BUILDING A WINNING CULTURE IN GOVERNMENT

A BLUEPRINT FOR DELIVERING SUCCESS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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We help organizations achieve results that require a change in human behavior. Our expertise is in seven areas: Leadership, Execution, Productivity, Trust, Sales Performance, Customer Loyalty, and Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Peter Drucker famously said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” In doing so, he identified a phenomenon that leaders have struggled with throughout history: \textit{It is one thing to have a great strategy, but it's quite another to accomplish it.} Never has this statement been more true—or more challenging—than for today’s government organizations.

Whether operating at the federal, state, or local level, government organizations face increased media scrutiny, reduced funding, and the many challenges of moving large, multi-layered, and highly regulated organizations. It’s no surprise that many government organizations report that their employees are less engaged than ever and that leaders feel helpless to change the situation.

In many cases, employees and leaders are caught in a vicious cycle. Performance declines, scrutiny increases, and employee paralysis ensues. Repeat.

How do you break this cycle?

You change the mindset from “leaders are a select few in the organization” to “everyone can and should be a leader.” This simple, yet significant shift is key to creating an effective government organization in the twenty-first century. If every member of the organization is leading from
where they are, it also allows government organizations to leverage the power of five highly effective practices:

1. Find the voice of the organization and connect and align accordingly (a.k.a. lead with purpose).
2. Execute your strategy with excellence.
3. Unleash and engage people to do infinitely more than they imagined they could.
4. Be the most trusted organization possible.
5. Create fervent loyalty with all stakeholders.

For years, FranklinCovey has helped government organizations employ these practices, develop leaders at every level, create results, and ignite their ultimate mission essential—a winning culture. We have worked with thousands of teams and hundreds of organizations at every level of government. Now we want to help you drive mission success by creating a winning culture of your own.

In this book we discuss the challenge and opportunity associated with building a powerful, winning culture within government and frame the paradigm of “leadership at all levels.” We review in some depth the five practices you need to create this culture.

Leaders are a significant leverage point for any team or organization. What the leaders say and how they behave represent an organization’s single largest opportunity for affecting change. Perhaps you are a leader with responsibility
for a team, agency, or division, or perhaps you don’t have any formal direct reports. Either way, you can be a force for change, for creating engagement, and—ultimately—for getting the most important things done.

The great cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Our goal with this book is not to help you change the world. It is to help you create lasting change within your own circles of influence with the knowledge that your influence can grow over time to become truly significant. Our goal with this book is to help you change your world. We invite you to begin the journey.
As keynote speaker, Patrick was biding his time until his turn at the podium and watching the current presenter. The organization’s executive director was about ten minutes into her remarks, and the audience was engaged. Not a passive she’s the boss so we have to listen type of engagement; they were genuinely enthralled by her presentation.

Her message aligned around a single theme: the organization needed to better meet the evolving needs of its customers. Although the organization had a stellar track record and an untarnished reputation, the leaders in the room needed to deliver higher-quality services on time, every time, and at the lowest cost...
possible. Theirs was a competitive environment, and if they didn’t raise their performance, someone else would subvert their efforts.

In our work with clients, we’ve heard many similar presentations in many other conference rooms. The leader was dynamic, the argument was sound, and the strategy was clear. However, this wasn’t a multinational corporation or a mid-size enterprise trying to reach the next level. The leader who mesmerized her audience was in charge of a government agency.

Her insights were spot-on. She understood that they were living in a world of diminishing resources, increasing scrutiny, and uncompromising demands. She had figured out that the organization was operating in an increasingly pressurized environment, and she was passionately conveying that message so that all in attendance would see and ultimately respond to the emerging environment by thinking and acting more effectively.

