

Wiley CIO Series



# Transforming IT Culture

How to use Social Intelligence, Human Factors, and Collaboration to Create an **IT Department that Outperforms**

Frank Wander

# Contents

[Cover](#)

[Contents](#)

[Series Page](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The Passing of an Era](#)

[A New Era Brings a New Focus](#)

[A Quick Book Tour](#)

[Note](#)

[Chapter 1: A Shining Light: The Blind Spot Revealed](#)

[A Race to the Bottom](#)

[Human Understanding Enters the Workplace](#)

[We Have Been Taught Not to See or Feel](#)

[Unlocking Human Potential](#)

[Dawn of a New Productivity Model](#)

[Working Social](#)

[The Social System Is the Factory](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 2: Corporate America's IT Organization: Failure Is All Too Common](#)

[Still Broken after All These Years . . .](#)

[Unfortunately, the Truth Is Worse](#)

[If We Would Just Embrace and Trust Our People . . .](#)  
[Offshore Outsourcing: A Deeper Look](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 3: Workers as Machines: A Social Pathology](#)

[He's a Good Hand](#)

[The Machine Age: Still Felt Today](#)

[Birth of Corporate Easter Islands](#)

[Our Human Resource Practices Remain Primitive](#)

[Selectively Continue the Past; Fully Embrace the Future](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 4: The Unseen Art and Emotion of IT: The Acme Inc. Philharmonic Orchestra: Knowledge as Notes, Leaders as Conductors, Programmers as Composers](#)

[A Product of Mind and Emotion](#)

[Limitations of Language and Our Resultant Inability to Communicate](#)

[Social Cohesion and Conceptual Unity](#)

[And the Instruments Keep Changing](#)

[The Encore. A Callback. Bravo!](#)

[Note](#)

[Chapter 5: Case Study: An Unproductive State of Mind: Toxic Leadership and Its Aftermath](#)

[Toxic to Competitive Advantage](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Note](#)

[Chapter 6: What Are We Waiting For? Applied Science at Work](#)

[Hawthorne Studies](#)

[Pygmalion in the Classroom](#)

[Empathy, Caring, and Compassion](#)  
[Organizational Citizenship Behavior](#)

[Mood Is Contagious](#)

[Limbic System](#)

[Maslow: Humanism in the Workplace](#)

[Working Memory](#)

[Mirror Neurons](#)

[Other Thoughts](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 7: Empathy and Compassion: The Socially Cohesive and Resilient Organization](#)

[The Toxic Handler: Empathy and Compassion in Action](#)

[Dysfunctional Organizations Have Less Time for Compassion](#)

[Empathy and Compassion: A Research Perspective](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 8: Designing a Collaborative Social System: Working Social: How the Right Culture Unlocks Productivity](#)

[Designing Collaborative Social Systems](#)

[Why a Collaborative Social System Matters](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 9: The Social Compact: Organizational Citizenship Behavior](#)

[Living the Values](#)

[Shaping IT: One Interaction at a Time](#)

[Courtesy Is Contagious](#)

[Giving versus Getting](#)

[Citizenship Performance](#)

## Notes

### Chapter 10: The Servant Leader: Prosocial and Authentic

Opening Night

Using Social Intelligence and Caring to Lead from Below

Conducting Styles

Servant Leadership in IT: Giving Credit While Silently Helping Drive Group Success

Academic Views

Moving the Group from “I Get It” to “I See It”

## Notes

### Chapter 11: Social and Emotional Intelligence: The Organizational Canvas Meets the Social Paintbrush

Personal and Social Competence

Sogence in Action

Understanding Expression: A Social Skill from Our Past

Good Vibrations: The Right Social Sentiment Energizes a Performance

## Notes

### Chapter 12: Designing an Innovative Culture

Talent and Mood

The Human Factors

Build a Culture of Creativity

### Chapter 13: Workforce Planning: Maximizing the Productivity of Your Talent—Today and Tomorrow

Workforce Planning Gap

Goals and Process

Context Diagram

[Outsourcing and Offshoring](#)

[Notes](#)

[Chapter 14: How to Successfully Transform Your Organization: Putting It All Together](#)

