

#CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

TWEET

**Business Advice on
Agility and Communication
Across Cultures**

MELISSA LAMSON

BOOK 01

A THiNKaha® BOOK

#CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION **tweet**
Book01

Business Advice on Agility and Communication Across Cultures

Book Excerpt

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Section I: Cultural Transformation: How It Works



Section I

Cultural Transformation: How It Works

The United States plays a huge role in the future of our global economic survival and given the recent upheaval in our economy, companies need to be thinking in terms of an overhaul in the way they do business today. It's not enough to *change*, we need a complete *transformation*; therefore, I believe Cultural Transformation is the answer. Transforming our approach to business is our only hope of nurturing our global economy and coming out ahead of the game.

5

Transformation can occur when we look at it holistically, considering individual, national, and organizational cultures.

6

Research has proven that job satisfaction is significantly linked to being treated as a unique individual with value to contribute.

7

Part of the problem is language. The term “corporate culture” is business-speak—it’s cerebral, not emotional.

8

Change happens regularly, whereas transformation is a single act of overhaul.

9

In order for people to buy in, they need to be reassured that what they know and love about a corporate culture won't change.

10

Often, Cultural Transformation isn't what's needed or wanted, but a change in behaviors whilst maintaining existing culture is.

11

Cultural Transformation happens when fear and duress pressure an organization and shakes it to its core.

Section II: Developing Cultural Agility: The Key to Transformation



Section II

Developing Cultural Agility: The Key to Transformation

The word “agile” or “agility” is tossed around when organizations, teams, and leaders see the need for a rapid and fresh response to changing market demands. To become agile is to be able to react quickly in completely new ways. We need to be flexible, responsive, and adaptive to compete with the changing needs of the world economy. In today’s global business climate, it’s the only way an organization, or for that matter, an individual, will excel. Cultural agility is the key to Cultural Transformation.

29

Companies can be more flexible and adaptable with processes and procedures based on their corporate culture.

30

Reflection is good, but sometimes it's important to stop thinking and talking.
Just do it.

31

Appreciation needs to be given to employees, customers, and partners—they must extend to the way we treat our community and families.

32

Companies can foster agility in a team by leveraging individual behaviors and honoring the unique attributes of each contributor.

33

A successful organization in today's business world must be flexible and able to adapt very quickly to the pace of technology.

34

The multitude of
communication options
available to customers makes
them accessible to sellers
around the clock.

Section III: The Role of a Leader in Cultural Transformation



Section III

The Role of a Leader in Cultural Transformation

The presence of a committed leader is ultimately the only chance an organization has to successfully transform itself. Yet, it isn't a leader's sole responsibility to make decisions regarding how to move forward—he or she must have a cohesive team at the upper management level. The leader's role is to confer, collaborate, ask, listen, and discover what is best needed to overhaul technology, processes, or product lines. But most of all, they need the sensitivity and awareness to know what their people need to engage in the transformation journey.

57

A company can only change its culture if senior leaders are of one heart, one mind, and one voice.

58

A CEO must become very aware of the influence of their own personality in allowing (or not allowing) Cultural Transformation to happen.

59

Leaders should take
an interest in their
organizational culture and
influence it to get their
strategies aligned and
processes implemented.

60

Corporate culture is maintained independently of new people brought into the organization, and this maintenance starts at the top.

61

If you want the CEO to “buy” corporate culture change, try putting it in plainer, more gut-connected language.

62

CEOs need to look at their organization with a critical eye. Sometimes “I don’t know” is the most powerful statement a leader can make.

63

New cultures are born with leadership commitment—they know themselves, understand the other, and are able to adapt to another’s style.

Section IV: Transforming Our Communication Across Cultures



Section IV

Transforming Our Communication Across Cultures

Every culture will have a different priority when determining how decisions are made; what the market needs or wants; and an approach to sales, marketing, development, hiring, and managing employees. If we don't take the time to understand those diverse perspectives, we'll miss the boat in truly being a global organization. A 2010 study by Hay Group¹ found that the top 20 most successful companies in the world devoted more than double the amount of resources to cultural awareness programs than those companies who were not on that list. Strive to be one of the most successful companies by treating cross cultural communication as an essential business competency.

1. Hay Group, "Taking a new direction: Summary of the 2010 Best Companies for Leadership study" (white paper), *Hay Group*, 2010, www.haygroup.com/BestCompaniesForLeadership/downloads/Taking_a_new_direction_2010_BCL_Summary.pdf.
<http://bit.ly/haygrouppdf>

83

Cultural communication
should strike a balance
between recognizing strength
and breeding complacency
(i.e. resting on one's laurels).

84

It's rare someone goes to work thinking, "I want everyone to suffer today." Most people's intentions are good even if the impact is bad.

85

Hold regular teleconferences (take into consideration respective time zones) to review progress, issues, next steps, and help needed.

86

Assign local champions of change
around the world at all levels.

87

Understanding another's culture starts
with being aware of your own. This
influences how far you are willing to
open up.

