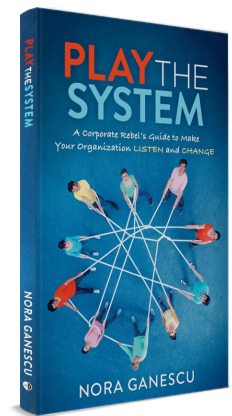


Play the System

A Corporate Rebel's Guide to Make Your Organization Listen and Change

by **Nora Ganescu**



Contents

The Life-Changing
“System”

Page 2

The Jedi Art of
Summoning “The Force”

Page 3

Wisdom Circle: Sponsorship,
Mentorship, and Resources

Page 3

Tell Your Story; Change
the Culture

Page 4

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Plenty of people dream of becoming entrepreneurs, but what about the aspiring intrapreneurs—the people who want to be creative, innovative, and game-changing in the context of their existing organizations and careers?

Play the System was written for these potential innovators, and was developed by career coach and innovation expert, Nora Ganescu. In this book summary, we'll outline some of the standout insights and identify how intrapreneurs can create the space for their inspired ideas to grow within their teams and organizations.

From tips for how to foster support for ideas to inspiring messages about staying true to the things you value most, there's something for everyone who wants to play their role more effectively—and redefine that role for the better of their career and their organization. In the end, you'll be more equipped to create spectacular innovation right from within your role in a company—and find yourself on a trajectory to increased career opportunities and chances to excel.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to summon “The Force,” the power and strength within each of us that can push us to innovate and excel.
- How to surround yourself with a supportive team and quietly build something game-changing.
- How to develop your idea on the fly and improve it until it sparkles with potential.

The Life-Draining “System”

Many of Nora’s clients are people who bring talent, cool ideas, and insights to the table (and they are great fun, too). Above all, they care. It matters to them, as it matters to you, what kind of organizations they are working for and how those organizations function. They want to take pride in their workplace, and they want to be able to give their best to their colleagues and the people they serve through their work. They’re engaged.

Often, they have great ideas for change and innovation: how to make the organization better for employees, eliminate waste, and serve clients better. They know how to achieve the goals of the organization better and care about its mission.

However, many companies treat engagement of their employees like some elusive Holy Grail that’s nearly impossible to achieve and must be carefully measured and managed. So how come engaged and committed people are having experiences every day that drain the life and excitement out of them.

Good news—you have more resources than you think. You have your skills, your talent, and your energy. You have an important role to play, an amazing contribution to make, and your energy and creativity would be a terrible thing to waste. But on your journey to be successful, you have to unlock some treasures, resources, and superpowers. The key is to find and unlock those treasures to make your adventure easier—and a lot more fun.

Nora’s Story

The author, Nora Ganescu, found herself hitting wall after wall in her quest to make meaningful contributions to her work. As time passed, she became more skillful at navigating those situations and realized some projects were dearer to her heart than others. She quickly became suspicious of any organization where employees had no voice or where change from the inside was not possible.

Now, she coaches her clients to identify the areas in their lives and careers where they can put themselves in the best possible position to excel within the existing system— and change the system in order to better improve their situation. Some of those clients have a very specific purpose; they seek to realize a specific dream, a specific project, an innovation, or a better way of doing things. They’re ambitious, but not for titles or climbing the corporate ladder.

One common theme within her clients’ success stories is that they’re not always obvious. They go beyond somebody performing their tasks well. These are examples of people who had an idea that went beyond their job description and their formal power in the company: their idea presented challenges, sometimes to the narrow way of doing things in one particular project, and sometimes to the fundamental way the company was seeking to achieve its goals.

The people who succeed need special equipment. They need protective gear, and some metaphorical high-energy astronaut food to keep them going. They need good tools to cut through weeds, a good compass, and a good set of communication tools.

We are living in times where we can’t afford to silence our collective problem-solving skills, constructive ideas, and any type of contributions that bring more life and joy. So, let’s not.

Roadmap

‘Intrapreneurship’ is the act of behaving like an entrepreneur while working within a large organization. The first and most important step is to become the person who can actually lead this process of transformation within a company. It’s easy to have an opinion and stand in opposition—but to take the lead, recognizing the power you already have, is much more difficult.

Meanwhile, it’s important to realize that finding and building a team to amplify your effort and impact is absolutely essential. The team will be the cradle of lasting change that you are envisioning.

You’ll need to build your movement by starting conversations with like-minded individuals, then gain sponsorship by bringing key, influential people onboard. Once they’ve offered their support, you’ll need to keep them onboard.

Next, you need to prototype your new approach, process, project, or product. You can’t assume to have it right from the beginning. Once you begin to iterate and improve your game-changing approach, you can start changing the organizational story to create something truly original.

In the coming sections of this summary, we’ll discuss each of these steps in more detail when it comes to approach and methodology. You’ll find useful ideas and perspectives, even if you don’t follow the steps in a particular order. They’re designed to work independently and provide power for your journey. At the end of the day, you yourself are the biggest

asset you have—and if you're not careful, you could be the biggest roadblock for your own success when it comes to pursuing your vision and achieving your goals.

The Jedi Art of Summoning “The Force”

Beyond luck and circumstance, we've seen quiet, unassuming people pull off amazing, transformational success in small and big organizations—sometimes even transforming oppressive political systems. What distinguishes them is indeed a level of personal development: they have mastered the art of knowing themselves and have arrived at a place of inner confidence and quiet courage of their convictions that is the source of their power and their strength.