[High-Level Outline](#)

[Best Practices in Detail](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[About The Author](#)

[Index](#)

[End User License Agreement](#)

## List of Tables

Chapter 2: Corporate America's IT Organization: Failure Is All Too Common

[Table 2.1 Classic Silver Bullets](#)

Chapter 9: The Social Compact: Organizational Citizenship Behavior

[Table 9.1 Revised Taxonomy of Citizenship Performance](#)

## List of Illustrations

Introduction

[Figure I.1 Two Eras in Contrast](#)

Chapter 2: Corporate America's IT Organization: Failure Is All Too Common

[Figure 2.1 Project Success Rates: Customer Perception](#)

Chapter 3: Workers as Machines: A Social Pathology

[Figure 3.1 Easter Island: The Beatings Won't Stop until Morale Improves \(Clichés Reflect Deeply Held Beliefs\)](#)

Chapter 4: The Unseen Art and Emotion of IT: The Acme Inc. Philharmonic Orchestra: Knowledge as Notes, Leaders as Conductors, Programmers as Composers

[Figure 4.1 Transition between Eras](#)

[Figure 4.2 Creative Roles Masked by Traditional Job Titles](#)

Chapter 6: What Are We Waiting For? Applied Science at Work

[Figure 6.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)

[Figure 6.2 Hierarchy of Productivity Needs](#)

Chapter 13: Workforce Planning: Maximizing the Productivity of Your Talent—Today and Tomorrow

[Figure 13.1 Talent Cycle](#)

[Figure 13.2 Workforce Planning Process](#)

[Figure 13.3 Workforce Planning Cycle](#)

[Figure 13.4 Time to Competency](#)

[Figure 13.5 Model for High Productivity](#)

Chapter 14: How to Successfully Transform Your Organization: Putting It All Together

[Figure 14.1 Federated IT: CIO Matrix](#)

[Figure 14.2 Project Collaboration by Design](#)

[Figure 14.3 Service Relationships](#)

[Figure 14.4 Strategy Phasing: Conceptual Model](#)

[Figure 14.5 Best Practices in Context](#)

[Figure 14.6 IT Governance Structure](#)

## WILEY CIO SERIES

Founded in 1807, John Wiley & Sons is the oldest independent publishing company in the United States. With offices in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, Wiley is globally committed to developing and marketing print and electronic products and services for our customers' professional and personal knowledge and understanding.

The Wiley CIO series provides information, tools, and insights to IT executives and managers. The products in this series cover a wide range of topics that supply strategic and implementation guidance on the latest technology trends, leadership, and emerging best practices.

Titles in the Wiley CIO series include:

*The Agile Architecture Revolution: How Cloud Computing, REST-Based SOA, and Mobile Computing Are Changing Enterprise IT* by Jason Bloomberg

*Big Data, Big Analytics: Emerging Business Intelligence and Analytic Trends for Today's Businesses* by Michele Chambers, Ambiga Dhiraj, and Michael Minelli

*The Chief Information Officer's Body of Knowledge: People, Process, and Technology* by Dean Lane

*CIO Best Practices: Enabling Strategic Value with Information Technology* by Joe Stenzel, Randy Betancourt, Gary Cokins, Alyssa Farrell, Bill Flemming, Michael H. Hugos, Jonathan Hujsak, and Karl D. Schubert

*The CIO Playbook: Strategies and Best Practices for IT Leaders to Deliver Value* by Nicholas R. Colisto



*Enterprise IT Strategy, + Website: An Executive Guide for Generating Optimal ROI from Critical IT Investments* by Gregory J. Fell

*Executive's Guide to Virtual Worlds: How Avatars Are Transforming Your Business and Your Brand* by Lonnie Benson

*Innovating for Growth and Value: How CIOs Lead Continuous Transformation in the Modern Enterprise* by Hunter Muller

*IT Leadership Manual: Roadmap to Becoming a Trusted Business Partner* by Alan R. Guibord

*Managing Electronic Records: Methods, Best Practices, and Technologies* by Robert F. Smallwood

*On Top of the Cloud: How CIOs Leverage New Technologies to Drive Change and Build Value Across the Enterprise* by Hunter Muller

