laugh, I should die, and you need this medicine as much as I do."

Aside from a desire to make others laugh, it's important to take time out for fun activities. "Whenever we have a board of directors meeting, we always create some kind of activity along with it," said Jim Olsen, president of Harman Management. "So maybe our meeting goes until 2 p.m., and we're over in Hawaii, so we take a break, put everyone on a bus, take 'em over to Tommy Bahamas to get 'em all swimsuits and T-shirts, and then come back to the hotel and go play volleyball. It's the intangible of having something fun to do and the playfulness that comes out in that process that I believe helps us work better not just as business associates, but also as people and friends. It's kind of a leveler.

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When somebody is dominant in the boardroom, and you get out on the volleyball court and someone else is dominant, you realize people contribute in different ways."

As Olsen exemplifies, leading with levity is about a lightness of manner and a willingness to enjoy the moment. It's a smile on your face and in your voice. It's an attitude of latitude. It's allowing levity to happen.

## Communication: If They're Laughing, They're Listening

Research increasingly shows that a sense of humor is essential for great communication. Humor is shown to:

- **Enhance negotiation skills.**
- **Build rapport between leaders and employees.**
- **Grab attention.**
- **Relax listeners, making them more receptive to your message.**
- **Make the information more memorable.**

As a businessperson, your ability to communicate is paramount to your success. A recent study revealed that the most significant work-related employee complaint was poor communication with management; and an amazing 64 percent of employees claimed that poor communication interfered with their work.

### Humorous Communication

Kent Murdock, CEO of the O.C. Tanner Co., has come to understand that humor will get employees to pay attention, and he uses that information to great effect in every speech or video he's given to employees of his successful 2,000-person recognition firm. In speeches, he has rappelled from the roof into his employee crowd and has acted out the book *Who Moved My Cheese?* to help employees understand the need for a major computer system change. In company videos, he's donned an Elvis wig to show how far the company had come in its history and has even been run over by a Zamboni (a special effect) to announce the company's sponsorship of the Olympic Winter Games.

### Listen to Employees

The bottom line is this: Your people will be 100 times more likely to follow you and produce for you if you can simply lighten your communication up a bit. For example, here's what Will Marriott said in 1964 as he was building his hotel empire: "It's important to listen to employees, ask questions of them, say 'Good Morning' to them, ask about their families and get to know a little bit about their aspirations, ambitions, home life and work motivations."

Lighten up. Laugh a little. And they'll start listening.

### A Happy and Healthy Work Environment

Kal Mistry, senior vice president of the 10,000-employee Vistas Innovative Hospice Care, said her employees are healthier when they are happy and having fun. "Absolutely. Happiness is key to having a healthy body and a clear and tranquil mind," she said. "To be able to have an environment where employees can have fun with their co-workers affects people physically. Hospice work can be physically and emotionally draining. As we laugh and have fun with each other, we are better able to care for our patients and their families with positive attitudes."

## Innovation: With Comedy, There's Creativity

Research shows that you can boost scores on a standardized test of creativity by exposing people to humor or other conditions that establish a "playful atmosphere."

"If you can find a job where you have fun, it will feel like a calling," said Dave Clark, HR vice president of sports-apparel giant Nike. "If you can find that zone, where you have such a passion for the job that it becomes fun, you are in the sweet spot for creativity."

### The Sweet Spot

Basically, there are three ways to get to that sweet spot:

**1. Make the work environment more fun.** Understanding its customers' obsession with competition, Nike leadership approaches business like a sport, enabling employees to feel the thrill of corporate competition and the high of winning big.

"Each quarter when we announce our results to Wall Street, we have a company meeting where our senior leadership shares the news, and then we celebrate after," said Clark. "We go out and mingle. We have live music, food, contests, refreshments. Overall, we want employees to feel the corporate competition and know that we're winning. Winning is fun."

**2. Expose and awaken latent "funness" from more serious employees.** It's not necessary or wise to attempt to overhaul the mood around the office in one

fell swoop. Over time, small steps can result in big improvements.

Arthur Hargate, CEO of Ross Environmental Services, understands how that works: "The regulatory environment is very strict, and there are potentially big penalties if you mess up. Our customers expect us to be very serious people. So lightening up for us is hard … Being 'seriousaholics,' it's like a 12-step program. You have to take it one day at a time."

**3. Hire employees who are more fun and creative.** While you can help employees be more creative, building a fun and creative culture is easiest if you start out with fun and creative people.

That's what Herb Kelleher, retired CEO of Southwest Airlines, was looking for when he hired people. He said, "What we are looking for, first and foremost, is a sense of humor … We don't care much about education and expertise because we can train people … We hire attitudes." ●

## Respect: In You They Trust

Think of levity not simply as a tool in the workplace, but a symptom of its culture. The conditions necessary to make a joke effective are the same conditions necessary to make a business work: communication, understanding, common ground, trust and respect. And surprisingly, interpersonal relationships that grow out of these environments are almost completely disregarded as too soft by many leadership consultants, business gurus and even by managers who seek to improve how their organizations function.

### The Golden Rule

The Boeing Co. has been surveying its employees since the 1950s. The 2007 employee survey had more than 100,000 respondents for a 75 percent response rate. Ruth Savolaine, employee relations communications manager at Boeing, said leaders at one site noted a surprising discovery from focus groups conducted after the 2005 survey: "We saw that managers who scored the highest on a dozen different engagement questions were simply better at doing the little, respectful things that employees appreciated. They asked employees how their weekends were; they asked about their kid's soccer game; they went to their employee's office space instead of requiring them to come to their office. They lived the Golden Rule — treat others as you would have them treat you."

Great leaders know instinctively that respect is directly related to the ability to have fun. And the Great Place to Work® Institute's research backs this up. It seems you can't have fun if respect between colleagues doesn't exist. Greater amounts of respect build greater amounts of trust. And trust leads to an environment where fun can flourish. One tangible demonstration of respect, according to effective leaders, is the need to roll up your sleeves and work with employees.

In stressful environments, respect and trust help alleviate pressure. Great leaders simply show a lot of respect for their people.

### Richard Branson

Virgin Group owner and founder Richard Branson said, "Some 80 percent of your life is spent working. You want to have fun at home; why shouldn't you have fun at work? I think leaders have got to make a bigger effort to make sure the people who work for them are enjoying what they're doing. If a chairman of a company visits Seattle, that chairman should take all the staff out in the evening, have a few drinks together, talk together, party together and not be embarrassed about the staff seeing your weaker side. They don't lose respect for you because they see your human side. They actually gain more respect for you."

According to a recent Sirota survey, employees are three times more likely to leave their employers within two years if they do not feel respected — 63 percent of respondents to the survey planned to exit within two years compared with only 19 percent who sensed respect. ●

## Health: Good for What Ails You

Research shows that a good belly laugh has measurable benefits on the heart, blood sugar, stress levels, circulation, the immune system and more.

A study of 2,015 Norwegians diagnosed with cancer discovered that a great sense of humor cut people's chances of death by a whopping 70 percent compared to those with a poor sense of humor. Laughter is the best medicine, indeed.

Levity has also become a subject of study to address questions of employee stress, which leads to burnout, decreased job satisfaction and, eventually, turnover. Levity has also been linked to higher incidences and levels of productivity, loyalty, cooperation and problem solving.

### Shared Meaning

Humor scholar William Hampes noted in two influential studies that close interpersonal relationships are

forged and strengthened through humor. In addition to reducing stress, humor promotes feelings of comfort, and as a byproduct, humor increases empathy. Hampes found that individuals who laugh more tend to have more positive and productive relationships. He also demonstrated a correlation between humor and trust — two dynamics of relationships we are all trying to foster at work … and at home.

High-humor individuals, according to Hampes' research, are better equipped to earn the trust of another individual, in part because humorous people tend to respond to stress in a different manner than others. It is a character trait we all take for granted and need science to make apparent: Levity helps us handle difficult situations. It is the physical manifestation of *perspective*.

### Healthy Laughter

Research by Lee Berk, a medical researcher in humor and laughter, shows that a good-natured or mirthful laugh can:

- **Increase the immune system's activity.**
- **Decrease stress hormones, which constrict blood vessels and suppress immune activity.**
- **Increase the antibody immunoglobulin A, which protects the upper-respiratory tract.**

"Who wouldn't want that kind of benefit?" said Dr. Berk, assistant professor of family medicine at the University of California Irvine. His study shows that if you're employing or experiencing positive humor, then the whole brain is involved in the experience, not just one side, and there's also more coordination between both sides. "When you utilize humor, it makes you less on edge, lowers your blood pressure and your heart rate, and allows you to think more clearly."

Your biology changes with humor. Stress hormones are lessened and the immune system is optimized, which means positive humor, as opposed to mean-spirited or negative joking, is always beneficial in the workplace. And out of it as well. ●

## Wealth: Laughing All the Way to the Bank

The accounting firm KPMG has made a concerted effort over the last several years to turn itself into an Employer of Choice (EOC) by increasing its focus on people-centric programs and initiatives. The comprehensive effort, which has included the introduction of myriad initiatives to help employees develop satisfying careers while balancing the responsibilities of work and their personal lives, made the firm's EOC aspirations a reality, evidenced by the fact that employee survey ratings on the statement, "Taking everything into account, this is a great place to work," increased 23 points since the introduction of EOC.

But even with this drastic upswing in employee ratings, KPMG leadership knew they couldn't rest on their laurels, because being an EOC takes an ongoing commitment. And while reviewing employee survey results, they were surprised to discover that two of the top five predictors of positive employee responses to the critical "great place to work" question were, "We are a close-knit team or family" and "I have fun at work."

KPMG's leaders decided they couldn't argue with the numbers — especially because they're hard-core number crunchers at heart. So in early 2007, the firm introduced a new "Esprit de Corps" initiative as part of its ongoing Employer of Choice efforts. The program's main objectives are to thank employees for their hard work and commitment, celebrate successes and bring some fun and camaraderie into the workplace.

### 'Movie Madness Challenge'

The first initiative was a "Movie Madness Challenge" that encouraged employees to go to the company's intranet to choose Oscar winners. Those who tallied the most correct choices were entered into a drawing for prizes that included plasma TVs, portable DVD players, iPods and free movie tickets. The results were convincing, even for critics.

"When we introduced the movie challenge, some leaders asked, 'Who is going to do this? Our people are too busy,'" admitted Bruce Pfau, KPMG's vice chair of human resources. "More than 10,000 of our 22,000 employees logged in to participate during a very busy season when it's difficult just to get the attention of our people. It said to me, 'Our accountants and auditors are hungry for some fun.'"

### Positive Momentum

Encouraged by the results, leadership has continued to sponsor fun activities. Scores on the most recent employee survey have continued to climb, and the positive momentum has helped earn the firm a spot on *Fortune's* "100 Best Companies to Work For," as well as in the top 10 of *Working Mother's* "100 Best Companies" list and *BusinessWeek's* "50 Best Places to Launch a Career."

In addition, KPMG's annualized employee turnover is at historic lows for the organization, which, according to *BusinessWeek,* has the best three-year retention rate for

entry-level hires among Big Four accounting firms. Like KPMG, companies that create the Levity Effect at work experience higher productivity, engagement and retention. For individual leaders, the financial rewards hit even closer to home: Leading with levity is proven to increase upward mobility and salary levels. ●

## PART 2: GETTING LIGHTER

Here is a basic blueprint that many organizations follow to build a culture that encourages consistent fun throughout the year. Your goal: levity that never loses steam.

• *Build from respect.* Spend time teaching managers to listen to their employees, to be more open in their communication styles and to be more deferential of employee opinions.

• *Have employee champions.* The best organizations have a person or rotating employee team that worries about creating fun activities on a regular basis. If it's assigned, it gets done.

• *Get senior management buy-in.* Your management team should buy into the need to build a stronger culture through some fun team-building activities.

• *Link fun to work.* At least once a month, you should be doing something fun that is directed at helping your organization grow.

• *Keep it personal.* Get new employees into a fun, engaging culture from the first day.

• *Recognize, recognize, recognize.* Cultures that are effective at recognizing excellence are up to three times more profitable than their competitors.

• *Be consistent.* Make fun an unfailing part of who you are as an organization.

## 12 Ways to Have Fun at Work

Remember levity is about lightening up and allowing others to do the same. Where humor and mirth grow organically, born spontaneously from trusting relationships, these suggestions may be unnecessary. But the wheels must be set in motion with some committed attempts at *programmed* fun.

Don't reject the list if a few seem out of character for your organization. Move on and find something that will work. And don't quit if you try one and it fails. Just try something else, all the while continuing to show your people that you're committed to building a workplace where trust, respect, friendship and camaraderie are indispensable.

Here then, in no particular order, are 12 ways to apply the levity effect at work:

**1. Play work bingo by filling in a square each time your team completes a task or has an achievement.** When a manager has signed off on five in a row, the employee or team wins a prize.

**2. Offer to shave your head if your team reaches a goal**. If you're already bald, offer to paint your dome.

**3. Have a tailgate party in the parking lot.**

**4. Make customers feel like royalty.** Dr. Vik *(a member of the executive team)* at Zappos.com has a throne in his office, along with a selection of crowns and tiaras, and snaps two Polaroid pictures of every visitor, employee and vendor. One picture is attached to the company's wall of fame; the other is taken home by the person in the photo as a reminder that he or she is royalty at Zappos.com and in his or her own life.