The executive director explained that if they did not continue to improve, they would fall prey to a growing number of threats both within the larger government structure (internal) and outside of the government (external). From an internal perspective, other government organizations were competing with them for funding, technology, facilities, and personnel. Although these internal competitors had
existed to varying degrees for years, the acceleration level was tremendous. In fact, these competitors were not competing simply for an extra employee or some additional funding; they were trying to take over her organization’s very mission. The other organizations were trying to consume them.

Simultaneously, the external environment was riddled with pitfalls. Contractors were absorbing roles that had once been considered inherently government and off-limits to outsourcing. A wide range of stakeholders—including legislators, businesses, and everyday citizens—were actively questioning and intervening in daily operations. Fueled by a 24/7 news cycle, a staggering number of cable channels, and the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, these stakeholders insisted every mistake signaled an epidemic and required sweeping changes, and that shared mission signified redundancy that needed to be wiped out. Add to these realities increased security as a result of terrorism, a less than desirable job market, and a recovering economy. The organization had never faced an environment like this before. The executive director wanted each of her 300 managers to understand that in today’s world, poor customer service in one part of the organization or a scandal in another could threaten the job of everyone in the room.
Of course, the concepts of competition, increased scrutiny, and growing pressure are not new to the public sector. Consider these examples:

• A charity focused on finding a cure for cancer is not the only organization with the mission of tackling this serious health condition. In the United States, the American Cancer Society deals with different cancer types; however, separate organizations tackle specific forms of this disease such as pancreatic cancer, liver cancer, breast cancer, and children’s cancer, just to name a few. The market has been segmented, and organizations are tailoring their messages and approaches. Whether acknowledged or not, these organizations—all with
a just and important mission—are pitted against each other. Potential donor pockets are only so deep. These groups must be creative, compelling, and relentless to get people’s attention and garner a slice of the market.

- A museum realizes that it is not the only game in town. Other museums are trying to attract the attention of the same patrons and visitors. Perhaps each organization has historically filled its own niche; maybe they even worked together as part of the community. However, as the environment becomes pressurized, each creeps into the other’s space. When a major traveling exhibit comes to town, museums that serve children, science buffs, historians, and art lovers all compete for the same exhibition.

- The United States Postal Service (USPS) has dealt with the pressure of FedEx and United Parcel Service (UPS) for years. A growing reliance on email and the cost of operations and employee benefits for USPS as a large federal agency exacerbate the situation. As a result, the USPS posted a loss of $25.9 billion in a three-year period (2011–2013), while experiencing a 5.9 percent decrease in mail volume.¹ These numbers suggest an erosion of USPS business, but there is more to the story. Beginning FY (Fiscal Year) 2014, USPS

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marketing initiatives are driving e-commerce growth and efforts to modernize operations are underway to improve delivery effectiveness.

You might be thinking, But those governments and nonprofits operate more like businesses. My organization is different. We don’t have FedEx breathing down our necks. We fill a vital role that is inherently government and something no one else can do. There is no competition; we are the only game in town.

We invite you to think again.

Consider the city of Sandy Springs, Georgia. Located fifteen miles north of Atlanta, Sandy Springs is a community of approximately 100,000 residents. Like similar cities, Sandy Springs provides a wide range of services to its constituents. Unlike most cities, the vast majority of Sandy Springs’ work is outsourced to private contractors. The entire town has only seven government employees, and the whole Sandy Springs operation “is housed in a generic, one-story industrial park…the people you meet here work for private companies through a variety of contracts.”

If you apply for a business license in Sandy Springs, want to make a structural change to your home, or need assistance with trash collection, you will work with contractors in Boston, San Francisco, and across the “pond” in Coventry.

England. Think this is a one-off experiment that won’t extend to your organization? Consider that the city has no long-term debt and no fleet of vehicles to maintain. While cities like Detroit and Chicago grapple with significant challenges, the first city manager of Sandy Springs, Oliver Porter, met with government leaders in Japan, Iceland, Britain, and the country of Georgia to share the Sandy Springs story. Meanwhile, the current city manager, John McDonough, is producing annual reports with the look and feel of private industry, showing an eight-year winning record and articulating a vision for the future.