*Straight to the Top: CIO Leadership in a Mobile, Social, and Cloud-based (Second Edition)* by Gregory S. Smith

*Strategic IT: Best Practices for IT Managers and Executives* by Arthur M. Langer

*Strategic IT Management: Transforming Business in Turbulent Times* by Robert J. Benson

*Transforming IT Culture: How to Use Social Intelligence, Human Factors and Collaboration to Create an IT Department That Outperforms* by Frank Wander

*Unleashing the Power of IT: Bringing People, Business, and Technology Together* by Dan Roberts

*The U.S. Technology Skills Gap: What Every Technology Executive Must Know to Save America's Future* by Gary Beach

# **TRANSFORMING IT CULTURE**

**HOW TO USE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE,  
HUMAN FACTORS, AND  
COLLABORATION TO CREATE AN IT  
DEPARTMENT THAT OUTPERFORMS**

Frank Wander



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Cover image: © draco77/iStockphoto

Cover design: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright © 2013 by Frank Wander. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the Web at [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com). Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:** While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:***

Wander, Frank, 1957-

Transforming it culture : how to use social intelligence, human factors, and collaboration to create an IT department that outperforms / Frank Wander.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-118-43653-0 (cloth); ISBN 978-1-118-57308-2 (ebk);

ISBN 978-1-118-57310-5 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-57549-9 (ebk)

1. Information technology—Management. 2. Electronic data processing departments—Management. I. Title.

HD30.2.W3477 2013

004.068—dc23

2012045107

The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

**—William James**

Dedicated to the Corporate Weaver: To those great and selfless leaders who unfashionably rely on sensitivity and outflowing concern to bond with their people; who peer deeply inside them with perceptive social intelligence (sogence); who understand that the social environment is their loom and their professionals are threads of experience; who weave these threads, one to another, forming a closely connected tapestry of mind and emotion, highly productive and deeply collaborative. Done skillfully, the result is pure harmony—information and productivity flow across the fibers. This is human social fabric, the material of modern productivity—the postindustrial equivalent of an assembly line. In this factory, what matters most are not the cost and quantity of thread but the quality—and whether each thread can be tightly woven into the section of the tapestry where it is needed.

This book uses the information technology (IT) profession as a lens through which we can see the importance of understanding the human factors of productivity and how to use them to unlock IT organizational effectiveness; this is how you make IT failure a rare exception, greatly increasing the success of projects, individuals, and teams; this is how you create an IT department that outperforms and companies that outcompete. Our workers are more than mere “human resources,” a dehumanizing description of talent that just reinforces the notion that professionals are interchangeable parts. They aren’t—and they never were! The next productivity revolution will be launched by applying human understanding to unlock the full potential

of our people. At long last, we will move beyond our industrial-era management practices and rely on trust, caring, and unselfishness to liberate the productivity of our knowledge workers.

The companies that leverage human understanding to embrace their people will own the future. The need is yesterday; the time is now.

# FOREWORD

Frank Wander's book, *Transforming IT Culture*, is being published at a time when the role of the chief information officer (CIO) and information technology (IT) departments are being reevaluated by chief executive officers. Wander rightfully warns IT management that they have become too dependent on process-based solutions and need to rely more on the "human factors" to improve IT results. Indeed, we have become a society that believes that business problems can be solved through integrated processes, yet everything we have learned from research at Columbia University suggests that it is the human side—those "soft skills"—that are the real difference makers for success.

At Columbia, we have a master's degree program in IT executive management that has relationships with over 125 of the most successful CIOs in the industry. These CIOs mentor and coach our students in hopes that they can help them become tomorrow's IT leaders. Our program focuses more on the soft skills portion—those very things that Frank Wander emphasizes in his book: being caring, social, unlocking the potential of staff, transforming ideas into realities, establishing social networks inside your organization, to name just a few of his strategies. Wander has been a mentor in our program at Columbia and has been instrumental in helping us deliver an important message to our students: Reliance on process only will not be enough for the successful CIO of the future.