**5. Hold a quarterly potluck lunch with some kind of fun theme.** The folks at the Missouri Department of Transportation charge $3 and make sure all the proceeds go to a local charity.

**6**. F*rom the minds at Whole Foods Market (No. 5 on the "100 Best Companies to Work For" list, 2007):* **Paint a break room wall with chalkboard paint, allowing employees to express thanks, pass a message or doodle to their heart's content.** At Whole Foods, the store team leader even writes her weekly updates on the wall, rather than sending out a memo. Employees read it while eating lunch or taking a break, making their leader and her message more visible and down to earth.

**7. On the third Thursday of the month, go to a pub for food and/or drinks and celebrate achievements, anniversaries and just making it through another month.**

**8. Plan a float trip together down a local river.**

**9. On Halloween, invite employees' kids to come to your workplace dressed up so that they can go trick or treating throughout the office.** Have special prizes if they dress up like the boss.

**10. In the summer, bring an ice cream or shaved ice truck onsite.**

**11. Have a retro day where employees dress up in clothes from whatever era they choose. Have great prizes to make sure people actually do it.**

**12. When you reach a goal, have executives prepare breakfast for everyone (nothing says thank-you like crispy bacon).** ●

## Overcoming Objections to Levity

While the case for personal and organizational levity is compelling, many people still think that lightening up won't work in their environment for one reason or another.

What follows are three common objections and answers based on experience, research and input from interviews:

• *My company tried to have some fun, but they really missed the mark. Employees were rolling their eyes instead of laughing.*

Understand that laughter is a co-product of trust, which is built from respect. In trusting environments, people can let their hair down. In low-trust environments, no one is going to laugh at the CEO in an Elvis wig or appreciate being herded together to attend the mandatory birthday party for the senior vice president of marketing.

"Fun can't be forced," says Amy Lyman, chair of the Great Place to Work® Institute. "Some organizations try to make the event happen; require people to go to the company picnic, the amusement park or the ice cream social down the hall. If you are required to go versus you want to go, the event can backfire.

"Genuineness has to come before the fun. In organizations where people have a tremendous amount of fun, it is because it is based on a solid relationship built on trust."

• *I've tried being funny, and it really bombed.*

First, understand that the levity effect is about being fun. Give your employees some rope. Enjoy the fun and humor they create. Don't sit in meetings furrowing your brow when employees are making light. Sit back, smile and remind yourself that the resulting effect of their making merry will be making money.

Keep trying to "make a funny" yourself. Practice a dry comment or two in front of your family around the dinner table or in the car and see if it hits. Use your intelligence, and come up with clever metaphors or inventive and original twists on common conversational conventions. You have humor within you. It's just a question of extracting it.

• *You can get too much of a good thing, you know.*

While this is typically the first fear of a brow-knitting manager, most organizations are hardly in danger of having "too much fun." Said Hitachi High Technology America's Craig Kerkove, "I know if I add 25 percent fun into the day, there's still plenty of pressure and anxiety to go around for everyone."

Most people actually enjoy a mix of fun and serious behavior at work. The trouble is most of us don't get much, if any, fun on the job. ●

### Consistent Levity

Here are a few ideas for completing the circle of your levity efforts and becoming more consistent in your approach at work or elsewhere.

- **Start each day smiling in the mirror.** Smiling is contagious even when it's just your own reflection beaming back at you.
- **Smile at your family.** Extend to your loved ones the same courtesies you'll extend to your office-mates later in the day.
- **Spend time with your "peeps."** Eat dinner with your family around the table. Tell stories about your day's amusing adventures.
- **Go easy on the kids.** They're going to screw up. Don't blow a fuse. Have a sense of perspective. Dig way down deep in there and conjure up a laugh about it.
- **Go easy on your sweetheart.** Would your significant other be surprised to observe the attention you pay, the interest you convey or the pleasantries you say to Phil or Tina in accounting, but never to anyone at home?
- **Take stock.** The most useful and truly happy leaders at work are those whose gap between their work persona and home persona is the narrowest. Consistency is king.
- **Smile at strangers.** Smile at people and give them a little head nod as you pass. Happiness is viral, contagious.
- **Lighten up on vacation, at public events, in traffic, in restaurants and in private.**
- **Take better care of yourself.** Have a regular exercise routine. People who regularly sweat, grunt and breathe heavy are less likely to get depressed or sustain an injury.
- **Work on your sense of humor.** The effects of levity — creativity, productivity, prosperity and so on — are more easily produced by the person who brings that balance into all facets of his or her life.

## Levity for Life: Bringing Home the Fun

A wise man once said, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home." That's the beauty of the levity effect. It isn't just for work. It affects all aspects of life. Just like *Oprah*.

Kerkove, senior vice president and general manager of a division of Hitachi High Technologies, explained, "I

try to lighten up the home environment. With my wife and son, the three of us go to movies together, dinner together. We hang out as a pack. I like my job. I like being there. You have to try to have fun and enjoy the people you work with. But when the job is done, I look forward to going home and hanging out with those guys (the family) too.

"No one ever retires and gets close to the end of their life and says, 'Gee, I wish I'd spent more time at work,'" Kerkove said.

### Life Outside Work

A huge part of lightening up around the workplace is understanding that people have lives outside of work and they aren't constantly thinking about their jobs.

According to a recent poll publicized by management guru Ken Blanchard, employees say that having a boss who is sympathetic to their personal (outside of work) issues is the third most important factor in their work experience, right after feeling "in on things" and a "full appreciation for work done" (number one).

It's time to get past the days of cantankerous timekeepers who raise an eyebrow at every unaccounted-for microsecond of an 80-hour pay period or simply *must* know where an employee could possibly be going at a quarter to five.

True levity is an attitude, a sense, a part of who you are. You carry it with you everywhere you go. ●

## Your Levity IQ

The statistics don't lie. Keeping employees happy and productive, retaining them and maintaining their best effort is worth the gamble of an occasional bomb.

Even the *Harvard Business Review* reports that executives with a sense of humor climb the corporate ladder more quickly and earn more money than their counterparts.

The number-one reason humor backfires at work is that a businessperson makes the dangerous assumption that everyone is like him or her. It's easy to assume that everyone has our sense of humor, to believe that a person will react the way we would, to think that anyone who looks like us has the same values and beliefs.

Here are a few of the most common forms of this assumption — and why they don't work:

- *"She has no sense of humor."* Not true. No person is without a sense of humor, however many people don't share our particular brand of humor. But laughter really is universal.
- *"I hope this doesn't offend anyone."* This preface doesn't let us off the hook in a work environment. If you think it might offend someone, save it for the Friday night bowling league.
- *"But I thought we were the same."* In a meeting, a leader looked around the room, noticed there were no individuals of Asian descent present, and proceeded to tell a very racist joke. What he didn't realize is that his customer — also in the room — was the proud mother of a darling Chinese girl. Needless to say, this humorous attempt backfired and the manager had to eat serious crow to repair the relationship.
- *"But we were at lunch."* Just because we've left the building doesn't mean we've left our work roles behind.

### Now, Go and Lighten Up

Leading with levity is about developing a lightness of manner. Levity is equated with having a sense of humor. Too many people wrongly assume that a sense of humor means you're hilarious. Not necessarily. Very few hilarious people walk the same work halls at the same time. The levity effect is aimed at the majority of us who simply possess or wish to develop a stronger sense of humor, in the hopes that it will help us develop into more effective leaders.

As a final exercise, to better cope with the inevitable grouches around you, wherever you are right now, laugh out loud. Come on, just do it. See what happens. Tighten your gut and push out a guffaw. Would it be terribly wrong for you to laugh right now?

Tilt your head back and let a laugh rip. It may sound fake or put on. So what? Within seconds you'll feel a surge of authentic joy, possibly coupled with a degree of humiliation and shame. But you won't care, because that natural little rush is worth it.

And with any luck, you'll infect someone else with your little laugh. It may spread a little among those around you, as infections do. When you hear a great laugh, it gets you going, doesn't it? ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Levity Effect*, you'll also like:

1. ***First, Break All the Rules*** **by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman.** Great managers know that conventional wisdom doesn't hold up. Learn what great managers do differently. Managers can use this to improve their performance; executives can use it to spot great managers.
2. ***A Whole New Mind*** **by Daniel H. Pink.** A new age has emerged and right-brainers — artists, investors, caregivers, designers, big-picture thinkers — are leading the pack. Learn the six essential aptitudes you'll need to excel in this new business environment.
3. ***Personality Not Included*** **by Rohit Bhargava.** In this social media era where identities are shaped as much by perception as communication, marketing becomes more about building relationships with customers. Bhargava details the theory of personality and explains how to put it into action.

· Book 42 of 47 ·

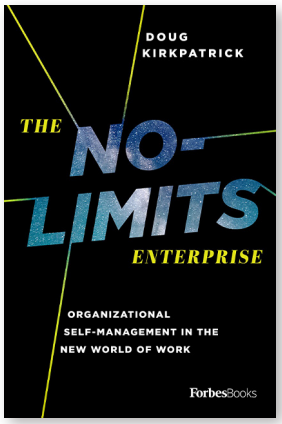
# The No-Limits Enterprise

Doug Kirkpatrick

Executive Book Summaries®

# The No-Limits Enterprise

## Organizational Self-Management In The New World Of Work




*by* **Doug Kirkpatrick**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Most modern workplaces are built on outdated systems: rigid hierarchies, disengaged employees, and management-heavy structures that stifle creativity and innovation. In an era that demands agility, purpose, and autonomy, this traditional approach is not just inefficient—it's unsustainable.

***The No-Limits Enterprise*** introduces a compelling alternative: self-management. It offers a vision of organizations where people collaborate without coercion, lead without titles, and work in alignment toward shared purpose. Through principles rooted in trust, commitment-keeping, and personal responsibility, author Doug Kirkpatrick outlines how businesses can move beyond bureaucracy to achieve higher levels of engagement, innovation, and resilience. Drawing from real-world experience and human-centered insight, he offers practical strategies—from creating peer agreements to redesigning decision rights—that help organizations thrive without rigid control.

This book is essential for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and changemakers who want to build workplaces where people are trusted to lead, innovate, and thrive. It gives you a clear roadmap to dismantle bureaucracy and build organizations that are resilient, innovative, and truly limitless.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Understand why traditional management systems are breaking down.
- Explore the 15 hidden costs of bureaucracy in modern business.
- Learn how self-managed teams foster innovation and commitment.
- Discover how to implement self-management in any organization.

## Life is a Concert (Or It Should Be)

Some people are lucky: they experience a seminal moment in life when what they believe, aspire to, dream, and practice come together in a single crystallizing experience. For me, one of those moments came a few years back, taking in a Leahy concert.

The night I attended their concert, I watched the band members come together, move apart, and hand off the spotlight to one another, all while working in a perfect concert and sustaining a pitch, energy and intensity that never flagged.

Never had I witnessed the true meaning of working in concert, as I did the night I took in a Leahy performance.

Afterward, I thought about what this transcendent group of musicians could teach us about passion, equality, and the joy of working in such a way that each of us leads, innovates, and performs to our highest levels.

In the end, the elation I experienced that evening served to bolster my belief in my own life's work - that of helping business enterprises succeed by relinquishing age-old entrenched beliefs and moving toward simple and basic life-affirming principles:

One, that people work best when they are happy and passionate about their work.

Two, that they produce and innovate on their highest levels when they are not coerced to work but are simply expected to keep the commitments that they freely make to their colleagues and their organization.

Today, our fast-moving, ever-expanding world demands engaged, innovative, and self-directed leaders. These are leaders who may emerge from any corner of an organization. These are leaders who will fearlessly set about to create work environments where everyone strives in concert, uncoerced, and committed to the passionate pursuit of excellence within an enterprise positioned for unlimited success.

## The Breakdown of Bureaucracy

The fact of the matter is: the unwieldy, ineffective, bureaucratic, and hierarchical workplace model in which most people uncomfortably spend more than half their waking lives is irretrievably broken. Each year, massive sums of money and an astounding amount of company time are spent dealing solely with the management issues pertaining to production, sales, competitive edge, and strategic retooling - not on the initiatives themselves. These expenditures do not even take into account the time and money dedicated to human resources management issues, which encompass recruiting, hiring, onboarding, retention, engagement, workplace toxicity, lack of diversity, firing outplacement, morale, harassment issues, and more.

As Gallup reports, 67 percent of the US workplace are disengaged from their organization at any given time, and 16 percent of workers are actively disengaged from the organization. One can imagine myriad forms of active disengagement, including unsafe work practices, gossip, harassment, drug use, inappropriate use of social media, absenteeism, and even sabotage. With the hard dollar cost of such disengagement pegged at around half-trillion dollars in lost production each year, the report points to nothing short of a management crisis that is having serious and lasting repercussions on the global economy.

## Bureaucracy: 15 Unavoidable Challenges

Companies today, as yesterday, must produce products and provide services that satisfy (hopefully, delight) customers, at a profit. Clearly the economics of being successful in the world have not changed, regardless of organizational system. Businesses must be able to address all stakeholders' needs, no matter what their organizational model.

