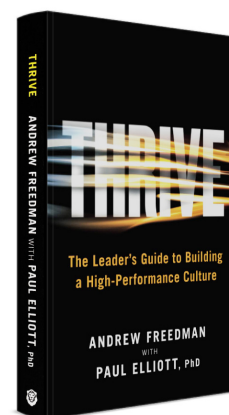


# Thrive

The Leader's Guide to Building a High Performance Culture

by **Andrew Freedman with Paul Elliott, Ph.D.**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Thrive* encourages you, as a business leader, that it is possible to create a culture where people are excited to go to work every day because they are inspired and fired up about the mission of the company, excited about their role, and supported by a team that is aligned around the vision and mission. However, too often the opposite happens instead, and workers are disengaged, appearing as either sleepwalkers or saboteurs in your organization each day. Research shows that a full 70% of workers are disengaged. *Thrive* is your blueprint for creating a culture of high engagement and high performance.

Author Andrew Freedman began to work with Paul Elliott, Ph.D., collaborating on strategic initiatives with clients to help them apply the high-performance principles and practices that facilitated growth and business impact. *Thrive* is the result of this client work, now packaged for others to use to impact their business. *Thrive* provides you with a replicable, scalable model to achieve levels of success that you didn't believe possible—for your organization, your people, and your customers.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What the top influencers of a successful organization are.
- How and why to start with your vision and mission.
- Why clear role expectations are so important for employees.
- How to implement the Role Excellence Profile (REP) process.

## Introduction

Thrive is your blueprint for creating a culture of high engagement and high performance. The tool I use to help business leaders improve their business culture was developed by my co-author, Paul, and is known as the Exemplary Performance System (EPS). There are six influences addressed by EPS:

- Environments, Systems, and Resources
- Expectations and Feedback
- Rewards, Recognition, and Consequences
- Capacity and Job Fit
- Skills and Knowledge
- Motivation and Preferences

## Define Success

Most workers start each day with their tasks for the day in mind but may lose the connection between the mission and vision of the company and how their tasks fit in to that larger purpose. The Shift model takes the opposite approach, a “right to left” process, and begins with defining success, then moves to determine outputs of value, then to analyze tasks, and determine influences. So, always start with mission, vision, values, goals, and corresponding metrics.

Creating a thriving enterprise requires employees to understand how their contributions, results, and accomplishments link to the organization and its strategic intent. Without knowing the value of their performance or their role, employees have an isolated, fractured, and often uninspired view of their work.

When leaders effectively link goals and metrics throughout the organization, it sets the stage for heightened employee engagement and for the organizational influences of the EPS to come into alignment. Making this one change facilitates significant performance acceleration through individual and organizational clarity about the impact created by what each person does and how they do it.

Aligning an employee’s role with the goals of the company ideally begins before she officially joins the team. Hiring managers can (and should) provide a realistic role preview during the interview process. Such a preview is designed to highlight the areas that most often attract and retain the right people as well as those aspects of the role that may cause them to fail or leave.

A realistic role preview reduces the likelihood of post-hire surprises. It helps a candidate understand the role and corresponding tasks and responsibilities and provides context for how the role fits into the big picture. Metrics for the job should be made clear. The candidate needs to fully understand that what she does makes a difference and that her job has an impact when it comes to achieving company goals.

Impact cuts both ways. Candidates should also understand the effects of producing substandard results. Performing poorly in their role will have some type of consequence for the enterprise. The consequence could show up as a financial loss for the company, an inconvenience to a customer, or a negative impact on a department goal. Each employee must have clarity with respect to the impact of their performance.

## Organizational Influences

Organizational Influences introduces you to three key influences and related factors from EPS that inhibit or foster success:

- Environments, Systems, and Resources
- Expectations and Feedback
- Rewards, Recognition, and Consequences.

For organizations to thrive, their people need to thrive.

Systems design and integration should start with the vision and strategy of the company, establishing clarity and helping to maintain alignment among the top layers of leadership. Leaders then can effectively align the three influences and keep them in sync directly and, ultimately, through everyone else throughout the organization.

This cascade of influence and accountability is driven by the behavior modeled by senior leadership for the divisional, departmental, team, and individual levels. Beyond modeling, there is the activation of a culture of inquiry in which regular probing occurs on processes like feedback and compensation.

An employee must understand expectations and how he fits into the broader work system. A well-aligned organization consistently provides clear overall expectations and consistent and meaningful feedback for all levels of employees—from executives to those on the front line. Expectations align with company goals, and feedback is specific. Goal setting, check-ins, mile markers, and one-on-ones occur in a steady, constant stream. Comprehensive performance reviews are held annually.

There are various career advancement options. Opportunities are shared and explored regularly. Turn work environments into ecosystems that enable and encourage their people to work in ways that produce better business results. New hires should feel inspired by their company's vision, understand the expectations for their roles, and receive ongoing feedback about how they're doing in the frame of those expectations. High-performing employees need to have the necessary resources, processes, and tools available to support them.