My research has rendered remarkable consistency in the ways senior CIOs defined their successes.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, these CIO *attributes*, as I call them, comprise mostly of the human factors highlighted in Wander's book.

Unfortunately, these soft skills are usually not the focus of many up-and-coming IT managers.

My new book with Wiley due to be published in early 2013, *Strategic IT: Best Practices for IT Managers and Executives*, coauthored with my colleague Lyle Yorks, divides these CIO human factor skills into two categories: personal attributes and organizational philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

Yorks and I define the term *personal attributes* as 11 individual traits that appear to be keys for IT leadership. Furthermore, we relate 12 organization philosophy issues that CIOs feel are critical to the way the IT organization should operate with the business.

The results of our research are clear. Most of what brings IT success relates more to the issues articulated in *Transforming IT Culture*, that is, social intelligence, human factors, and collaboration. While so many CIOs agree with this approach, few have been able to do it successfully. We still see many CIOs with a “short shelf life” in their position—only 39 months. Yet we also see that there are CIOs that have crossed that milestone and are bringing real value to their firms. Certainly, Frank Wander’s book represents what this new breed of business CIOs need to do to change the ways IT is integrated into the business world.

Dr. Arthur M. Langer  
Academic Director, Executive Masters of Science in  
Technology Management, Columbia University,  
Faculties: Graduate School of Business, Graduate School of  
Education, School of Continuing Education

## Notes

- [1.](#) A. M. Langer, *Information Technology and Organizational Learning: Managing Behavioral Change Through*



Technology and Education (New York: CRC Press, 2011).

- [2.](#) A.M. Langer and L. Yorks, Strategic IT: Best Practices for IT Managers and Executives (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, forthcoming).

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a book is a significant undertaking, one even bigger than I imagined when I decided to finish *Transforming IT Culture*, given that I had started this manuscript way back in 2004. Along the way, I have had encouragement from many folks who worked for me, all of whom thought a book on the human factors of productivity was more necessary than ever. I am thankful to all of them for their support.

As I look back over this journey, many, many people come to mind. Speaking with others has enriched my knowledge and led me to great books and information sources, and their probing questions sharpened my understanding. That said, a few folks need to be specifically mentioned.

Dan Roberts, president of Ouellette & Associates Consulting, Inc., has been a great help, encouraging me to finish my book and referring me to my acquisitions editor at John Wiley & Sons. He will always stand out as someone truly genuine, who is also thoughtfully focused on the human side of IT.

Dr. Arthur Langer of Columbia University, who wrote the Foreword to this book, stands out as an individual who is making a difference in so many people's lives. Aside from being a brilliant educator, he has been both a friend and mentor. Through his nonprofit, Workforce Opportunity Services, Art provides scholarships to bright, disadvantaged kids who are in danger of being left behind; he helps them get a degree in computer science and a career in IT by placing them in corporations hungry for entry-level professionals. Art understands talent and the importance of growing it. He is truly leading the way and is a great example of the power of caring.

I would also like to thank the many professionals at Wiley who provided great support, structure, and guidance as we worked together on this book. Wiley is an excellent company that has been wonderful to collaborate with, and I would never have been able to produce a book of this quality without the help and guidance of its staff. I am proud to be a member of the Wiley family.

Most important, I would like to thank my wife, Laura, and my three sons, Alex, Chris, and Kevin, who have put up with me sitting at a computer for long hours as I researched, wrote, and reviewed each chapter. They have been a great help, reviewing content, suggesting improvements, and remaining tireless cheerleaders. I am very proud of each of them and will surely engage them in my next book.

# Introduction

We fear to know the fearsome and unsavory aspects of ourselves, but we fear even more to know the godlike in ourselves.

**—Abraham Maslow**

Welcome to a future where professionals count and leaders have the tools and knowledge to unlock the full potential of their talent; where companies are as concerned about their human infrastructure as they are about their networks, storage, and computers; where human understanding is seen as highly productive, and human-centric practices have replaced the selfish, cold, industrial methods that now dominate traditional corporate America. That day now dawns. The pendulum of caring is starting to swing back, and its movement will produce winners and losers. How will things turn out for you?