Yet, in a bureaucratic organization, challenges are everywhere.

Challenge No. 1 - Production and Sales: In bureaucratic organizations that rely on layers of management to perpetually prod and motivate, challenges are everywhere as bosses are consumed by their people management issues and the resulting whack-a-mole impact of production, sales, services and distribution.

Challenge No. 2 - Human Resources: The greatest challenge to human resources professionals is that, while they are congratulating themselves on moving their many employees through their authorized programs and processes, they have done little or nothing to address the 67 percent disengagement issue that lies at the heart of the company's struggle to succeed in the marketplace.

Challenge No. 3 - Competitive Edge: Companies set measurable growth goals to gain an edge in their marketplace. The problem is, when you set such goals, you also encourage shortcuts and taking any route possible to achieve those

## A No-Limits Enterprise requires no-collar thinkers and doers.

ends, which places integrity and the quest for excellence at the bottom of the company priority list.

Challenge No. 4- Strategic Retooling: Bureaucratic organizations get too comfortable with their niches and processes and, at some point, lose any ability to strategically retool quickly and effectively so they can promptly seize an opportunity or nimbly address a risk or threat.

Challenge No. 5- Power: There's simply no underestimating the damage that the spirit-breaking control emanating from power can cause. Not to mention, the sheer waste of human talent, skill, and creativity that result when a manager, supervisor, or colleague is more interested in exercising control (and coercion) than in getting out of the way and letting people do what they already know how to do.

Challenge No. 6- Management Tax: Hard-Dollar Cost of Bureaucracy: Fostering a bureaucratic workplace is all about dedicating huge sums of money to something other than core mission, competitive edge, and timely and value-based delivery of the products and services.

Challenge No. 7- Innovation and Improvement: While companies like W.L. Gore nimbly and speedily innovate and improve, for organizations with entrenched bureaucratic management structures, improvement is sluggish, and innovation is often unknowingly squelched by managers.

Challenge No. 8- Attracting and Retaining Talent: As difficult as attracting talent has become, the even more painful issue is retention because it represents a huge waste of training dollars as millennials head to competitors or start up their own businesses with their newly acquired skills.

Challenge No.9 - Corporate Vulnerability: Bureaucratically organized companies are vulnerable because they're sluggish, unwieldy, too heavy (and top-heavy, thus unbalanced), brittle, and ego-driven. There's nothing light, lean, nimble, adaptable, and open about them.

Challenge No. 10- Workplace Toxicity: Toxic employees transmit their personal dissatisfaction with their company in endless ways, and customers are equipped with antennae to detect that discontent even during the most meticulously scripted conversation.

Challenge No. 11- The Org Chart: Conventional organizations spend a great deal of time, money and effort creating incredibly elaborate, complex, complicated, top-down organization charts. This only succeeds in snuffing out innovation, creativity, and flexibility, while creating a great deal of political and administrative maneuvering.

Challenge No. 12 - Incongruence with Twenty-First-Century Expectations: When companies cling to the bureaucratic hierarchy models of the past two centuries, they also face the serious challenge of trying to meet twenty-first-century customer expectations with nineteenth-century service and process response.

Challenge No. 13 - Blue-Collar vs. White-Collar Intelligence: White-collar managers herding blue-collar workers through their tasks may have worked in the nineteenth century, but, today, self-managed enterprises rely on all workers to keep them ahead of customer expectation and, importantly, the competition. A No-Limits Enterprise requires no-collar thinkers and doers.

Challenge No. 14- Fear, Anxiety and Predictability: In companies with cultures that are anything but open and transparent, where communication is not free and is guarded, fear can surge in waves. Then management's knee-jerk response is generally to institute more control, not plan for less. Anxiety and a need for predictability then spins out even more challenges: power-mongering, toxicity, serious retention issues, and the inability to attract talent.

Challenge No. 15- The Future, and Human Beings in It: One thing we know for sure is that the eight primary commercial needs of human beings will not change, and every business in the world is organized to supply one or more of those needs: food, clothing, shelter, communication, transportation, personal security, entertainment, and health care. That's it. Whatever structures we create to address those human needs, they will always require thought, creativity, and leadership, plus innovation and teamwork. Bureaucracy cannot get us there.

It is clear that bureaucracy does not facilitate the enterprise of the twenty-first century, but only hinders it.

So, how can we make our enterprises stronger, more competitive, innovative, resilient, and intrepid as we move toward the future? How can we make workers happier and more fulfilled in the one-third of their lives that they spend with us? The answer lies, in large part, in the power of organizational self-management.

## The Power of Self-Management

When we consider the concept of self-management–wherein people interact, collaborate and achieve under their own power without repressing, constraining, or coercing others– the question often crops up: Why not simply empower people to do what they do best? Why not extend certain modes of power to them, while retaining other types of control for the organization and its managers?

The answer lies in the true understanding of human nature, and in the acknowledgment that being a human has everything to do with choice and free will. Choice and free will can be repressed, but always at a cost. As a business leader, why pay that price–and force fellow human beings to pay an even greater price– when the ability of workers to exercise their free will and choice benefits your company mission and goals?

Business philosopher Peter Koestenbaum applies the discussion of free will and choice to the enterprise as a whole and asks, What does free will mean to the organization? His conclusion: it means that everyone is responsible for motivating himself or herself, and it is not the job of company CEOs, leaders, and managers to motivate people.

With workers finally responsible for unearthing their own power and negotiating (and negotiating) their own positions within the organization, company leaders are at last freed up to deal with markets, strategies, and their responsibilities to the enterprise. The traditional management-model mind-set is, thus, turned upside down– or possibly, right-side-up for the very first time.

With all the benefits to the enterprise derived from such powerful activity, the question is: Why would any enterprise leader or manager want to get in the way?

## Before You Plan: Self-Management Considerations

Now, let's say you are beginning to see the constellation of strategic, competitive, and human benefits that can accrue to a self-managed enterprise.

You are considering the concept of a self-management as a viable alternative as you guide your company into the future or launch your new venture. But–wait. You have so many questions, and while some are entirely logical, others may have more visceral origins. After all, this is change we are talking about. Change can be exciting and teeming with promise, yet it can also breed fear within an organization if it is not managed properly.

Before any internal discussions can take place (and certainly before you make the case for self-management to stakeholders), it is vital to confront questions, apprehensions, and preconceived notions about self-management as an organizational philosophy, and in practice.

An experienced self-management advisor can help you with the many, many questions your stakeholders may pose about your particular enterprise (for example: Which of our colleagues will handle strategy? How, precisely, would our company handle compensation? What will the managers we keep on board be doing? How long will our specific initiative take to roll out?).

The answers will depend greatly upon the scope of your initiative, the size of your enterprise, and the extent of the change you hope to initiate with each phase of your implementation. If you are serious about the prospect of moving to self-management, all issues should be discussed with stakeholders up front, to prevent unnecessary anxiety about change that is being considered.

## New Ways of Working

Because self-management in the business world is all about keeping commitments– to customers, to the company mission, and among all those who collaborate in the workplace– commitment-keeping is key to any type of self-governing enterprise, no matter where it falls along the continuum of work environments. Frankly, keeping commitments should be the aim of any organization if the business owners want the enterprise to remain viable and competitive. Even in a highly repressive work environment, most business owners want to keep their commitments to customers and the marketplace. It's just that conventional bureaucracies usually rely on command-and-control to compel their workers to keep those commitments for them.

I like to think of a self-managed network as a spider's web. It may look like a fragile network of threads, yet the spider's web is one of the strongest, most durable wonders of nature.

But that's coercion, and it doesn't work very well for any extended length of time.

When we look at the continuum along which organizational structures lie, what we're essentially looking at is varying degrees of freedom in the work environment. The most-extreme example of that continuum would show up the most repressive work environment on one end, and a work environment that represents the model of total self-management (freedom to produce, create, and innovate with no command-and-control whatsoever) on the opposite end.

## Determining Where Your Organization Fits in the Self-Management Continuum

There are a growing number of company leaders who believe that some form of self-management is a better (and inevitable) route to a happy, inspired, engaged, and innovative workforce. These company owners and CEOs may have opted for various routes to self-management, yet all undoubtedly saw self-organizing, nonlinear and adaptive systems as core to the future success of their businesses – and key to a better world for all.

Still, before these company leaders could embark on a route to transformative change within their organizations, each (formally or informally) earnestly assessed the current state of their organizations and company cultures, their own business and personal philosophies, and their visions for the future of their company. Without that pre-assessment process, a roadmap to any form of self-management could not be developed. What's more, without an initial self-assessment process, there is no way to determine precisely where on the continuum between rigid bureaucracy and full blown self-management your own organization should reside.

## Establishing your Self-Management Philosophy and Principles

I like to think of a self-managed network as a spider's web. It may look like a fragile network of threads, yet the spider's web is one of the strongest, most durable wonders of nature. Because of the tensile strength of spider silk, the web of strands is extremely resilient and enduring. Similarly, in the case of self-management, it is the principles and philosophies (the solid "silk") of the organization that undergird the network (or "web") of the workforce, creating an enterprise that is so sustainable that it can support greater and greater performance. It is an enterprise where there are virtually no limits to the levels of success that can be achieved. What's more, as the web of networks becomes more tightly spun (company workers transparently interact with ever-greater numbers of their colleagues), the gaps between the strands become narrower and the web becomes denser. That means that there are fewer places throughout the organization where corruption, exploitation, and other workplace ills can creep in.

In a self-managed environment, there could be hundreds of eyes – as opposed to a few designated managers– to catch potential warning signs of trouble. Importantly, all the facets of daily operation are carefully spelled out, most often in a constitution-like document or statement of universally applicable business principles within the organization. In that way, the principles and philosophies that underlie the organization's core values are available to all and encourage clarity.

## Self-Management Implications (Or, What to Expect)

There could be any number of implications when you launch a company in self-managed mode or re-tool an organization toward self-management; the wide-ranging list of cultural aspects I've asked clients to consider is usually thought-provoking. But let's look at some of the most common implications you will encounter, and want to consider, up front.

The first one that comes to mind is an individual who enjoys power. This character trait is a bad fit for self-management simply because in a fully self-managed enterprise, everyone's voice is equal to everyone else's.

Clearly, moving to self-management can be a problem for

those accustomed to having some manager hand down decisions about their work hours, schedule, terms of employment, etc. They will suddenly be expected to participate in those decisions and shoulder more responsibility, and they may experience anxiety about that.

Lastly, the people who are passive personality types or generally lack initiative may find self-management challenging because self-management relies heavily on constant communication.

Fortunately, self-managed enterprises don't have to be perfect. They just have to be better than traditionally managed organizations, where 67 percent of the workforce is disengaged and the management tax is wasting $3 trillion per year in lost productivity.

## Making the Case for Self-Management

When a company leader begins to ruminate about self-management for his or her organization, there is nothing to dictate who should be brought in, in the early stages of that consideration process.

At some point, the company leader is going to want to reach out for reactions, feedback, impressions, advice, and arguments from trusted or respected senior colleagues, company stakeholders, personal advisers, and key influencers who will be most helpful in widening the information circle. That said, this kind of communication is an art, not a science, and there are no hard-and-fast concentric-circle guidelines.

Eventually, stakeholders who are not gung-ho may be encountered, and the goal will be to persuade them to at least experiment with the concept of self-management.

An organizational self-management consultant can help with business case-making, organizational assessment, education, and implementation assistance at various junctures in the process. There is no right or wrong time to call in the self-management cavalry.

The contextual background a self-management consultant brings to the table, not to mention the know-how to predict roadblocks (and the antenna to sense them), can help any leadership team progress smoothly through its initiative. Even early on, the consultant can help that team to "sell" its self-management case to the workforce in ever widening circles.

## Bringing Self-Management to Life: 12 Real-World Components

Holistic self-management does not require rigid and involved implementation steps. It does, however, require a thoughtful, cleanly planned and clearly communicated implementation process, plus vigilant stewardship to prevent slide-back into the many counterproductive hallmarks of bureaucracy.

The components of self-management implementation- and we offer twelve of them here- are not, as I have said, hard and fast. They are ideas and suggestions.

No. 1-Identify the Players: Who are the people who need to be involved? Enterprise stakeholders are anyone or any entity impacted by your enterprise.

No. 2-Introduce the concept of organizational self-management: It will be crucial to get the idea of self-management "out there" and exhaustively address questions and concerns about the concept.

No. 3-Determine Scope: The determination of scope can not only be key to the success of a self-management implementation, but pivotal to the buy-in of the self-management concept before it gets to the implementation stage.

No. 4-Identify the Why: Behind the overarching mission of the enterprise are the missions of the various areas, teams, and affiliates of the enterprise that support the overall company mission.

No. 5-Identify the What: This encompasses what you do, and why and perhaps how you do it.

No. 6- Create a Structure for Commitment-making and Commitment Keeping: Commitment-keeping is supremely important because it constitutes half the foundation of self-management itself.

No. 7-Determine Decision Rights: Without a doubt, this can be one of the stickiest steps of an experiment or implementation process, certainly in the effort to re-tool an existing bureaucratic hierarchy into a dynamic, self-managed network of title-free contributors, but also in a start-up situation.