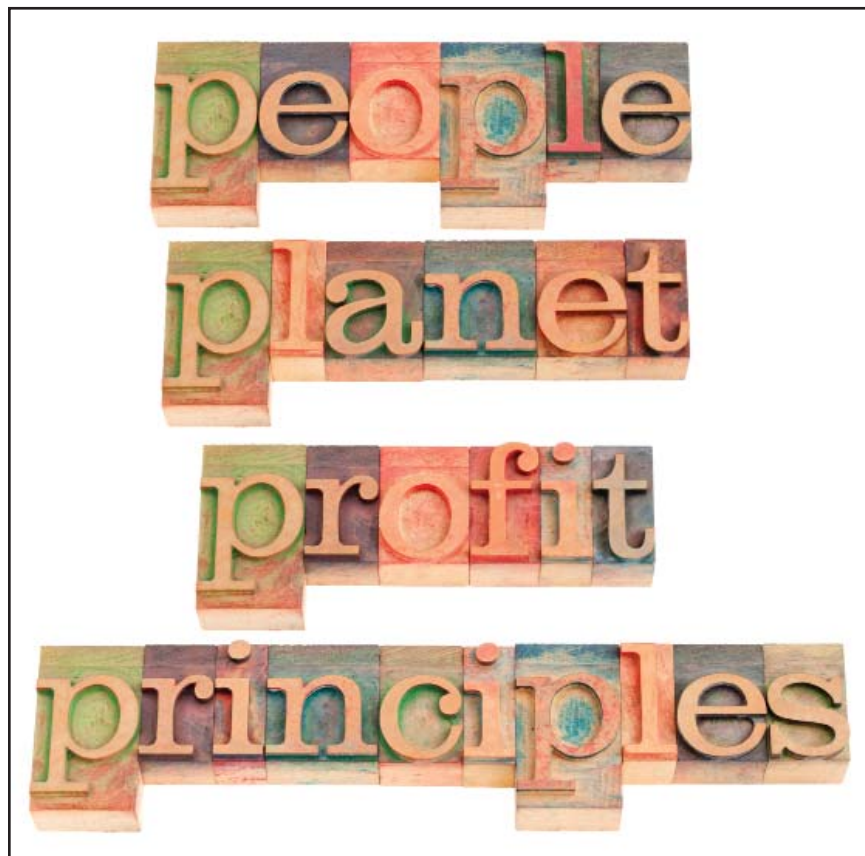
88

Have all employees take a “Doing Business in X” class, taught by a reputable firm that provides personal insight and business guidance.

89

Individuals in a corporation need to learn to adapt their communication styles across country locations and global cultures.

Section V: Sustaining Cultural Transformation



Section V

Sustaining Cultural Transformation

Now that we've done it, how do we make it stick? It's not enough to overhaul our approach, we need to establish patterns and systems—new ways of doing things—which become ingrained in the DNA of an organization. Research has shown that new behaviors “force” attitudinal change. If the goal is to truly make change last in our companies, we need to repeat new behaviors until our brains have decided they're good for us!

116

International business is about continually separating the people from the problem.

117

To reinforce local engagement, conduct face-to-face kickoffs and quarterly reviews with headquarter representatives in regional countries.

118

Listen to regional input and ensure follow-up and closure to issues and actions.

119

For change to be sustainable, behaviors must be modeled by the business leaders and continually practiced by everyone in the organization.

127

Continually re-design the physical workspace to ensure new energy, innovative ideas, and a fresh approach.

128

Ask for feedback, create space for honest conversations, and be aware that your presence influences how others communicate.

About the Author



Melissa Lamson is a pioneer in the fields of Cultural Transformation and global business development. As a Cultural Transformation expert, she has developed a proprietary methodology called Agility, Communication and Transformation, or ACT™. ACT helps organizations around the globe create the common values, business practices, and behaviors that are hallmarks of productive and innovative company cultures.

Melissa is the author of the book, *No Such Thing as Small Talk: 7 Keys to Understanding German Business Culture*, published in November 2010. She has authored books and articles on cross cultural communication, global talent management, global expansion, and managing cultural diversity worldwide.

Melissa has lived in France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, and the United States. In 2008, she was named one of the top 25 female entrepreneurs in Europe and received an award for her work in Cultural Diversity from the German Ministry of Cultural Affairs. She is regularly invited to speak about Cultural Transformation to corporations and also teaches courses for executive MBA programs globally. Melissa holds an M.A. in Intercultural Relations from Lesley University, Cambridge, MA. She is fluent in English and German and is conversational in French and Spanish.

To find out how Melissa can help transform your company culture to achieve greater productivity and innovation, contact her at: melissa.lamson@lamsonconsulting.com.

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TWEET BOOK 01

Transform the Way You Work Across Cultures Globally

"Transformation from a 'culture of training' into a 'culture of learning' is critical for organizations wanting to maintain an edge in today's agile and rapidly changing business world. Transforming into a culture that is one of continual learning is the most effective way to facilitate change, maintain engagement, and drive productivity. In her book, #CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION tweet, Melissa advocates for listening to and incorporating employee and customer viewpoints for a holistic approach to creating an optimal learning organization. I would highly recommend any individual responsible for change or transformation management to read the nuggets of wisdom she shares with us."

David Alper, Global Sales Learning & Development Manager, Yahoo! Inc.

"Business leaders today are most concerned with their people developing global mindsets. Melissa shares invaluable insights into cross-cultural communication and cultural agility, two skills critically needed to secure any organization's global presence. I would highly recommend anyone working globally to keep a copy of #CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION tweet on their desk."

Larry Anderson, Senior Managing Consultant, IBM

"Melissa articulates innovative principles she has collected from discussions with seasoned business leaders and from her own experiences. #CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION tweet is filled with nuggets of wisdom on how leaders can optimize their organizational cultures to meet the demands of global business; a wonderful book to reference time and again."

Hillary Barnhart, Senior Director Business Operations, Applied Materials

"#CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION tweet is unique in that it clearly bridges processes and technology with the people who use them. Cultural transformation can only occur when people in organizations (employees, managers, leaders, customers, and suppliers) come together with a set of values and operate from a place of excitement and engagement around common goals and objectives. Melissa presents us with invaluable, bite-sized pieces of advice which support success and profitability."

Lauren Larson Diehl, Senior Director, Oracle Global Customer Management



A pioneer in the field of cultural transformation, **Melissa Lamson** shares cutting-edge advice on change processes for today's global enterprise.

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