

# THE ThinkersBooks *Summaries*



Hi! I'm Robert N. Jacobs – father, husband, author, wannabe philosopher, wannabe many things, deep thinker, and big dreamer. Welcome to Thinkers Books, a space where you can read a summary of a selection of non-fiction books on topics across business, psychology, self-help, and success. How are these books selected? Well, not every book will make it onto the list, but those that do are chosen because of the positive impact they have and their potential to help create a better future for both businesses and individuals. The objective of each summary is to highlight some of the key learnings from the book and, if the message resonates with you, to spark curiosity for deeper digging. A link to purchase the book is provided at the end of each summary.

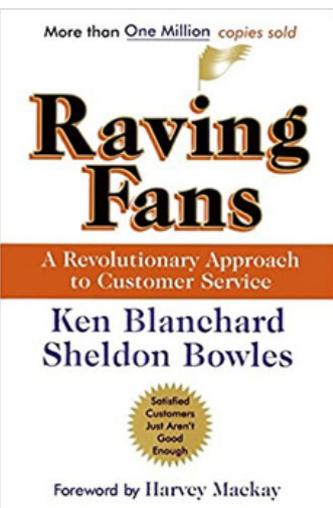
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## Scaling Culture

Ron Lovett (2022)

**T**he author's main message in this book is that culture is present in every company, and as it's at an organisation's core, it's not something that can be left to chance. He raises the point that it's often given little thought, but it's a company's culture that helps to ensure its success and longevity, therefore it needs to be intentional, and it should also be scalable.

Using his own experiences, he demonstrates the value of culture in an organisation, giving the reader actionable steps that can be taken to help align every employee and stakeholder into a results-driven team, and thereby create a thriving company.



## How to Build and Sustain a Resilient, High-Performing Organisation..

According to the author, culture in an organisation is critical in creating a resilient and high-performing organisation. He states that for this reason, any organisation looking to scale the company must also scale the culture. To do so, the stakeholders need to be passionate, because passionate stakeholders bring their A-game to the table, and they express their loyalty to the organisation at every opportunity. He explains that a company's cumulative personality can be defined by its corporate culture, which is also its foundation in terms of behaviours

that are acceptable to drive business results but point out that many leaders don't know how to embrace culture in a way that works in their favour. Instead, they leave it to chance, creating an unstable, volatile, and unpredictable environment; something he confesses to doing himself when he first started out. He writes: In the beginning, I didn't think much about corporate culture – only considered it a distraction from real business. Having several remote offices, I centred my focus primarily on the people directly in front of me, policing their actions and not paying any mind to the other offices' behaviours or expectations. It wasn't until I visited these remote offices that I realized ignoring the corporate culture of all the offices across the board was a mistake. Without a clear definition, behavioural guidelines, and expectations, I had allowed every location to have a different culture – which was not conducive to the organization's success.

### Core Values.

Whether intentional or not, every organisation has a culture. The author states that culture is either a product of design or default.

## My Top 3 Takes from the Summary

- Culture in an organisation is critical in creating a resilient and high-performing organisation.
- In an ideal world, a team's behaviours will be guided by core values, and those values will stem from the organisation's culture.
- Culture is not something that can instantly be activated company-wide, not without a nurturing drive behind it.

When it's by default, there are often competing cultures within an organisation that can create aggressive, risky environments. By comparison, when it's by design, it creates an environment of harmony, with everyone in the organisation on the same page.

In an ideal world, a team's behaviours will be guided by core values, and those values will stem from the organisation's culture. This needs to happen by design if a business is to grow, and everyone needs to abide by the organisational values if it's to succeed. Speaking from his own experience of allowing a different culture to develop in each location, all of this needs to be planned if a business is to continue succeeding, even when you're not there watching over it.

*'Your core values are what drive your team's accountability and allow you to praise or coach them according to a very clear set of standards.'*

He writes: In order to get in line with what it takes for a cohesive culture, it requires core values to be implemented. These values are the words and clarifying language that describes behaviours and expectations for your team. Your core values are what drive your team's accountability and allow you to praise or coach them according to a very clear set of standards. One of the best exercises you can do with your employees is creating a company eulogy – what would someone say about your organization (especially ex-customers and former employees)? Use this to help shape and develop the core values you want to be instilled in your business and employees.

Before I was a believer in culture, my company was in a bad place; upon reflection, so was I. After reading Nuts! By Jackie and Kevin Freiberg, I learned how

Herb Kelleher at Southwest Airlines created a culture that his whole staff was in alignment with. I was so intrigued by the story that I even approached a Southwest Airlines employee and asked how they liked their job – it rocked me when he said it was the best company on the planet to work for. This encounter boosted my spirits that maybe culture was not nonsense after all.

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## Cultural Alignment

The author comments that getting everyone on the same page and aligned in your company's culture is a hard task to accomplish, but adds that as you evolve in your understanding of cultural alignment, you will realise that you have to make big changes. He writes: There is a need for clear and direct communication – transparency that requires strategic input from everyone involved.

There are three things that you must communicate with every person in your organization:

1. Your Core Values
2. Your Purpose
3. Your “BHAG” – big, hairy, audacious goal.

Alignment happens on several different levels – ranging from individual to global levels. The goal is to create transparency on all the levels necessary to achieve the alignment you require in your culture.

Accomplishing anything with culture in your organization requires you to take the first step and build a relationship with your people. Much like your culture is the foundation of your company, your relationships with your employees are the core of accomplishing anything in your organization.