This book will give you an awareness of the human factors of productivity, enabling you to unlock hidden pockets of personal and group effectiveness, thereby ensuring you are positioned for long-term success. Your outcome does not have to be in doubt. This is a meaningful read, and the first steps in your journey toward a higher level of performance. Enjoy it.

So, how do I know the pendulum is moving? Some things in life are just accidental. As an information technology (IT) leader, I was always very good at strategy, process, and technology, but I also cared deeply about my people and fought to create high-performing cultures where each of them really did count; they repaid the caring with on-time projects, great solutions, deep collaboration, positive social

chemistry, and organizational effectiveness. The bargain was unwritten but very clear.

Because of my track record of timely delivery and innovation, I was given the opportunity to turn around departments that were struggling or deeply in trouble. Soon I was fortunate enough to lead turnarounds across companies, and it was then that a pattern emerged: The root cause of failure was the toxic behavior and practices of management itself. These behaviors and practices were not isolated to a company or even an industry—they were part of business. Serendipitously, I had come to see that caring had high productive value, and it was a blind spot. Fortunately, this blind spot has been illuminated, and the pendulum of caring is in motion, even if it isn't yet visible to you. Higher productivity leads to increased returns on human capital and competitive advantage. The companies that embrace their workers will win; the dinosaurs will fade away.

Once I understood the root cause, I was left wondering why caring is so productive. I wasn't able to explain why, so I was moved to dig deeply into academic research and write this book. *Transforming IT Culture* reveals why caring, unselfishness, and human-centric management practices are the key to unlocking knowledge worker productivity, and why increased human understanding remains an enormous opportunity for traditional corporate America and its workers.

## **The Passing of an Era**

When breakthroughs are made, change comes quickly. Case in point: the suitcase. Putting wheels on a suitcase is such an obvious innovation, one wonders how it could have been overlooked for so long. This improvement required no complex engineering and no leading-edge materials, yet

everyone missed it. Quite simply, we were trained to accept suitcases and trunks without wheels, so everyone did—for hundreds of years! But once a better alternative appeared, suitcases without wheels disappeared quickly.

Now for something equally obvious that leaders in corporate America do not yet see: the well-documented human factors of mind and emotion. These offer far more productivity potential than the practices we currently embrace. Once this breakthrough is understood, work will change very quickly. We just have to reach the tipping point.

You see, while every era is built on an explosion of understanding, every era gives something while it takes something else away. In the industrial era, we learned to mass-produce goods and held in awe the great machines that turned raw materials into finished products. Unfortunately, craftsmen, the “machines” of the prior era, were dehumanized, becoming nothing more than good hands, mere interchangeable parts, spawning a union movement that won back a measure of self-esteem and control.

Today we have transitioned into the information economy, and a new type of craftsman has appeared: the knowledge worker. Almost unnoticed, craftspeople have returned, toiling in modern information factories, where they utilize the raw materials of a new era: concepts. By applying networks of minds and emotions, concepts are turned into reality; here deep institutional experience and advanced technical knowledge are a competitive advantage; here human understanding is a lever of productivity; here management remains largely blind to this unfolding reality.

In a stark departure with the past, a socially intelligent and unselfish leadership paradigm will fill the cold vacuum of

insensitivity that is part of our industrial heritage. Our factories will buzz with the notion of socially derived productivity, and managers will focus on designing social environments that unlock human output—in addition to managing and controlling the workers. We will learn new forms of measurement that combine both art and science, so that we can peer inside these social systems and see if they are operating effectively.

Refreshingly, we have entered a time that relies on networks of people as the means of production, not machines and process (not to say they won't be very important). As this era evolves, harmony and happiness will increase, and the economic environment will become inhospitable to the cold and socially insensitive giants of the passing era. They will transform themselves or migrate to foreign environs, where an unchanged economic environment can supply their commodity labor.

Clearly, large shifts such as this happen slowly. The industrial revolution that began in the early 1700s is bleeding into the information economy that began in 1945. Like a ship traveling from the ocean to an inland waterway, we are now passing through the brackish delta, where the water transitions from cold, to cool, and then gradually becomes warm and fresh. We eagerly journey toward the warm water, where we will stop, revitalize ourselves, and relax within the security of a caring social environment that is safe and highly productive.