When individual contributors, line managers, and directors are able to see how the pieces of the puzzle fit together, the magic of high performance is enabled. Cross-departmental understanding of how one person's work relates to another's creates a camaraderie and cohesion that supports better outcomes and better experiences. Whenever and wherever behavior consistent with the expressed preferences of the company occurs, recognition by direct supervisors and others, through appropriate rewards, earns more of the same and better from its people. To create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts where those parts don't compete but complement one another is the outcome goal of a thriving, well-aligned organization.

### Individual Performance

For an organization and its employees to thrive, there must be alignment of the three individual influences from EPS:

- Capacity and Job Fit
- Skills and Knowledge
- Motivation and Preferences

Competencies are not the only factors that shape success, and the employee's level of talent does not guarantee performance excellence. The three individual influences reflect the totality of an individual, and none outweighs the others—they must all fit together in a harmonic mosaic.

### Analyze “Star” Employees

We use a tool at SHIFT called the Role Excellence Profile (REP). The REP is a powerful, outcomes-based approach designed to shift the performance in the majority of your workforce to higher levels of contribution that are significantly more profitable. The Role Excellence approach focuses on identifying what makes your top performers tick and what they actually do to be so effective. These insights are then laid out in a performance map that is used to guide

others to replicate those behaviors. Through interview, observation, and case-based analysis, exemplary performers reveal what is needed to accelerate the performance of the entire organization.

The Role Excellence Profile (REP) process provides greater role clarity for individual contributors and teams, identify best practices, and uncover barriers to high performance. Creating clarity around what excellent performance looks like and using that new standard as the design point for recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, coaching, performance management, and career mobility can have a significant impact on your organization's top- and bottom-line business results.

### Amplify and Accelerate Impact and Results

Trust is one of the greatest accelerators of organizational performance, and lack of trust is one of the greatest decelerators. Inherently, people know this, yet many leaders fail to build this critical element into the fabric of the organization successfully. The truth is, you can build trust in small ways right now, from having regular one on ones with employees to writing handwritten thank-you notes.

You accelerate your organization impact when you do two things: create a vision and bringing the entire organization into the planning process how to carry it out. Organizational momentum comes to a halt when employees can't see how their role fits in with the strategy—distance and disconnection create disengagement and, ultimately, diminished performance. I instead want to help you operate with clarity and transparency, measuring what matters most and putting your people in a position to move your organization forward.

### Independent Strategy

Leaders need high levels of discipline and a rigorous approach to follow-through and execution. New initiatives will not deliver the intended benefits with a fractional focus or effort. Leaders must set the example of full commitment to an execution and implementation effort that delivers the intended business outcomes. Without accountability for results, roles, teams, and organizations underperform. In either case, the EPS model can bring to light the most direct ways to shift performance.

We have found that creating rituals, routines, and rhythms are the practical ways that organizations connect and engage with one another. Leaders also need to work on transparency and that includes being honest about difficulties. The wisdom

of knowing when to slow down for a time so you can speed up later is at the heart of shifting performance.

## Resistance and Resilience

It is hard to successfully land business transformation and change efforts. In order to bridge the gap between strategy and execution, leaders need to understand that providing steadfast leadership amidst chaos, clarity and certainty during times of great ambiguity, and fortitude when it would be easier to relent and retreat are defining characteristics that form the foundation of a high-performance culture.

We love to talk about The Achievement Model as our growth process. It starts with Mindset first, the why we do what we do. That is followed by Process next, the how are we going to get there question. Last is the what, the results, that so often others put as highest importance. Results are never as high unless you have down the shared vision and mindset and processes developed how to get there.

Two characteristics you must develop are the ability to mitigate resistance and build resilience. To help you in your endeavors, we strongly recommend that you have people in your life who can, among other things, tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear, and get you to see points of view and possibilities that you may not have otherwise been able to see. These people can be mentors, peers, or friends, but you've got to have folks who can play these roles for you if you are really going to be the leader of a thriving organization.

## Conclusion

If you want things to be different—if you are really ready

to commit to elevating performance and business results in a sustainable way—you must take ownership of the change you need to see. You get what you tolerate. The success—or lack thereof—in your business and your life is mostly within your control.

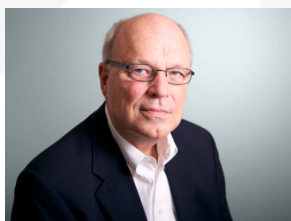
Leading your people past their current plateaus will not be easy. In fact, it will be painful, risky, and met with resistance. That doesn't matter, because you know you can be more, do more, and give more. Every successful person has a mental model for accomplishment. The intent of this book is to help you develop your own.

*Thrive* provides you with a replicable, scalable model to achieve levels of success that you didn't believe possible—for your organization, your people, and your customers.

The world needs you to take the next step. Put your new ideas and knowledge into purposeful, consistent action. “Good” results put you out of business. “Great” results keep you in the middle of the pack. Organizations that THRIVE set new standards for business.



**Andrew Freedman** is a lifelong advocate for maximizing human potential and creating positive change. For over 25 years, he's been a driving force in designing strategies that provide leaders with a foundation to translate individual, team, and organizational talent into tangible business growth.



**Paul Elliott** is President, Founder, and Chief Performance Architect at Exemplary Performance LLC. Paul leverages his experience with Fortune 500 organizations to help clients achieve exceptional results by optimizing the performance of teams and individuals.

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