In *Unleashed*, Frances Frei outlines a beautiful process for building trust. She says that everyone has one of three areas where they struggle (wobble) with trust-building, including authenticity, logic, and empathy. If you take a look at yourself and your relationships with your team, where do they find you wobbly? There are some obstacles when approaching trust – interruption, speaking too quickly, humour and jokes, dismissing, rescuing, and asking the wrong questions. Remember – everything you do in dealing with another person will either bring you closer together or create distance between you. You can strengthen your team by using a format centred on intention, outcome, and experience.

## Making Change Happen.

The author writes: If, at first, you don't succeed (I didn't), try again. The first time I tried to roll out the values in our company, it was a total disaster. Part of the initial rollout included a checklist of our core values to go over during the onboarding process – it lacked the “experience” necessary to make the culture a reality. As a leader, you have to address everyone at once when you want to implement something new. Everyone needs to be on the same page, and they need to know that you are behind the words you are saying.

*'Accomplishing anything with culture in your organization requires you to take the first step and build a relationship with your people.'*

If you are introducing your core values as you mean it, your employees are going to feel more empowered to do the same. Leaders have to take charge – talk is great, but the action has to be equally visible. Your team's most powerful motivation is when they see your own transformation and enforcement of the culture. Identify and deploy culture champions to be involved in the bigger picture and help identify the next leaders.

Although I love change, there is a pain in change management. There are always ways to change and improve things – keeping with the mindset “if it ain't broke, don't fix it” is only a path that will lead you nowhere.

Change this adage to “even if it isn’t broken, break it apart, and put it back together better than you found it” and tackle the entire idea.

As a leader, you need to decide when change needs to happen. Once you decide, present why it needs to happen and begin working on it from the ground up. You can build change into your values and implement them throughout your whole organization. Use your A.B.C’s – “always be changing.” Change will become a force that empowers your people to grow and be empowered.

*'You can build change into your values and implement them throughout your whole organization.'*

## **Culture-Based Onboarding.**

In terms of “trying again” with the onboarding process, the author writes: Core values are something that cannot be force-fed during the onboarding process. Culture is not something that can instantly be activated company-wide, not without a nurturing drive behind it. Just because someone is a great hire on paper doesn’t mean that they will instantaneously fall in stride with the culture you have cultivated within your business.

Shifting to a culture-based screening of employees can help ensure that those you onboard are more in line with the company’s current culture.

Something to consider when promoting your job vacancies is The Employee Value Proposition. The Employee Value Proposition puts you in the shoes of the potential candidate with the question – “What’s in it for me (the candidate)?” You can use this model to think about what might be more important for your candidate beyond the salary requirements. This is your opportunity to stand out to the best client and reflect on what your company offers to the potential clients you interview.

Consider the three levels of employees that create your environment:

- 1.A-Players – Your passionate shareholders – those who see the company’s purpose from 10,000 feet away and understand where your organization is headed and how their roles function inside of it.
- 2.B-Players – These players understand the company’s purpose, values, and goals and work toward them intelligently. These employees are resourceful enough to overcome obstacles in their roles and bring creative thinking and innovation to the job. Not everyone was made to be an A-Player, but the B-Players should not be underestimated.
- 3.C-Players – Those who fall into the C-Player category require direction on what to do and when to do it. That stays the same no matter how well aligned the company is, and ideally, you have to screen out these players or manage them out if they already exist – they do not function with autonomy.

Even though there is diversity, it doesn't equal inclusion. It is part of it, but if you only focus on that, it won't get you all the way there. You have to foster it by including safety and trust, building up listening skills, increasing vulnerability and empathy, and also creating a space with no judgment.

The author also provides strategies for building team relationships. He writes: When a team is a top performer, it can be a life-changing experience. This only works when the team works together – they have to put the team's success ahead of their own desires to shine or dominate others. There is a unification within their purposes. The creation of peer forums creates a bond among team members. The benefits of these forums include relationship building, revealing gaps in team systems, raising issues quickly, creating trust and belonging, saving time, identifying your company's future leaders, finding internal experts, transferring information, and fostering inclusivity.

## The Bottom Line.

The final advice offered by the author is to keep looking for ways to nurture a culture of success. He writes: No matter how far you have come in creating the cohesive culture you want in your organization, it is important to remember not to stop because you are comfortable. Always look for ways to change things, improve them, and more. Your organization will thrive in this type of culture, especially if you want to implement strategies and techniques that build the warm, authentic relationships you need and the ability to coach the people in your life when you want to succeed. The bottom line – just don't stop.

## Conclusion.

In the pages of this book, the author provides readers with the key components needed to create a successful organisation that lasts. Aimed at founders, CEOs, and organisational leaders, he gives strategies designed to bring company values to life, manage change, operate as a team, and build the warm, authentic relationships needed to succeed.

*'...keep looking for ways to nurture a culture of success.'*

## Highlights.

The author's personal experience of scaling culture in an organisation gives the book a behind-the-scenes perspective that takes the reader way beyond theories and case studies. His advice and strategies are based on real experience in the real world.

## Bio of Author.

Ron Lovett is an entrepreneur, globally recognised author, speaker, and corporate culture thought leader who is passionate about change. His unorthodox leadership style is characterised by going back to the drawing board, disrupting the status quo, and acting swiftly on new information.

Scaling Culture: How to Build and Sustain a Resilient, High-Performing Organization by Ron Lovett, 2022, ISBN: 978-1-544-52855-7 is available to buy at Amazon.

# Thank you for reading!

Socrates once said - *"The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing"*.

Just perhaps; after reading this summary, you now know a little more than before.

**ROBERT N. JACOBS**

*Robert Jacobs*  
Curious By Design



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