The U.S. economy is already far into this delta, where our past and future are bleeding together. Research-based human understanding has been building during our journey, and it is this knowledge that will propel us along the remainder of this journey. By embracing and applying what is already known, we will finally recognize the insensitive management practices of the industrial era for

what they are—a human social pathology embedded within our management culture that is a legacy of the past. Patterns of behavioral transmission like this are technically classified as memes: “a cultural unit (an idea or value or pattern of behavior) that is passed from one generation to another by non-genetic means (as by imitation); memes are the cultural counterpart of genes.”<sup>1</sup> Passively, as managers train their successors, they add a new link to corporate America’s pathological chain of inheritance.

With this insight as a backdrop, we can clearly see that the root cause of our repeated failure on large, collaborative IT projects is our ignorance of the human factors of productivity. [Figure I.1](#) juxtaposes our unemotional, cold industrial past and our future, warmed by human understanding.



**[Figure I.1](#)** Two Eras in Contrast



## A New Era Brings a New Focus

In this new era, it is clear that social intelligence, trust, and unselfishness are indispensable management tools that enable a leader to energize a human web and make it highly productive. Executives who can do this will rise in importance as corporate America realizes that each web is a *social system—and the social system is the factory*. Science has brought an explosion of human understanding. This era will provide the insights necessary to build highly collaborative and productive social systems. As understanding grows, the inhumanity of the prior era will fade away. It is a win-win model, unlocking potential by blending the findings of modern science with age-old wisdom:

Even in such technical lines as engineering, about 15% of one's financial success is due to one's technical knowledge, *and about 85% is due to skill in human engineering, to personality and the ability to lead people.* (emphasis added)

**—Dale Carnegie**

Fortunately, we have been putting many building blocks in place. Diversity was a training ground that increased our awareness and sensitivity to others. Now we must add a new dimension to our interpersonal understanding by becoming aware of the social, cognitive, and emotional aspects of human collaboration. This growth in our human understanding will become a competitive advantage, as we leverage social intelligence to unleash strengths in others. Although the transition will be difficult, it will be far more difficult for countries deeply tied to the industrial mind-set where workers are just another type of machine—keep it running, and if it breaks down, discard it and get a new

one. We are many steps ahead on the pathway to human-centric practices.

As in all changes, this transformation will require understanding, trust, and conviction. We must, therefore, move forward with confidence, recognizing that the emerging environment is hospitable and will sustain us until we reach a much better place. As Buckminster Fuller once said, “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” That is where we are today, in the *transition zone*: a place where a socially intelligent, servant leadership paradigm will finally begin to reproduce itself. We must work collectively to make sure the new model is seen, understood, and embraced—a set of memes that inaugurates a new enlightenment.

As is well known, cultural change is a complex, time-consuming undertaking. But here there is good news: Changing the focus from self to others is very powerful indeed.

Self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection—or compassionate action.

**—Daniel Goleman**

Leading companies like Google understand that the only shortcut is talent, and they have therefore embraced and nurtured a creative and motivated workforce. Clearly, the winners of this unfolding era will be led by servants who understand how to unlock human potential. Satisfyingly, this understanding will rehumanize the workforce,

launching productivity revolutions within corporations that shun selfishness and short-term thinking; those that refuse to embrace their professionals will compete in a race to the bottom.

To fuel this revolution, an explosion of human understanding has arrived on cue. Brain science has revealed how the human mind works, and decades of scientific research has shown how we think and feel. Winning companies will design collaborative cultures where prosocial and caring behaviors give way to positive social chemistry. Here the minds and emotions of the workers will literally flourish, unlocking desperately needed innovation. The hands no longer matter; instead, we will learn to cultivate work environments where the collective state of mind is productive. Nothing is more important.