No. 8-Create and Nurture Feedback Loops: Self management is all about the constant flow of feedback regarding behaviors, suggestions for continuous improvement, innovation, and more.

No. 9-Identify and Incorporate Social Technology Systems and Tools: Social systems and tools are all about how people relate to one another. In the self-managed enterprise of today, new social tools and technologies help the organization to respect the voices of individuals and foster inclusion.

No. 10-Define Your Enterprise Worldview: Start with Principles: Without clarity around what steers the enterprise, the company ship is rudderless, and any organizational structure (or non-structure, in the case of pure self-management) is built on quicksand.

No. 11-Create an Enterprise Peer Agreement Template: These are extremely valuable in any implementation of self-management. They minimize ambiguity and help to ensure clarity and transparency, which are so key to high performance across an enterprise.

No. 12-Create a Structure for Learning and Development (Sustainment): Providing a learning and development platform can help to amplify the self-management skills people may already possess, and also help them develop business know-how.

## Conclusion

Work cultures appear to be at a tipping point in making the case for transcending outdated bureaucracies– interest is bubbling all around the world about the benefits of creating engaging workplaces where everyone has a voice. Workplaces that inspire and liberate people, and respect the inherent adulthood of contributors, will have a strategic competitive advantage in the future of work. We're rapidly moving beyond theory into real-world examples.

Our hope is that this book will accelerate the appreciation of these realities by leaders who can make a difference.

My dream is that current and future generations will be able to view work as an energizing, vibrant part of life and not as something one has to do in order to make money to retire.

We're always happy to connect with anyone who wants to learn how to make organizations thrive with engaged, innovative and self-directed leaders. To contact us, visit our website at dougkirkpatrick.com.



**Doug Kirkpatrick** is an organizational change consultant, TEDx speaker, executive coach, author, and educator. He is the founder of D'Artagnan Advisors, helping companies embrace the future of work. A member of the Forbes Speakers network, he has served as a director on a number of boards including the Association for Talent Development (ATD), the world's largest talent development association with 35,000+ members in 120 countries, and the Leadership Institute for Development, Education and Research (LiDER) to develop leaders throughout the Americas.

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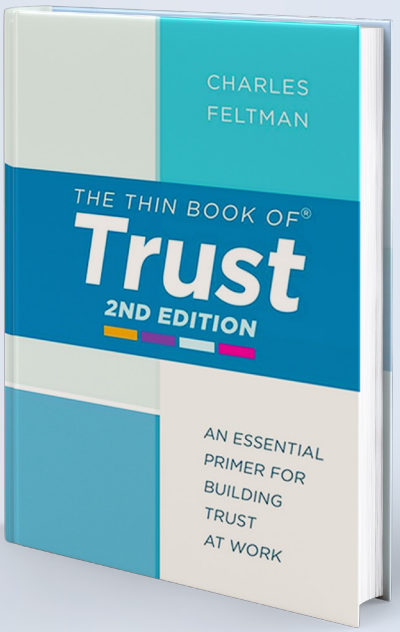
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# The Thin Book of Trust

Charles Feltman

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Thin Book of Trust

**An Essential Primer for Building Trust at Work**

By Charles Feltman

Charles Feltman is an executive coach, consultant and facilitator. he coaches executives and managers in developing the thinking, being and doing that constitute the most effective leadership in their organizations. He also coaches teams and workgroups around issues of trust, commitment, conflict, collaboration, and accountability. In addition to coaching and consulting for Fortune 500 companies since 1990, Charles has served as a community mediator and facilitator for the past 30 years. In all of his work he has helped people successfully confront and deal with issues of trust, betrayal and reconciliation in their work, community and personal lives.

## The High Achievers' Guide to Happiness,

There has been so much written about trust, in the workplace and otherwise, that it's easy to forget just how vital it is for individuals, families, companies, communities, countries, and the world as a whole.

In Charles Feltman's ***The Thin Book of Trust***, the essential nature of trust in the workplace is deconstructed, defined, and rebuilt in a truly compelling and innovative way. Feltman's brief book promises to help readers "learn how to build and maintain strong trusting relationships with others, and repair trust when it is broken, by being intentional and consistent in your language and actions."

He begins the book with an assessment that's worth recreating in its entirety here, as it frames just how intentional and effective Feltman is about making us all confront and improve the trust in our lives and careers:

*How would you rate your own trustworthiness?*

*How would you rate the trustworthiness of your co-workers?*

*How would you rate your immediate supervisor?*

*What about your company's top management?*

It turns out that on a scale of 1-10, people tend to rate themselves just below a 9, the people they work with around 7.5, their immediate supervisors a bit higher at 8.3, and their company's top management the lowest— just 6.53. These results indicate that we generally judge others to be less trustworthy than ourselves. If most of the people you work with are also like these survey respondents, they are making the same judgments. That means it is very likely some of the people you work with judge you to be less trustworthy than you consider yourself to be. Your first thought may be that they are mistaken.

## Feltman's "Language of Trust"

One of the central tenets of Feltman's approach to building trust at work is what he calls "The Language of Trust." This language is broken up into four distinct categories— Care, Sincerity, Reliability, and Competence.

Says Feltman, "Trust is fundamental to our sense of safety, autonomy, and dignity as human beings. It's also an integral part of every relationship we have. When we trust someone, we feel safe to share what is important to us including our thoughts, ideas, efforts, hopes, and concerns."

He argues that the only way to build trust like this is to understand the terms we use when speaking about it, and to use those terms to inform our journey toward greater trust in the workplace.

This language of trust serves as the through-line for much of the first half of *The Thin Book of Trust.* Generally, it's an effective foundation. Too many books on trust, in the workplace or elsewhere, dive into trust-building principles without ever taking the time to define those principles. Language is a powerful thing, and by placing proper emphasis on the way we talk about our relationships and cultivating those relationships, Feltman gets all readers on the same page with him as he explores trust on a deeper level.

With that in mind, it's worthwhile addressing each of Feltman's four tenets of trust and how he defines them within the book.

**1. Care**

According to Feltman, Care is the assessment that you have another person's interests in mind as well as you brown when you make decisions and take action. He says that of the four assessments of trustworthiness (the others we'll explore shortly), care could be considered the most important when it comes to building lasting trust.

Why? Because when someone believes that you're only looking out for your own interests, they may trust your sincerity, reliability and competence but still limit their trust of you to specific situations and transactions.

But, he argues compellingly, people will extend their trust more broadly to you when they feel you hold their interests in mind at all times.

**2. Sincerity**

Sincerity is the assessment that "you are honest, that you say what you mean and mean what you say; you can be believed and taken seriously." To Feldman, it also means expressing opinions that are valid, useful, and backed up by both sound rational thought and actual evidence.

Further, Feldman emphasizes the importance of ensuring that your actions always align with your words. When people around you sense a dissonance between what you say and what you do, they'll recognize a lack of sincerity that can result in a deep cut to your credibility and trust.

**3. Reliability**

Reliability, in Feltman's view, is defined quite simply— "the assessment that you meet the commitments you make, and that you keep your promises." The simplicity of this aspect of Feltman's approach is quietly brilliant. So much of trust in the workplace is gained and lost around one simple premise— whether you do what you say you're going to do or not.

In fact, it could be argued that reliability often serves as the foundation for the other areas of trust— care, sincerity, and reliability. Before many of your coworkers or others get to know you on a personal level, when you may be little more than an email address, they often get a sense for your reliability. "I haven't met David in marketing yet, but boy he always gets back to me with an answer quickly anytime I ask him a question."

If you can build a reputation for being reliable, Feltman convincingly writes, then other levels of trust will be raised as well.

**4. Competence**

Closely tied to reliability is competence, but here Feltman makes an important distinction. Reliability is doing what you say you're going to do. Competence is what it is you're capable of doing. It's "the assessment that you have the ability to do what you are doing or propose to do. In the workplace, this usually means others believe you have the requisite capacity, skill, knowledge, and resources to do a particularly task or job."

So what's the fourth way to build trust at your job? By being good at that job. Simple? Absolutely. Easy? Never.

**A Measured Approach**

One of the most refreshing aspects of Feltman's approach is that he doesn't see trust in the workplace in black and white, oversimplified terms. "Trust is not all or nothing," he says. His four assessment domains give us all a better, more nuanced way to talk about and repair broken trust.

## Distrust in the Workplace

One of the elements that makes The Thin Book of Trust so effective is its willingness to take an unflinching look at the sources and causes of distrust.

As Feltman says, "Distrust is a choice to not make yourself vulnerable to another person's actions. It is the general assessment that something I value is not safe with this person in this situation."

He explains how distrust engages us in strategies to protect ourselves, which ultimately block our ability to get good work done and create something meaningful with the people around us.

Feltman suggests a checklist to help us determine whether we're engaging in behavior and conversation that builds or erodes trust. He encourages us all to think of a person we do not trust, and ask these questions:

*Is it blanket distrust, or can you identify specific things you value that you don't trust them with?*

*Specifically, what do you value that you do not trust them with?*

> . . . finding a path back from betrayed trust is simple, even if it's not always easy. It requires us to acknowledge and apologize."

*What are you concerned they might do with what you value?*

*What does this person say and/or do that causes you to distrust them?*

*What do you do to avoid being harmed by this person's actions?*

In the end, Feltman encourages us all to look inward in order to mend distrust in the workplace— even if we feel our distrust of someone else feels justified.

Regarding people who have broken our trust, Feltman says that "ultimately you will need to find a way to forgive him or her for the breach or betrayal of your trust. Forgiveness means withdrawing your attention from the past and focusing on what you are doing with him or her now and in the future."

## A Path Back from Betrayed Trust

Interestingly, Feltman doesn't stop there. He also looks at distrust in the workplace from the opposite perspective— when you are the one who has betrayed someone else's trust. Fortunately, Feltman believes that finding a path back from betrayed trust is simple, even if it's not always easy. It requires us to acknowledge and apologize.

To acknowledge the betrayal means recognizing what you did was wrong or damaging in the other person's eyes. Even if you didn't intend it, whatever you did harmed them in some way, and they want to know you realize this and take it seriously. To apologize is to take responsibility for what you've done, ask forgiveness, and declare your intention to redeem yourself. This, in turn, opens the possibility of a conversation about how you can make amends.

According to Feltman, redeeming yourself in the eyes of someone you have betrayed usually means making a commitment to not repeat the action that led to betrayal. It may also entail helping fix whatever problem your actions created.

## A Deep Dive on the Psychology of Trust (and Distrust)

One of the elements that sets Feltman's work apart from the rest is his willingness and capability when it comes to diving deep on the psychological principles behind trust and distrust. In fact, he devotes an entire chapter to this exact subject. He shares the neurological and biological changes that undergo our brain when we either trust or distrust another person, and how we can change those responses.

"Building and maintaining trust," he says, "involves activating the trust network and calming the distrust network, in ourselves and others. With attention, intention and practice we can moderate the neurophysiologic distrust response enough to take a step back and objectively evaluate the situation. Intentionally using the distinctions of trust gives you a framework to use. Practicing good brain health will also support your ability to quell the distrust network and make a more objective assessment."

## A Practical Guide and a Call to Action

*The Thin Book of Trust* concludes with a chapter titled "Putting It Into Practice," and it's here that Feltman sets himself apart from other writers on this subject. He recognizes that in the real world, high-minded discussions of trust and culture don't amount to much without the tools necessary to put them into action. It's in this section that Feltman shares some of his most actionable insights, such as a guide for how to begin building trust. The potential steps are simple— for example, "Start looking for the trust distinctions and their related behaviors in your interactions with co-workers."

## Conclusion

Overall, *The Thin Book of Trust* is an extremely effective guide that offers a framework for developing and sustaining others' trust in you by intentionally speaking and acting in ways that other people consider to be trustworthy, talking constructively with people about distrust when you need to, and restoring trust with others when it's been broken.

Meanwhile, it makes the case that building trust is a competency, a set of skills that can be learned and improved. This means no matter how good you are at it now you can get even better. You can find the ability, Feltman says, to consistently build and maintain trust which enhances everything else you do.

*The Thin Book of Trust* can serve as a primer for improving your ability to increase trust with your employees, colleagues, boss, customers, suppliers and other important stakeholders. What you take from this little book can even spill over into greater trust in your family and community life.