They know how to summon ‘The Force,’ an inner power that's capable of changing the world around them. This is not some elite talent, granted as a birth-right to a select few. This is a set of practices that we can all do ourselves. In the words of writer, Will Durant, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

Taking responsibility, tackling your limiting beliefs, and building up your sense of confidence and power is an ongoing practice. We often make the mistake of going straight out into the world before we're ready to drive our ideas to success. If you're making the internal work an integral part of the work you have to do, you will have the energy and the resilience to make a success of it.

Your Start-Up Team

We're familiar with the pop-culture image of a hero, the savior who single-handedly solves problems, wins battles, leads companies and nations to success and basically does it all. It's the idea of a rock star entrepreneur who will bootstrap their idea and then take it to dazzling success—a myth of the lonely and brilliant leader.

This myth is outdated in most circumstances, but especially when it comes to trying to achieve success in the complex and fraught environment of a company. It's a misleading and disempowering notion, and it's time to get rid of it.

Your chances of success are significantly higher if you don't go it alone. To build support for your vision, you have to have trusted colleagues. A transformational, innovative project like yours requires collective leadership, not an individual. That does not diminish your leadership one bit, but adds strength, vitality, and traction to your work.

Successful intrapreneurs often launch and try-out innovation without much fanfare, following the Nike motto: Just do it! Only when they gathered enough evidence and ‘grassroots’ support did they start to look for official recognition of what they were doing. Being ‘in the shadows’ allowed them much freedom for conversation and real creativity among their trusted circle, before bursting out with something powerful and innovative to show the world.

Building a Movement

Initiatives and ideas come and go in all organizations. Every day, people come up with solutions, brainstorm ideas, consult and propose new approaches, and lay new tracks for the future. What's the difference between the ideas that stick and the ones that are never pursued or are abandoned early? It's certainly not how good they are, as the value of many of them cannot be known in advance. What gives some ideas advantage over others is the support they get from the people who matter, the people in the organization—the leadership and stakeholders.

If they identify with an idea or a proposal, it will have a far better chance of being seriously explored, considered, funded, and pursued. As an intrapreneur, especially one that proposes innovative thinking, your path to success will not be the one of the lonely hero whose contribution and ideas will be embraced because they are so brilliant. Rather, if you really want to turn your ideas into realities you will need to create a movement inside your organization, and possibly outside, that champions them. This chapter is about how you can do that.

Wisdom Circle: Sponsorship, Mentorship, and Resources

The more transformational your vision, the more resistance it is likely to encounter. New thinking and new proposals always elicit resistance, even if they make a lot of sense, because they might mean changing the way people work and the traditional authority lines within an organization. Lateral thinking can be perceived as threatening to the established authority, and your early success can create a backlash.

You want to have support from some people in the higher hierarchy who can provide legitimacy to your request, support, and even protection if necessary—and people who can help get you the resources you need when you take your project to the next level. Not only that, but just like experienced investors, these people can provide you with a different and

valuable perspective on the company and experience and contribute to the work just as anybody would do.

Prototype

Many established companies have created a culture of risk reduction and intolerance to the unknown, or to making mistakes. Yet innovation is, by definition, the act of creating something new, and the expectation that you have to get it right and have all the answers from the beginning is not only unrealistic—it's damaging.

If you start from a position of not much power and no mandate, you might feel the pressure to have all the answers and present the perfect solution right from the beginning. But don't give into this thought—it's a dangerous and limiting belief.

Starting early and starting small, making most of the mistakes early, and learning how to mitigate them incorporating feedback from early users and practitioners is actually the least risky strategy with the highest chance of success.

Tell Your Story; Change the Culture

Some organizations are like tribes or villages, and some of them are like big cities. There are many people living there, and they have clear rules about how things work. They also have a predominant overview that will codify a lot of what is possible or likely, even if it's not written down in detail anywhere. This is the organizational culture (or worldview), a set of stories and beliefs. If you found it hard to pursue your passion and innovation, it probably was because 'things work differently around here,' or 'we don't do things that way.'

You have to shape the narrative of your organization's culture, so that your initiative and other innovations have the fertile space they need to be embraced. Ultimately, this will decide the long-term viability of the change that you are seeking. Determining whether something should be done or not is not an exact science—it becomes reality because enough people in the organization believe in an idea. So ask yourself—what is the story that you want to see alive in your system and organization? What possible story of values, if it were to be believed and adopted by most people, would be nourishing and life-giving to everyone? What story of courage do you want your organization to tell?



Nora Ganescu is a coach, consultant, and trainer. Her work is helping companies maximize their impact and become amazing workplaces. Nora started her professional journey 25 years ago as a youth activist for intercultural understanding in post-communist Romania, and she has been dedicated to building bridges between people ever since. In Nora's work, she combines personal development tools, spiritual nourishment from ancient wisdom schools, and insights gleaned from some of the most forward looking and successful companies in the world.

Play the System: A Corporate Rebel's Guide to Make Your Organization Listen and Change by Nora Ganescu. © 2020 Nora Ganescu. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Morgan James Publishing. 134 pages, ISBN 978-1642795585 Summary copyright ©2020 by Soundview Book Summaries®