# A Quick Book Tour

[Chapter 1](#), “A Shining Light: The Blind Spot Revealed,” shows that an inflection point has truly arrived. Peter Drucker said the management challenge of the twenty-first century would be to increase the productivity of knowledge work and knowledge workers. In my years of leading turnaround transformations of failed and/or failing information technology (IT) organizations, the author saw how they shared frightful, dark climates where the energy was consumed by protective behaviors, not productive work. We have so much to learn. Using the analogy of robots in a factory, the chapter shows how dysfunctional our management practices are, with our in-depth knowledge of technology and so little knowledge of our most expensive and important tools: our people. It introduces the need for servant leadership practices, unselfishness, and prosocial behaviors focused on the needs of others, and the importance of relegating toxic leadership practices to the past because they destroy the return on human capital.

[Chapter 2](#), “Corporate America’s IT Organization: Failure Is All Too Common,” examines the history of corporate IT failure. Decades of IT project failure and underperformance are reviewed to underscore the fact that this is a long-standing problem. In fact, when compared to how much the performance of our technology (computers, storage, etc.) has increased during this same time period, we are left to wonder: How did one improve so much, while the other so little? Sixty years into the information era, IT remains a marriage of necessity, not love, in traditional corporate America. Failures are worse than publicly admitted, and, when one looks closely, we see these failures are a failure of management, not the IT organizations. If management would just embrace its people, instead of external experts

and silver bullets, IT would perform well. Management can turn around troubled organizations by acquiring, growing, and retaining talent, and relying on human factors like, trust, meaningful teamwork, and real cross-functional collaboration to create reliable execution and project delivery. A quick review of the silver bullets shows that the solution to IT failure will be found by applying human-centric practices and understanding within the corporation.

[Chapter 3](#), “Man as Machine: A Social Pathology,” examines the root cause of persistent IT failure. A trip back to the industrial era reveals a mind-set that turned craftsmen into machines, where organizations became devoid of emotion, corporate Easter Islands whose workers stare blankly into space. The management ethos that created these cold, industrial settings flowed into our present era, so the blank stares remain, and through the blank stares we find a root cause: antisocial, selfish behaviors create environments that are toxic to cognitive productivity, where the human infrastructure literally shuts down, causing labor burn rates and costs to explode as productivity plummets. It is a paradox, but it is real. Our human resource practices remain primitive but, as clearly shown, they perpetuate themselves, awaiting a movement outside the corporation to ignite the flames of productive change.

In [Chapter 4](#), “The Unseen Art and Emotion of IT: The Acme Inc. Philharmonic Orchestra: Knowledge as Notes, Leaders as Conductors, Programmers as Composers,” we take a detailed look at the hidden inner world of IT projects, where mind and emotion are the tools of a conceptual and emotional reality shared by artistic co-creators who have to deeply collaborate to turn concepts into reality. It is within this inner realm of the mind where alignment—conceptual unity—is found, but only if there is a high degree of social cohesion to facilitate the unfettered exchange of information. Here we examine how the

process-based models and controls of the industrial factory are inadequate, because people-based potential can be unlocked only by leveraging the human factors to animate the workers. Using music as a metaphor, we see how composers (programmers) use a variety of instruments (programming and design tools) to create unique works (solutions); here we begin to look at the challenges of leading the IT orchestra, where the business cannot see the hidden inner reality, where the instruments keep changing, where hyperspecialization is the norm, and where human-centric practices are the unused levers of an unfolding era. When professionals are treated as mere parts, the financial impact is dramatic.

This is clearly shown in [Chapter 5](#), “Case Study: An Unproductive State of Mind: Toxic Leadership and Its Aftermath.” Because every software development project creates unique output, we have not been able to measure the productivity impact of different management practices. Finding a case study that looks at toxic leadership and its aftermath was a challenge, but the author did uncover one. IT is all about working social, so here we see how socially corrosive behaviors impede the complex human collaboration required to build a solution and the bottom-line impact such toxicity creates. Failure is a distinctly human drama, and in this case study, an unsuspecting group of professionals quickly go from celebrating success to sharing an unfolding disaster. The casualties are real; the names have been changed to protect the guilty.

[Chapter 6](#), “What Are We Waiting For? Applied Science at Work,” provides an academic research window through which the human factors of productivity are visible. Beginning with the Hawthorne experiments and culminating with research into neuroscience, we take a tour that shows how a leader can employ the human factors to unlock the productivity of any organization and how an