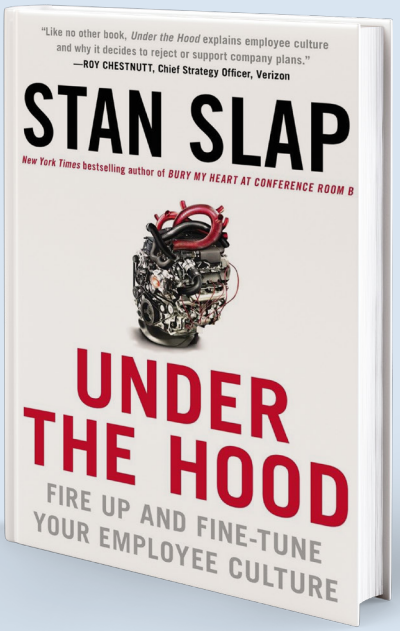
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# Under The Hood

Stan Slap

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Under the Hood

**Fire Up and Fine-Tune Your Employee Culture**

*By Stan Slap*

**Stan Slap** is president of the international consulting company SLAP, renowned for achieving maximum commitment in manager, employee, and customer cultures. His work has produced legendary impact for a who's who of successful companies—the kind that don't include "Patience" on their list of corporate values. He is the author of the New York Times bestseller Bury My Heart at Conference Room B. He lives in San Francisco.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Manage Culture So All Can Prosper

Stan Slap helps organizational leaders understand and work within and upon their employee culture in his book, ***Under the Hood: Fire Up and Fine-Tune Your Employee Culture.*** For Slap, employee culture can help a company flourish or lead to significant struggles. While management is primarily concerned with the success of the company and moving things forward, culture is actually most concerned with protecting itself. This can put employee culture at odds with management and leadership teams. Because Slap understands this deeply, in his book he attempts to help leadership learn how to manage culture so all involved can prosper.

## The First and Primary Deadly Sin

Slap's first deadly skin of corporate culture is the "failure to respect the power of employee culture." He believes that the other deadly sins stem from this single one. He defines culture as "your employees' shared beliefs about the rules of survival and emotional prosperity." In short, culture refers to employees' beliefs about how to thrive within the organization. This culture's main priority is self-protection, not the flourishing of the organization. Even though managers are an important part of an organization, they are not part of the culture. In the most important ways, they are outside of it. Still managers are "the key influencer of its survival and emotional prosperity."

To explain how important culture is, Slap tells the story of Mrs. Fields Cookies. Slap knew that it was crucial for growth of the company for employees to sell milk to customers when they sold cookies. This simple act could increase average sales by 30%. Despite knowing this and being repeatedly encouraged to sell milk, employees did not routinely do this. One day, frustrated, Slap created posters for one store explaining the company's commitment to quality and perfection. It detailed the necessity, in short phrases, of treating customers like they are family. He did not expect much of these posters, but when he next returned to the store, he noticed that employees had signed the poster, and he heard employees singing "We Are Family" to customers. He realized that the change happened when he started concerning himself with culture. To have a strong

culture, employees must know why things are done, predict how things will play out, and see the company as a force of good. Demanding the sale of milk did little to nothing but defining company culture had a significant impact.

## Further Deadly Sins

Slap's second deadly sin concerns the "presumption of rapid behavioral change." Typically, Slap states, planned organizational change is generally met with either overt or covert resistance. With overt resistance, management acts too late in order to prevent resistance. With covert resistance, it is already too far underway for management to prevent it. Organizational culture is resistant to change because its primary motive is self-preservation, and change threatens this. Slap explains that those at the top can allow themselves to believe that they are masters of change and that those beneath them do not hold this trait. As Slap explains, however, this is an oversimplification. Those at the top create the change and make the change when they are ready for it, making it easier for them to adopt. This is not the case for those upon whom change is inflicted. In order to help company culture accept change, Slap encourages managers to relate the change in terms that the company culture can relate to, demonstrate personal confidence in the change, and prove "that the change is real and safe." Managers should both remind the culture of what is not changing and sell the change as if it were a consumer product.

Slap moves on next to discussing the difference between leadership and management, stating that the third deadly sin is managing when leading is what is required. Cultures are unified when they feel either attacked or inspired. Slap maintains that a true leader's "emotional commitment is the ultimate trigger for your discretionary effort, worth more than your financial, intellectual, and physical commitment combined." It is this commitment that solves problems. This requires leaders to live their "own deepest values in whatever relationship or environment you're involved in." Being a manager requires a person to subjugate their values to that of the company. This causes emotional detachment on the part of the manager. "The irreducible essence of leadership is that leaders are human beings who live their own deepest values without compromise and use those values to make life better for other people. That's why people become leaders and why people follow leaders."

Corporations often fear that allowing managers to pursue their values will necessarily make them subjugate company priorities. Slap asks, "What if the real leaders in your company, transformed from throughout the ranks of its managers, flourished in the belief that to protect the company was to protect their ability to gain the personal benefits of leadership – to live their most important personal values every day at work?" Slap's main recommendations to encourage leaders are to encourage leaders to incorporate their most important values into their work and to help these values create better conditions for employees.

Slap then moves on to communication and discusses how important it is. He writes that corporate communication must "be sincere, heartfelt, and empathetic to the lives of those receiving it" if it is to be persuasive. Culture notes how often a message is repeated and the way it is said and also notices the priority given to it and who it is spoken to. Slap maintains that silence from culture in response to a message does not mean the culture is not taking it seriously. It simply is also paying attention to everything else that is going on. In addition, he maintains that "cynicism doesn't mean your employee culture doesn't care…. Cynicism means it hurts to care, and the culture still has plenty of commitment to give if it can be convinced it's safe and sane to give it." One step in doing this is to "do something significant to prove that you mean it."

Slap's fifth deadly sin concerns money and rewards. He ends this chapter discussing a retail store that noticed a sudden increase and then decrease in productivity. He went personally to the store to figure out what happened. He learned that in a crunch, a grade school teacher was hired as a manager. The manager was concerned with tidiness and order. She also found a pack of gold stars hidden away somewhere. She decided to give a gold star on each person's time card who sold a dozen cookies. This was so effective in encouraging motivation that she had to keep changing the reward, eventually giving a star for every three dozen cookies sold. When asked why the sales then had a sharp decrease, she told him that she had run out of gold stars. Employees were no longer motivated.

Slap writes, "Most compensation systems focus on money. The better ones focus on what money buys. The best ones – that deliver maximum cultural impact – focus on what money can't buy: security and a sense of self." Slap then goes on to detail ways that companies can help their employees feel a sense of security and pride in their work. First, however, he cautions his readers to be careful about the cultural impact of what it is they give, making sure not to give gifts for compensation that might be offensive in other countries or cultures. Next, he warns against rewarding employees and then laying them off shortly after as this takes away security from remaining employees. Slap maintains that helping an employee's family realize the impact the employee has on the company can be particularly helpful. This can be done as simply as sending a letter of praise to an employee's home rather than giving it to them at work. He also details many types of compensation that confer honor, respect, and prestige that are not specifically monetary such as providing concert tickets, specialty classes, or concierge services. Creativity can be employed in situations where a company does not have money to spend on pricey services because the main message is appreciation.

## The Last Deadly Sins

What do the Peanut Corporation of America, Enron, and Circuit City all have in common? They were all million or billion dollar companies that currently have $0 in revenue. As Slap explains, these companies all had specifically stated company wide values that were often in stark contrast to the activities that brought the companies down. Slap's sixth deadly sin is "asking for too much trust." He maintains that companies ought to do anything they can in order to avoid officially naming company values. Rather, they should ask employees what they believe the

> *Some things that were once allowed in an employee culture simply will not be allowed anymore once a company grows."*

company's values are, and when they are not what leadership wishes them to be, leadership ought to do everything they can to enact changes that demonstrate the values they are striving for. As Slap explains, management is, by nature, forward looking because managers are interested in success. Culture, as already explained, is interested in survival. As such, culture is looking at the past to see what has already happened. When trust is broken, leaders can make good on small promises, avoid specifically stating values, and trust the culture it is asking to trust it in order to build up trust.

When discussing his seventh deadly sin, Slap suggests illumination. This is because this deadly sin has to do with how new initiatives can bring very little payoff. Slap explains how quite frequently companies will put a lot of time, money, and effort into kicking off initiatives, but often it does not pay off. He writes about how Oracle sought to get the message out about four new transformations. Oracle took great effort to get the message about these transformations out to employees, but despite seeing the message everywhere, employees never fully got it. Slap writes that "The problem was that the Four Transformations had to take their place in line behind the Sixteen Thousand Other Transformations the Oracle employee culture had on its plate." In North America, only 43% percent of employees reported comprehension of these Four Transformations even though the transformations were listed on their mousepads and screensavers. To get employees to understand and buy into transformations, Slap recommends explaining to employees when the change will occur, explaining problems people may encounter, and letting employees know that "it's okay to raise a hand and ask for help."

## Common Vulnerabilities

Slap discusses four key vulnerabilities companies face. The first of these vulnerabilities is growth. Things must change when a company starts to grow, but there are things leaders can do to mitigate the damage. Slap maintains that you can scale "a great employee culture as your company grows." Slap states that "When you already have a great employee culture, the key to competing against big companies is not to build another big company; it is to build a very big, small company."

One of the major challenges that companies face is increased pressure from everybody to prove that the company is "a safe bet." Some things that were once allowed in an employee culture simply will not be allowed anymore once a company grows. Slap maintains that "Process, systems, and layers are all appropriate, but your company needs to pick places to dwell forever in the inappropriate, preserving cultural personality and individual judgment that, while not disdainful of increased corporate control, remain sacred identity markers immune to taming." One important move leadership can make is to ask employees to submit procedures that they believe are dumb or wasteful. These complaints can be about new policies but can also include policies leadership got rid of but that employees think should have been maintained. Leadership should also request recommendations for change. Senior management should then review these claims and make a decision regarding them. Slap believes this act becomes proof that management wants to maintain the employee culture.

Another threat that comes about with growth is new employees. Slap believes that oftentimes these employees will be looking for a better culture than they came from but may not hold the company to the high standards of its past culture because they are coming from a company whose own culture is lacking in key ways. Slap writes that "you can stop this problem before it starts by not confusing orientation with onboarding." He believes onboarding should last perhaps three months because that gives time for a company to decide if the employee is a good fit. Companies also need to create firm guidelines about how their "employee culture is to be led and managed."

As companies grow, it is important that they honor their past as they move into their more lucrative future. When people complain about changes, it is important to know that this complaining stems from an investment in the organization. Because of this, complainers "can be an invaluable enterprise asset." Managers must be able to manage these veterans by honoring the contributions employees have made to get the company where it is but also stay focused on "continued learning, strengthening, and progress."

Another time a company is vulnerable is during mergers and acquisitions. Slap maintains that acquired companies need to be respected. After all, the purchase was not an act of charity. There is something valuable in that company, and this should be respected. Slap states that "Many times an acquisition will go well, and the culture will absorb the changes without seeming to notice. But most times an employee culture will notice this." There are other moves that can be taken to increase employee security and buy in during the M&A process.

One step that management needs to take is to "prohibit a conqueror mentality." Usually in a M&A, one company is significantly bigger than the other; this is the dominant company. This has benefits, but it can also lead to "arrogance and condescension." Executives need to make it very clear that the acquired company is a valuable organization because they have accomplished notable things. Another problem arises

in that the new employee culture is going to be cautious as it considers how to survive in this new landscape. This requires the new company to be patient as the old one learns new ways to manage business. Mistakes will occur, and the whole process of learning will be stymied and delayed if employees are met with unhelpful and unforgiving coworkers. It is also important for a company to get fast wins. This will show both the cultures, the old and the new, "that they can win together." Finally, management can ease tensions by focusing on those things that will not be changing.

Slap moves on to worldwide giants like CNN and Paul McCartney to discuss the vulnerabilities that can arise with cultural complacency in high stakes, competitive markets, but he also discusses the ways in which leaders can mitigate these vulnerabilities through solid leadership. Slap quotes those who worked with McCartney to explain the degree to which McCartney holds both himself and his crew and band members to high standards. McCartney knows what is going on in all aspects of a show, and he believes deeply in providing a high quality experience for concert goers. The stakes are high for all involved. His songs are so well known that everybody in the audience knows if someone makes a mistake. There is no room for complacency.

Slap provides numerous ways to overcome complacency. The first is to "link your employee culture's energy to something unchanging like quality, customer service standards, and impact on the world, and use financial performance as an indicator about how well those issues are being performed." This helps avoid the complacency that can come from both success and from word of doom. Next, companies can give their members the authority to make key decisions. Third, leaders can promote curiosity by allowing employees to make and also to try out suggestions. Finally, companies need to create performance. He writes, "the quality and quantity of your employee culture's performance depends on its willingness to use" its skills to the best of their ability.

Slap's fourth point of vulnerability comes about when things go wrong. To explain a company that handled strife well, he discusses the time when Progressive needed to lay off employees because of changes in insurance law. When this became necessary, Progressive gave employees the option to choose if they would like to be laid off. Furthermore, if employees wanted to work through the holidays, the company allowed them to. People still needed to be laid off, but executives did the best they could to do so in the most honorable manner possible.

Slap discusses numerous moves companies can make when facing a crisis. The first is "maintaining cultural commitment under pressure." It is in difficult times when management can learn whether they have cultivated a high quality culture. It is also important that management maintains a dedication to truth and avoids inappropriately placing blame while also taking steps to earn trust and delivering "on what you promise.". Companies ought to also create" legends among [their] customer culture about how the enterprise is accountable, concerned, and decent."

Slap has a deep understanding of employee culture. Because of this he understands mistakes companies can make that turn their culture against them and become yet another problem for management to have to fight against. Slap also understands times companies are particularly vulnerable and when they need to focus heavily on their culture. In his book, "Under the Hood: Fire Up and Fine-Tune Your Employee Culture," Slap does not simply state the problems he has witnessed; he provides tangible steps companies can take to get employee culture to work with management for the betterment of the entire company and all involved with it. After all, by its very nature, management is set apart from company culture. Because of Slap's deep understanding, his book is imminently practical and applicable to those concerned with their own company's culture.

