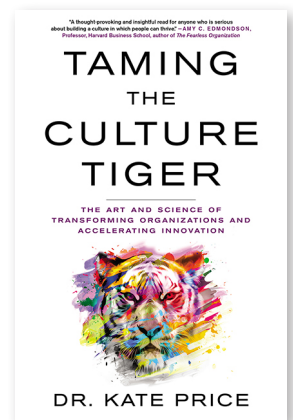


Taming the Culture Tiger

The Art and Science of Transforming Organizations and Accelerating Innovation

by **Kate Price**



Contents

Introduction

Page 2

Part One: Culture and the Challenges of Transformation

Page 2

Part Two: Expectations and the Elements of Successful Innovation Cultures

Page 3

Part Three: Preparing for Cultural Change

Page 3

Conclusion

Page 4

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 be 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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