Whether you work for local, state, or federal government, volunteer at or run a nonprofit, serve on the board of a charitable hospital, or work in any part of the public sector, competition is present, growing, and intensifying. Yours is a world of competition.

We’re not saying, “Act like a business.” As Jim Collins wrote, “We must reject the idea—well-intentioned, but dead wrong—that the primary path to greatness in the social sector is to become ‘more like a business.’ Most businesses—like most of anything else in life—fall somewhere between mediocre and good.”3 Moreover, your organization’s purpose and the measures of success may be very different from those of most businesses. In your world, it is likely that mission

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is more important than market share, and service trumps profits. Additionally the inherent challenges of enforcing laws, implementing policies, and ensuring public safety or national security rarely correlate with stellar customer-service numbers—after all, the very nature of your work may cause you and your people to say no. For the most part, customers don’t like that word. Throw into the mix the public sector’s unique constraints associated with hiring, positioning, developing, rewarding, promoting, and—at times—terminating employees, and the concept of acting like a business becomes not just difficult but downright naïve to suggest.

We are saying that to be a truly great public-sector organization, you must recognize the pressures that surround you and proactively rise to the challenge. You must see the world as the executive director in our example saw it and put a system in place to ensure success both today and tomorrow as the pressures in the competitive cauldron become more and more intense. This book is a road map for such an operating system.
CHAPTER 2

THE PARADIGM: LEADERSHIP IS A CHOICE, NOT JUST A POSITION

A NEW PARADIGM: EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM SHOULD BE A LEADER—AND IT IS YOUR JOB TO GET THEM THERE

“Leadership is a team sport, and teams require collective leadership.”

–Dave Ulrich

It Starts With Culture

Think of a top-notch organization you know—one you wholeheartedly tell others to work for, or whose story you share with friends at dinner. Why do you recommend it? What makes it so unique? Or, to put it more forcefully, why is that organization so remarkable, and rare, that you tell stories about it? What causes you to feel so strongly about the organization?
After thirty-plus years of partnering with some of the greatest public- and private-sector organizations and leaders worldwide, we know that top organizations share the most powerful, hard-to-replicate, and sustainable competitive advantage: a winning culture.

We define culture as the collective behavior of your people—what the majority of your people do the majority of the time; the nature of the language and relationships; and the spoken and unspoken values, norms, and systems at work. Winning cultures are filled with superb people who deliver as promised time after time. In the public sector, a winning culture means that customers go to you not just because they must, but because they know you can effectively provide services or support. They give them someone and something to trust. Winning cultures are unique, deliberately designed and maintained, and rare.

**DEFINITION:**

*culture: the collective behavior of your people—what the majority of your people do the majority of the time; the nature of the language and relationships within the culture; and the spoken and unspoken values, norms, and systems at work.*
“Winning cultures are filled with superb people who deliver as promised time after time.”

Culture That Stays on Track

In the 1830s, Charles Pearson proposed a rather ingenious, and arguably mad, idea for public transportation. Some fourteen years later, a tunnel began to weave its way under the streets of London. Nine years after that, the first segment of what would become London’s Underground opened for business. Although the system’s original visionary, Charles Pearson, was no longer alive to make the journey, some 30,000 Londoners climbed aboard the Metropolitan Line during its first day of operation.

“Winning cultures are unique, deliberately designed and maintained, and rare.”

Since its opening day in 1863, the Underground has grown to 11 lines, 249 miles of track, and some 270 stations. Transportation for London (TfL) operates the “Tube,” as it has come to be called, and in 2014, it carried a record 1.26
billion travelers, marking an increase of over 33 percent in the last decade.

Keeping pace with the rapid growth of both the city population and passenger numbers is a significant challenge for TfL. Imagine trying to renovate stations, replace aging trains, build new control centers, and upgrade network signals while transporting four million people. One leader said that modernizing the Tube is similar to “doing open-heart surgery whilst the patient is playing tennis.” Those of you in the Washington, D.C., metro area during the update in 2017 can likely relate.