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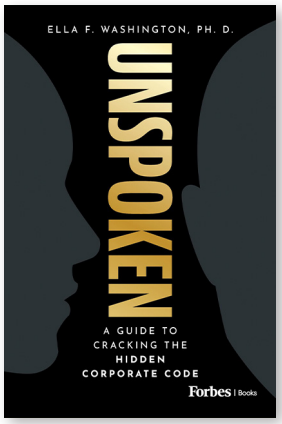
# Unspoken

Ella Washington

Executive Book Summaries®

# Unspoken

## A Guide to Cracking the Hidden Corporate Code




*by* **Ella F. Washington, PhD**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

So many of us go through life automatically assuming that work will always be hard and stressful, and will always suck. But most work environments can deliver a better experience for all of us if we change the dynamics of the workplace and maybe even our expectations.

In ***Unspoken: A Guide to Cracking the Hidden Corporate Code***, the unspoken rules that determine success in corporate settings are explored, and empowering tactics to help shape a successful career are shared in detail. The practical strategies outlined will help you to own your story and build your strengths, leverage your skills, and identify opportunities to excel and advance.

The intention is for you to walk away with everything you need to uncover and manage the unspoken rules in any workplace, even those that may be uncomfortable, unfamiliar, or where you may be "the only one." You'll learn how to use this book's practical, actionable content to overcome them, allowing you to thrive in corporate environments, develop leadership skills, and achieve your career goals.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Gain clarity on your personal story to gain confidence and authenticity in your career.
- Leverage and develop your strengths to align your work with what you do best.
- Balance authenticity and strategy to foster strong workplace relationships
- Develop a personal playbook to intentionally plan your career and adapt to change.

## Section One

### Chapter One: Own Your Story

Unspoken Rule: Who you are outside of work impacts who you are inside of work.

Unspoken Rule: Owning who you are gives you confidence anywhere you show up.

Take the time and try to understand your story. The more you understand yourself, the better you'll be able to navigate your career and interactions with others.

Determine the differences between how you see yourself and how others see you. Try to understand why some might be getting the wrong idea about you—and how you might change things up to better show up as who you really are and who you want to become.

Understand the experiences you've gone through, both good and bad. What made them negative or positive? What role did you play in making them turn out the way they did? What role did others around you play?

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: THE ELEVATOR PITCH

If you haven't heard of an elevator pitch, it's simply a capsule summary of something you can complete during an elevator ride. It's also a great way to get clear on and convey your story. Elevator pitches are short, concise, and meant to get your audience's attention. Generally, you want to keep it under thirty seconds. Break elevator pitches down into three distinct categories: the professional pitch, the future pitch, and the human pitch. These represent three ways you can "show up" in the workplace.

### Chapter Two: The Power of Your Strengths

Unspoken Rule: Success comes from amplifying your strengths, not fixing your weaknesses.

Unspoken Rule: Seek opportunities to align your work with your strengths.

Unspoken Rule: Own your flaws, and turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones for success.

Unspoken Rule: Success is a team sport. Every star had a wingman or backstage hero who made the win possible.

Assess your own strengths. You can accomplish this by seeking feedback from your peers, managers, friends, and family. You can also use online tools to identify your assets. Knowing your strengths is the next step in understanding your story.

The more you understand yourself, the better you'll be able to navigate your career and interactions with others.

Leverage your strengths. Look for professional opportunities to take advantage of those strengths and help you shine in the workplace. Create quick fact-based statements that capsulize your talents.

Develop your strengths. Focus on improving them through personal efforts. Also, look for outside help by recruiting accountability buddies and mentors and hiring professional coaches.

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: SUPERSIZE A STRENGTH

Six-Month Activity: Strengthening Success Journal

Reflect on Your Strengths (Month 1): Journal about specific instances where they contributed to your achievements.

Strategic Opportunities (Months 2–3): Actively seek out and engage in professional opportunities that align with your strengths.

Personal Development Plan (Months 4–5): : Create a personalized development plan outlining specific actions and milestones to enhance each identified strength

Reflect and Reassess (Month 6): Assess how leveraging and developing your strengths has influenced your career and interactions.

One final aspect of this exercise: Create a "strengths statement" that, in a couple of sentences, defines your primary strength and validate it by mentioning an achievement you've reached through that strength.

### Chapter Three: Authenticity and Code-Switching

Unspoken Rule: Everyone code-switches at work (to some degree).

Unspoken Rule: Code-switching can be a strategy.

Unspoken Rule: Strong workplace relationships pave the way to success.

The term "code-switching" was initially coined in the 1950s by linguist Einar Haugen. He used it to describe the ability to move between languages and dialects, but today, it has come to mean changing something (or multiple things) about yourself, like the way you talk, dress, or, yes, style your hair, to fit in with a more dominant group. While authenticity is increasingly desired in the workplace, balancing authenticity with when you choose to code-switch can be a viable strategy.

When reading the room, analyze situations based on what is said and what is not said.

Code-switching, when carried to an extreme, can be harmful to your job performance and even to your mental and physical health. By being judicious with code-switching and only using it strategically, you can reap its benefits without sinking under its drawbacks.

Try to limit code-switching to instances where you do it as a conscious choice, not a fear-based reaction. Don't assume the worst, and seek instead to clarify the situation when you feel you're being slighted. Finally, look for ways to feel more connected to the people you work with by sharing more about yourself and looking for positive social situations.

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: WHERE ARE YOU CODE-SWITCHING?

Do you feel you're doing too much code-switching? How much of it is actually necessary? Is your code-switching forced or strategic? Reflect on how you feel about the reasons behind your codeswitching to determine if and how you might want to try showing more of your authentic self.

## Section Two

### Chapter Four: Be Ready, Be Right, Be Excellent

Unspoken Rule: Excellence does not mean perfection. It means doing your personal best.

Unspoken Rule: Make sure you always have the receipts.

Unspoken Rule: Delivering your best helps you navigate shifting expectations.

Unspoken Rule: Work in a way where you will get recognized for it.

Over the long run, creating a personal standard of excellence and committing to it help pave your way. Seal the deal by making an impact so that it earns you recognition.

Discover the company's metrics for success you need to meet in your role and surpass their expectations if you can. Stay prepared and retain evidence of your efforts in case they're ever questioned. In short, be ready, be right, and be excellent.

Meet shifting expectations by remaining consistent. If you always deliver, you raise your value within an organization. If you're unhappy in your current role, tap into your passion and look for ways to fulfill it over time.

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: DEFINE AND LEVERAGE YOUR STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

Go back and revisit your own professional and personal successes. What was your process in those instances? Can you replicate that process in the future and create your standard of excellence by examining it? Also, look at what creates the conditions for you to be at your best at work. Finally, get real with your manager, in terms of what they believe good performance looks like. Collect some concrete examples, get them to be as specific as possible, and have this conversation not just when you start in a new role.

### Chapter Five: Read the Room

Unspoken Rule: What's not said is often more important than what is said.

Unspoken Rule: "Doing your job" only gets you so far.

Unspoken Rule: Power in the workplace goes beyond titles; it's also about access, resources, and relationships that allow you to get things done.

When reading the room, analyze situations based on what is said and what's not said. Look for recurring communication patterns so you can flag negative situations and lean into positive ones.

Understand the various sources of power that people draw from to increase their authority. Analyze them, and leverage them for your advancement.

Use distance and objectivity when you size up other people. Be aware of common biases both in them and yourself and work to minimize your natural blind spots.

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: FIGURE OUT THE POWER DYNAMICS

It is important to understand the power dynamics in your

department and organization. Here are some questions to answer:

1. Who holds authority in your organization?
2. Observe who exercises different modes of power, for example:
   - Who do others seek out for information (information power)
   - Who always get approval for additional resources (reward power)
   - Who is well-known and liked (referent power)
3. Question whether there have been situational shifts in power. In certain situations, relational power can trump hierarchical power.

### Chapter Six: Expand Your Networks of Influence

Unspoken Rule: If you want something, you must ask for it, even if it's uncomfortable.

Unspoken Rule: It's not what you know but who you know.

Unspoken Rule: Embracing invitations to build connections can unlock opportunities.

Unspoken Rule: Inside information is valuable information.

Work on losing your fear of approaching mentors and others you want in your network. Choose opportunities (walking them to their car, taking an elevator ride with them) where you can spend a few minutes alone.

When you first talk to a potential mentor, start by offering to help them with their work. Lighten their burden; don't add to it by asking them immediately to do something for you.

Create your board of directors—a group of people with experience in different walks of life who can advise you on different situations. Expand that network to reflect your goals and focus, to help you on your way rather than hold you back.

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: MAP YOUR NETWORK

"Network mapping" is a visual representation of all the elements in a network and how they are connected. Create a map of your network, giving you a visual representation of your areas of influence. The goal is to have a diverse and varied group of people in your network so that you can get a multitude of perspectives when you need them. How does your network stack up?

## Section Three

### Chapter Seven: Master the ABCs of Negotiations

Unspoken Rule: Everything is negotiable.

Unspoken Rule: Negotiations can happen at any point in the employee life cycle, not just during hiring.

Unspoken Rule: The stronger your plan B, the stronger your negotiating power.

Don't be afraid to ask for what you want. All they can say is no. But prepare the way for that ask, and do what you can to prove you deserve it.

Understand the ABCs of negotiation — awareness and agency, building relationships, and creating clear outcomes. Try to be objective about the process and not make it personal.

People may make assumptions about you, but a skillful negotiator is best positioned for favorable outcomes.

### CHAPTER EXERCISE: NEGOTIATING WITHOUT NUMBERS

Reflect on your experience with a real-world negotiation that did not involve numbers but instead involved advocating for behavioral or organizational change. You might consider times when someone else was trying to persuade you to change or you were trying to persuade someone else. In either case, consider the perceptions and significant insights you gained from this negotiation, and analyze what this says about your style of negotiating.

### Chapter Eight: Lean In To Grow

Unspoken Rule: Opportunities for growth often hide in uncomfortable moments.

Unspoken Rule: Negative feedback can be a blueprint for growth.

Unspoken Rule: A strategic no will make space for a meaningful yes.

Discomfort, if handled correctly, can be a cheat code to positive growth. No true progress comes without some pain.

Sometimes an unwanted request can actually be transformed into a great opportunity. And sometimes, if it's unfair and forces you to do more work without much reward, it should be avoided.

Your nos and your yesses should be part of your strategic growth, so be thoughtful about both.

Your nos and yesses should be part of your strategic growth, so be thoughtful about both.

## CHAPTER EXERCISE: HOW DO YOU HANDLE DISCOMFORT?

Consider one way to push yourself out of your comfort zone professionally. Whether it's taking on a new project, learning from your failures and trying again, or identifying your fears, write down one way you step outside of your comfort zone in the next thirty days.

### Chapter Nine: Create Your Own Niche

Unspoken Rule: Your job is always more than what it says in your job description.

Unspoken Rule: The thing that makes you different could be your superpower.

Unspoken Rule: Corporate resources are treasures — maximize them for your ascent.

To build your niche, think beyond your job requirements, and look for opportunities to fill other needs within the organization with your specialized skills and abilities.

Ask high-quality questions to uncover the truth about situations, and find common ground solutions, as well as position yourself as a positive presence in the company.

Don't hide your differences. Share and leverage them to create a unique role for yourself, and bolster your niche.

Think past your current role and organization, and build your niche externally so that you establish yourself outside your current company.

## CHAPTER EXERCISE: DEFINING AND EXPRESSING YOUR NICHE

Jeff Bezos once said, "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room." It's the same with your niche.

Here are four steps you can take to both define and communicate your niche effectively in the professional world:

1. DEFINE YOUR NICHE AND PUT IT IN WRITING

What's your long-term vision and mission?

What values do you want to embody?

What motivates others to turn to you?

How do you make a difference in your environment?

Create your own personal mission statement that answers these questions and defines your niche.

2. AUDIT YOUR NICHE

Analyze where you are today with the niche you've defined in step 1.

3. EMBODY YOUR NICHE

Be aware of what impression you're giving others and what messages you're sending consciously and unconsciously. Align your communication with your niche in an authentic and positive way.

4. CONTINUE TO REEVALUATE AND ADJUST YOUR NICHE

Your niche should always be regarded as a work in progress. With that in mind, regularly assess how your niche mission statement fits into your current professional position, and then tweak it accordingly.

If there's one overriding theme to this book, it's this: You have the power to make the future what you want it to be. You can continue to learn, grow, and succeed throughout your professional life if you're willing to be thoughtful and strategic, work hard, and leverage your strengths in such a way that they continually raise your profile and deliver amazing results.

In a corporate world ruled by "If You Know, You Know," you now have the knowledge. You know what these rules are and how they work. Your next step is to take them on in a way that's true to who you are while also serving your organization's needs (or preparing to move to an organization where your own needs will be better served, if that's what the situation calls for).

Just as you had a major and a minor in college, you can also continue to have both in your career. Your major would

represent your primary career push, such as your full-time job, while your minor could represent a different passion or interest. You do have choices, but feel free to open yourself up to more than one. We only have one life to lead, and the personal and professional can't help but intersect.

Harold Kushner, rabbi and author of When Bad Things Happen to Good People, famously wrote, "Nobody on their deathbed has ever said 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'" Perhaps that's true, but you don't also want to look back with regret at what you never allowed yourself to accomplish. The challenge is to manage your own mental and physical health along the way.

Workplaces are always evolving, and we have to evolve with them. This book has emphasized the need to deal with things as they are, not as we'd like them to be. When we fight change, we enlist in an unwinnable war, because change is inevitable.

You must own your own story. That's where you should begin in terms of writing your own playbook. Aim for a real understanding of what you want out of your career, what personal strengths you can leverage, and how you can connect the dots of your education, experience, and achievements to reach your personal and professional goals. And, perhaps most importantly, try to clarify your overall mission and what you want to achieve.

You shouldn't just let your career happen. You should plan your path and travel fearlessly down it. So, be intentional. Be strategic. Be in the next room before you get there. And even if you don't exactly know what your ultimate end goal is yet, you can know what kind of work you love to do, what kind of environment you want to do it in, and what type of impact you want to have. Only you can define what a well-lived life looks like for you because that definition is different for everyone.

When you're writing your own playbook, it doesn't really matter what company you're at. It doesn't matter if you're not at a company and, instead, swimming in your own lane. Because your playbook isn't about where you are; it's about who you are. It's a living document that changes as you change. What matters is being in alignment with your own self and your own superpowers and what you feel like you were put here on this planet to do. You won't acquire all that wisdom overnight. It will take some time to figure your goals out, and even then, some of them will continue to evolve.

But if you're committed to this process and mastering the skills we discussed in this book, that commitment will bring you closer to getting what you want out of life. So, with that in mind, let's finish this journey, or at least this part of it, with one final exercise.

## OWN YOUR STORY AND MAKE IT YOUR PLAYBOOK'S FOUNDATION

Use your history to look at situations where you've excelled in the past, both professionally and personally. Analyze what conditions allowed you to shine and which of your strengths were most important to your success at that moment. Also, note what was most satisfying about those positive outcomes and what aspects you might be able to replicate in the future. Conversely, also examine when you fell short for one reason or another.

## FINAL EXERCISE: LET'S CREATE YOUR PLAYBOOK

It's important to develop your own professional playbook to meet your needs and find the best opportunities to showcase your superpowers. With that goal in mind, take a comprehensive look at yourself and use the concepts from this book to go deep and develop your playbook for the future, keeping in mind where you've been, where you want to go, and how you can get there.

There is tremendous power in self-awareness, strategic planning, and adaptability as cornerstones of a fulfilling career. By owning your story, leveraging your strengths, navigating challenges, and building meaningful relationships, you can create a personal playbook for success that aligns with your values and aspirations.

You should embrace authenticity, seize opportunities for growth, and define your unique niche in the professional world. Ultimately, this journey is about crafting a career — and life — that reflects who you truly are and the impact you want to make, empowering you to thrive in an ever-evolving workplace.



A recognized expert on DEI and a range of workplace issues, organizational psychologist Ella F. Washington, PhD, is the Founder and CEO of Ellavate Solutions, an integrated DEI strategy firm, and the author of ***The Necessary Journey: Making Real Progress on Equity and Inclusion***. She is a Professor of Practice at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, where she has won honors including Excellence in Teaching 2021 and Poet and Quants 40 under 40 MBA Professors in 2023. Additionally, she is the Founder of the Ellavate Charity Foundation and a sought-after author, speaker, and consultant.

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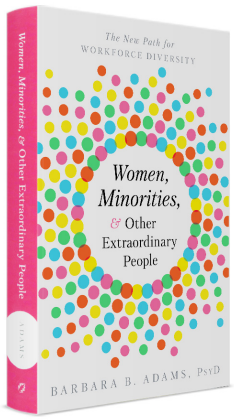
# Women, Minorities, and Extraordinary People

Barbara Adams

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# Women, Minorities, and Extraordinary People

## The New Path for Workforce Diversity




*by* **Barbara Adams**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Workforce diversity is good business. Studies show that companies with higher percentages of women in management roles have higher financial returns; ethnically diverse companies are more likely to outperform companies that struggle with diversity; companies with greater ethnic and gender diversity innovate faster; and improved gender diversity alone can add trillions of dollars to the global GDP.

Diversity is a noun meaning "the mix," whereas inclusion is a noun meaning "making the mix work." Inclusion refers to proactive behaviors we take based on self-awareness and respect for differences that make people feel valued for the abilities, unique qualities, and perspectives they contribute to an organization.

This book is for anyone who wants change in the workplace and believes things can be done differently. Author, Dr. Barbara Adams, Founder and Chief Learning Officer at GAR (Gender, Age, and Race) Diversity Consulting, invites us to walk a new path of diversity and inclusion that enables us to achieve growth, heighten performance, and increase innovation.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The meaning of diversity and inclusion.
- To recognize both negative and positive bias.
- That diversity creates extraordinary opportunities.
- To hire and develop employees to create an innovative culture.

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Acknowledging the Problem, Embracing the Opportunity

Acknowledging we have a problem in our companies requires us to admit that the lack of diversity in businesses today has not been fixed by laws, policies, regulations, or education. When we don't work toward change, we're unable to benefit from the differences, innovations, and advancements that women and minorities could bring to our companies; as a result, we are thwarting our own efforts to meaningfully grow our businesses.

### The Problem with Unconscious Bias

Biologically, we're hardwired to prefer the company of people who look and sound like us, and who share our interests, experiences, and values. For example, in a public place, we often make snap judgments about who is safe to be with and who isn't. This instinct is designed to keep us from harm. Research shows that 90% of brain function is outside conscious awareness. Since 90% of brain functioning is automatic, we know people will make biased decisions without even realizing it.

Culture and society hold strong influences on biases and beliefs. When certain groups are more associated with good things and other groups with bad things, people unwittingly believe these associations. For example, seeing whites portrayed as lawyers and Blacks portrayed as criminals in the media subtly influences how individuals perceive these groups. These hidden effects are impossible to escape in society until you train yourself to see them.

### The Problem with Positive Bias

As odd as this may sound, positive biases can have just as profound a negative effect as negative biases. Our natural biases are driving hiring practices and netting the overly homogeneous workplaces that exist today. If diverse workforces are ever to develop, we need to examine and fundamentally rethink our positive biases.

Sometimes, a simple act can bring powerful change. Dr. Adams recounts how the universities she graduated from periodically solicit her for donations. When in a financial position to give, she happily does so. But one year, she changed her practice and also gave an equal amount, at the same time, to the United Negro College Fund. Imagine if alumni donors from every institution of higher education also donated to organizations serving underrepresented communities. Powerful change could occur.

### Creating Opportunities for Diversity and Inclusion

The diversity problem in companies cannot be solved by making token hires, giving money to school programs, or simply sending employees to unconscious-bias training. When employees with different experiences of the world, varying belief systems, and dissimilar upbringing in multicultural environments come together, they generate a multitude of ideas. It's this wealth of ideas that becomes the wellspring of innovation in business.

The Apple Watch, advertised as the ultimate device for a healthy life, was designed to work best on light-skinned people. Buried deep in Apple's online disclosure forms is a list of so-called restricted chemicals for wearables. Sure enough, colorants are on the list, including but not limited to black and brown pigments. Hashtags like #BlackWristsMatter and #TattooGate exploded online. One of the largest technology companies in the world launched a product that would not function on individuals with dark skin or tattoos. This embarrassment could have been avoided altogether had a diverse, inclusive team been responsible for the development and testing of the watch before its launch. This is what can happen when people in companies see the world through the same lens.

## Reframing Your Thinking

Despite what we might like to believe, the culture of any given organization does not spontaneously or mysteriously develop. The founders of an organization instill their company culture with their values, beliefs, and assumptions. This first group of employees, led by the founders, effectively sets up the process of culture formation.

### Looking at Your Organizational Culture

Truly inclusive leaders break from past norms, take risks, and champion a culture of diversity in their organizations. They don't make statements we sometimes hear people say, like "I'd hire them, but they're just not there," "It's going to take a long time to correct the diversity problem here," or "Changing the educational system is the real problem." They don't make excuses, shift responsibility to someone else, or shrink away because the work is hard. Inclusive leaders understand the essential value in diverse work environments and summon the courage to proceed toward that vision.

### A Framework for Thinking about Differences

An invisible structure exists in American society that operates to maintain the status quo. Societal norms enable

some people to move through life with ease and require others to work much harder to move forward. This framework has influenced all of us.

As an example, prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act, not much thought was given to the challenge of entering a building or a bathroom in a wheelchair, because most people are able-bodied. The Disability Implicit Association Test shows that 76% of people have a hidden preference (bias) for able-bodied persons. Similarly, a male leader has never experienced the challenge of being female, since that has never been the lens through which he views the world. Each of us needs to understand our place in the framework of differences.

### Critical Thinking

In the workplace, assumptions that women are not as good as men when it comes to solving certain math or engineering problems can be a significant issue. Similarly, assumptions that whites have greater intellectual ability than Blacks, that younger people are more technically savvy than older people, or that men are better than women as CEOs of large companies (because they hold the majority of these positions) are assumptions worth questioning. As we surface our unconscious biases, questioning our beliefs about gender and family, Blacks and whites, and a host of other hidden preferences, we can empower ourselves to learn and grow by using evaluative thinkinog.

## Making a Plan Like No Other

If you want to transform your current organization into one that is more diverse and inclusive, you need to boldly rethink how you recruit, hire, engage, and manage your employees. Changing a company into one that is diverse and inclusive is like fitting a square peg into a round hole. It takes a significant systemic change that can't be accomplished simply through a suite-of-diversity-initiatives approach.

### Finding the Right Talent

It takes intentionality to not only build up but also develop a talented, diverse, inclusive workforce. You want to hire the best people, but make sure you're recruiting from all the right places, including places where you might not have looked in the past.

There are extraordinarily successful people who either never attended college or dropped out. Ruth Handler, the co-founder of Mattel, observed her young daughter, Barbara, playing with paper dolls and went on to create her company's signature product—the Barbie doll. Literary genius Maya Angelou and international journalist Lisa Ling are two other examples. Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, Muriel Siebert (the first woman to purchase a seat on the New York Stock Exchange), and the late Steve Jobs (just to name a few) are all high school graduates who succeeded in their fields, absent college degrees. A desire to think more creatively and implement new techniques for finding diverse candidates can unearth phenomenal talent pools.

### Enhancing the Hiring Process

In 1970, women made up only 20% of all new hires by America's major symphony orchestras. Many people didn't believe that women had the lung capacity to play large wind instruments. Today, most symphonies hold blind auditions with potential candidates performing behind a screen so that judging panels can better make unbiased assessments based on the quality of playing. Since blind auditions began, the proportion of women hired by major symphony orchestras has doubled, from 20% to 40%. Businesses would do well to model this approach with their hiring practices. Finding creative ways to control interviewing conditions, essentially holding blind auditions, could help prevent bias in hiring decisions.

### Retaining and Engaging Employees

Even if you've increased the diversity of your workforce in the number of hires, you still have the critical task of creating and fostering a culture and environment that people want to be a part of. The handful of women who have succeeded in the current system are those who have widely adapted their style and approach to the patriarchal (male) model. They are valued less for their natural contributions and more for their male adaptations—in other words, they are valued for their sameness, not their difference!"

We know that in meetings, women are more likely to be interrupted or ignored than men. Knowing this, and wanting to mitigate this gender bias, the person in charge could say something like "Karla was just interrupted, and I'm curious to hear the rest of her thinking on this topic." Another approach could be to allow each person in the meeting an equal amount of time to share their ideas. Similarly, people from different cultures in which it's considered impolite to speak up can be encouraged to do so by an adept leader or group member who asks for their input. This person might say something like "Kumi, you've been quiet, but I'm aware that you're a subject matter expert. We're interested in hearing your thoughts."

## Learning to Navigate the Difference

Diversity is an acquired taste. When we have not had any substantive and meaningful exposure to people who are not like us, it's difficult to develop an appreciation for them. Our enjoyment of others comes as we begin the process of knowing them and valuing the differences and similarities we share.

### Conversations that Shift Thinking

We need to begin having conversations that shift and elevate our thinking, our interactions, and our work. This requires a paradigm shift in our companies but also a change in our approach. Is silence inadvertently used in your organization to serve the purpose of maintaining relationships and social order? Race, sex, politics, and religion are topics that most of us have been socialized not to discuss at work.

### Assessing Your Company's Readiness

We can engage with people in our companies in meaningful, responsive, and eye-opening ways. Some of the tools at our disposal allow us to collect data and learn more about how our employees feel and what they really think. Other tools require us to introduce new practices and ideas to our companies, interrupting the status quo.

In addition to helping our employees learn about themselves, we can leverage information from these tools to help build teams that assure input from those with different strengths, viewpoints, and talents. When we have more information about our employees and teams and know how they work best, we can better navigate differences and create an environment that is productive and satisfying for our employees, leading to greater respect, retention, engagement, and performance.

### Determining Your Own Self Readiness

We would not climb a mountain or run a marathon without deciding our readiness and working to become as prepared as possible. It's just as important to assess our self-readiness to navigate differences.

A useful way to embark on the journey of determining self-readiness for navigating differences is to write your own brief three- to five-page biography. This doesn't require that you produce a masterpiece, only that you are honest with yourself. A biography of this sort will enable you to notice and reflect upon your experiences and underlying belief systems. You can use it as a tool to explore and think further about the influences in your life—specifically your values and beliefs about yourself and others. After you finish it, consider sharing your bio with a trusted colleague to encourage deep listening and questioning, allowing you to further explore cultural curiosity.

Forward-thinking, progressive leaders understand that it's time for us to bravely explore new ways to make this work. Change is possible, but as I mentioned, the job ahead is hard and not for the faint of heart. It's for those of us willing to develop a new narrative and stride down the path to attain a workplace in which differences among people not only abound but also are leveraged for the betterment of individuals, companies, and society.



Dr. Barbara Adams is the Founder of GAR (Gender, Age & Race) Diversity Consulting, based in Bellingham, Washington. She consults with progressive clients globally to advance a new path for workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has been featured in The Sacramento Bee; SiliconValley.com; WallStreetSelect; Miami Herald; and more. She holds a Doctorate of Psychology in Organizational Development.

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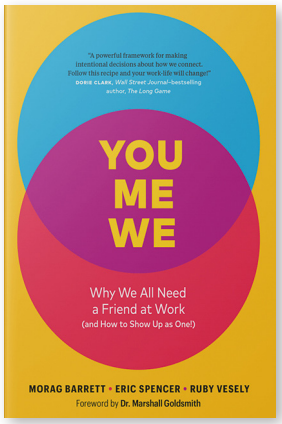
# You, Me, We

Morag Barrett, Eric Spencer, Ruby Vesely

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# You, Me, We

## Why We All Need a Friend at Work (and How to Show Up As One!)




*by* **Morag Barrett, Eric Spencer, Ruby Vesely**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In today's age of Zoom calls and hybrid workplaces, how can leaders foster relationships that allow everyone to succeed? A trio of best friends and leadership consultants at SkyeTeam have the surprising answer: workplace success starts by being a friend.

Meet the Ally Mindset, a model for proactive, thoughtful work relationships. As you heal adversarial relationships and strengthen weaker ties, you'll find that when you have best friends at work—colleagues who have your back—you thrive. Through personal stories, science-backed insights, and valuable lessons from clients including Google, the National Geographic Society, and Microsoft, Author and business expert Morag Barrett, HR and Leadership Development Coach Eric Spencer, and executive coach and leadership development expert Ruby Vesely use ***You, Me, We: Why We All Need a Friend at Work (and How to Show Up As One!)*** to explore the five key parts of the Ally Mindset and demonstrate how to apply them to your relationships.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The importance of establishing close relationships at work.
- How to adopt the Ally Mindset so that you can be a more effective leader, improve your long-term career results, boost employee engagement, strengthen your relationships, and benefit your own health and that of others around you.
- A systematic approach for how you can most effectively show up at work.
- How to take back control of your work, to speak your truth, and to be seen, heard, and valued.
- The tools you need to nurture your work relationships with intentionality.

## Introduction – Relationships: The True Currency for Success

The Ally Mindset is how you show up in the relationships that matter most to you—whether or not the other person is showing up as an ally or a rival, a friend or an enemy. As a result, you are more likely to be engaged in these relationships rather than checked out. The Ally Mindset is the guiding principle that drives intentionality—what you feel, think, and do—and ultimately the health of the relationship and the mutual success that comes from it.

In this book, we explore the importance of establishing close relationships at work—friendships—and show how to create the kind of mindset essential for making allies while delivering the business results being asked of you. We show you how to adopt the Ally Mindset so that you can be a more effective leader, improve your long-term career results, boost employee engagement, strengthen your relationships, and benefit your own health and that of others around you.

In this book, we offer a systematic approach—proven over the course of many years in our research and in practice with companies of all shapes and sizes—for how you can most effectively show up at work. We show you how to take back control of your work, to speak your truth, and to be seen, heard, and valued. We give you the tools you need to nurture your work relationships with intentionality, not relying on chance or random connections.

## The Remarkable Power of Being a Friend at Work: Why be Robin to My Batman?

Our allies allow us to be who we are, and they help keep us grounded when we go off track. Without effective relationships, your success will likely be compromised. Fortunately, there is a solution: reinventing a sense of connection in a disconnected world.

The Relationship Ecosystem is a way of thinking about who you are dependent on for your success—your boss, team, peers, industry experts, and so on—and how you would describe the health of your relationship.

The Ally Mindset connects to your personal values. It connects to your personal brand. And it connects deeply to your emotions. Developing your Ally Mindset is what moves your focus from me to we.

## The Ally Mindset: We're All #BetterTogether

The Ally Mindset is all about forging the human connection, and it is the first step in building stronger relationships on the job by creating allies—people whom you can count on, whom you can depend on, who care about you, and who trust you.

The Ally Mindset propels us forward. It aligns with our personal values. It allows us to be at our best when circumstances or others might be encouraging us to be at our worst. And when we're at our best, we help others to be at their best.

The Ally Mindset is an intentional, conscious choice to be proactive and thoughtful in your relationships rather than reactive and defensive in your interactions. Taking on a proactive Ally Mindset requires self-awareness. The Ally Mindset also requires letting go of what you think others should do.

When you adopt the Ally Mindset and build a strong network of best friends at work, you'll do more than build your relationships, you'll create the conditions necessary for the three Cs to take root and flourish: Community because success is a team sport; Commitment as you prepare to take on your greatest goals; Connection when you realize you'll never have to feel alone at work again.

The five practices of the Ally Mindset provide a framework for intentional choices in all your relationships: abundance and generosity, connection and compassion, courage and vulnerability, candor and debate, action and accountability.

## Abundance and Generosity: Be the Flame That Lights Another's Candle

Abundance and generosity are all about working with others, and they are the first step in moving from a me-first to a we-first orientation. An Ally Mindset begins with holding a perspective of abundance: you believe there's plenty of success to go around and that collaborating for the success of others in your workplace and network will create more success for everyone.

When you have an abundance mindset, you feel that there is plenty to share with others, whether it's time, money, people, information, expertise, or any number of other valuable things in a particular situation or environment.

Generosity is related to abundance but distinctly different. It's giving to others freely without expectation of getting anything back in return or keeping count.

Generosity doesn't only come in the form of money; it comes from sharing your knowledge and experiences, coaching and mentoring others. It also comes from being generous with your time. When you give generously to someone, it expands generosity in your team, in your community, and in the world in a circular way.

## Connection and Compassion: Empathy Rules!

Connection and compassion are built in everyday interactions, through recognition and acknowledgment, when we feel that we are seen, that our voices are heard, and that our opinions matter. At its very essence, connection is all about the relationships you build with others. Connection is undeniably important, but like many other things in work and life, it's not the quantity of connections you make that will ultimately have the greatest impact; it's the quality of them.

When we talk about connection, we also need to talk about compassion. Compassion is the authentic desire to help others and to have a positive impact. When we have a mindset of abundance and generosity, we feel more compassion toward others. Compassion is also what you show when others build connection by sharing their emotions—their fear and anxiety, as well as their joy and excitement—and you respond in kind, without judgment.

Connection and compassion strengthen your professional ties and lend you the courage to remove your professional mask and share what is really going on for you. Connection and compassion create the psychological safety and inclusion necessary to get the very best from your people—and to give your very best to others.

## Courage and Vulnerability: When You Let Your Guard Down, the Magic Happens

The key to developing an Ally Mindset is having the willingness and ability to reveal ourselves completely to others. It requires having the courage to admit to our shortcomings and mistakes and to be open to honest and candid feedback. It also requires demonstrating vulnerability—owning up to our fears or concerns, asking others for help, and acting on that help when it is provided.

While some think that vulnerability is a weakness, it's really a strength that can help us build relationships with others.

Courage and vulnerability are inextricably linked. Courage is having the conviction to be true to yourself. When we're vulnerable, we show the world that we aren't always right, that sometimes we don't know what we're doing, that occasionally we're out of control and need help. To work, vulnerability must be honest and sincere.

## Candor and Debate: Stop Dancing with the Elephant in the Room

Candor is expressing your point of view in a way that increases learning and shared understanding, and it also means seeking out opportunities to both give and receive tough feedback. Debate is the willingness to take a stand and then explore it in discussions with others—perhaps passionately, but always respectfully. An effective debate also taps into your active listening skills.

Candor is choosing to speak up despite the risk you may feel. It is also choosing to keep quiet because you recognize that whatever you've got on your mind won't ultimately serve the situation or the relationship. One way for leaders to create a culture where candor rules is to explicitly encourage and reward the behavior.

Debate is when we engage in a back-and-forth conversation with one or more people. There are two parts to the debate equation. The first part is hearing it: are you willing to actively listen to what others have to say and are you curious enough to engage in a back-and-forth conversation that will help you choose a new path forward? The second part is exploring it: taking the time to consider the pros and cons of the various options and then deciding to act.

Engaging in healthy candor and debate means people don't always agree. When you're trying to encourage people to speak with candor and to engage in healthy debate—without holding back or hiding out—you've got to create an environment positively dripping with psychological safety.

## Action and Accountability: It's All Wishes, Ponies, and Unicorns Until the Money's in the Bank

Action is doing something, and in the context of the Ally Mindset, it is reactive in nature. It's doing what you say you're going to do when you say you'll do it. Accountability is proactively looking out for the needs of others. This is the

capstone piece of the Ally Mindset model.

Action is moving forward, accomplishing your goals. Action is about applying uncommon discipline and keeping commitments on your team, while accountability is going the extra step—recognizing a coaching moment, pausing, and doing the right thing instead of the simple or fast thing.

It's not just about your actions; accountability is also about how you do those actions. Accountability is proactively looking out for opportunities to serve and support others. Accountability is also ensuring that you serve and support your own needs and goals. Ultimately, the practice of action and accountability builds trust.

## From Adversary to Ally: Even Darth Vader Left the Dark Side

When your words and actions don't align, it damages your reputation and your career. And if you're in a leadership role, this gap could also be hurting your company.

We judge ourselves by our intent because we know what we mean, what we're trying to accomplish, and what we're capable of. But everyone else judges us by how what we do lands—and we them. Saying one thing but feeling another has a huge influence on the quality of our working relationships because we write stories about each other. And we don't talk about it.

To mind the gap, you must be conscious of the gap—the difference between people's stories, including your own, and reality. Think about these gaps and talk them through with others around you. It's essential when you're deciding what needs to be done about an individual relationship.

Repairing a damaged relationship, or your reputation, starts with giving up something of value rather than asking for something of value from others. If you don't give first, then you are simply conducting a transaction. Apologize not only to the recipient of your less-than-stellar performance but also to innocent bystanders, those who witnessed the outburst or were impacted in the ripple effect of your behavior.

## Trust: The Secret Sauce to Friendships at Work

There's one more thing that must be in place for the Ally Mindset to work. Trust is a bridge of connection we build with someone else that says, "I believe you; I can rely on you; I feel safe with you."

The Ally Mindset enables you to move from the me-first to the we-first perspective that maximizes your potential to be and have allies. These two elements of trust work together in balance, providing the tasty secret sauce you need to be an ally to those around you. But there's one more level of trust that many often forget. In addition to trust (or a lack thereof) in others, there is trust (or a lack thereof) in yourself. And like the trust you have with others, this, too, is in a constant state of flux, a constant state of change.

The point is, you can up how competent and trustworthy people perceive you as by dialing into your relationships with the people who work for and with you. As we discussed earlier, building trust in an organization depends on employees feeling psychologically safe. Remember, relationships are built or destroyed one conversation at a time, one action (or lack of action) at a time. Trust is both art and science in action.

## Conclusion: Always Do Your Best

As we strive to always do our best, we should do everything we can to help our colleagues, clients, friends, family, and others do their best too. It's about connecting, making someone's day a little bit better. It's about the human touch. In a world with so much disconnection, all of us need that touch, whether it's in-person or virtual.

People crave connection, people need connection; it's built deep into our DNA. But we're so busy running on our hamster wheels we forget to reach out. Relationships are made or broken one conversation at a time. We have a choice to enter into relationships one thought at a time. And those thoughts happen every day.

Look up. What do you want others to feel in your presence? How do you feel in your own presence? Show up. Are you intentional about how you show up? Who do you need to connect with? Step up. There is no try, only do. And do your best. Always.



**Morag Barrett,** CEO of SkyeTeam, is an accomplished keynote speaker, leadership development expert, and Dr. Marshall Goldsmith Top 100 Coach who has supported more than 15,000 leaders.

**Eric Spencer,** COO for SkyeTeam, has more than 20 years of experience building and shaping human resources organizations, and delivering HR and leadership development programs.

**Ruby Vesely,** CSO for SkyeTeam, is a sought-out executive coach, and savvy leadership development expert with over 20 years of experience in a variety of industries and organizations.

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