So how does an organization accomplish such a mammoth task without disrupting commuters and frustrating thousands of employees? TfL decided that the answer resided in its ability to build leadership capacity and establish core values. In other words, they needed to deliberately develop a culture that would meet the demands of their ever-expanding mission.

In 2006, TfL began training managers on the organization’s core behaviors of accountability, fairness, consistency, collaboration, and directness. After two years, the general manager of TfL’s Bakerloo Line, Lance Ramsay, believed that to truly achieve the culture he envisioned, he needed to empower his organization’s team members as well.
Ramsay, a TfL employee since 1983, knew how things operated in the Underground. The Tube’s history was heavily influenced by the military and its command-and-control culture. Ramsay determined that his 800 Bakerloo Line team members would benefit from FranklinCovey’s proven process of behavior change. FranklinCovey began by training Ramsay’s leadership team in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®* and certifying internal Bakerloo Line facilitators and champions at all levels of Ramsay’s organization.

Just as an individual’s character is tested in crisis, an organization’s culture is exposed under intense pressure. The Bakerloo Line was tested from 2008 to 2013 as it experienced rapid growth coupled with major events ranging from the 2012 Summer Olympics to the marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton. Throughout this period, the Bakerloo Line not only kept up with the demands of continuous system improvements and unprecedented growth in passenger numbers, but they increased their performance:

- Passenger wait times dropped by 37 percent.
- On-time schedule operation increased from 94 percent in 2008 to 97.8 percent in 2012.
- Delays over fifteen minutes declined by 61 percent.
- Customer satisfaction improved to an 83 out of 100.

Beyond the metrics, Bakerloo Line team members said that the culture change has improved union negotiations, senior-
leadership communication, and accountability throughout the organization. As manager Dave Proffitt said, “I think we’ve almost grown together, and we are far more open… there is a very high degree of trust within the room. We’ve all done it together, and have been mutually supportive.”

That feeling of mutual support, cooperation, and leadership at all organizational levels has become the Bakerloo Line culture. Ramsay knows that the efforts of his team to deliberately develop a winning culture is key to keeping their organization on track as the turnstiles turn more frequently and train capacity continues to soar.

**A Culture That Is Derailed With Bad Leadership**

Let’s look at a different kind of culture and the behaviors, language, and results it can produce.

Jan and her sister were in the garden enjoying a cup of coffee, when her sister’s husband, Tom, joined them. As he sat down, he glanced at his phone. “One year, three months, two days, six hours, four minutes, and exactly thirty seconds until I retire.”

“What are you talking about?” Jan asked. Tom was bright, capable, and had years of great work ahead of him. Or so she thought.
“I’ve got an app on my phone that counts down to the moment I retire.”

Jan thought this must be a joke. “You’re not going to retire, Tom,” she said. “With your background, your organization will hire you back as a consultant—and pay you five times as much.”

“No,” Tom said. “You don’t get it. When the countdown ends, I can retire with all my benefits. I’m not working for that organization one second more.”

“Why not?”

“My organization used to be a great place to work,” Tom said. “I loved everything about it; but two years ago, things really changed. We got a new boss, and he told us how things were going to be from now on. Some of us had been around for a few years, so we asked, ‘Do we have any say in this?’ I also remarked, ‘We have appreciated the loyalty we have felt from the organization over the years. Should we continue to expect that?’ And he gave us a look—let’s just say it’s a look I’ve gotten familiar with. The new boss then said, rather curtly, ‘If you want loyalty, get a dog.’ ”

When was Tom’s true retirement date? Despite what his phone said, he hung it up two years ago. That’s when he stopped doing his best work, when he ceased being fully engaged. He’s been physically on the job, he does what’s
expected, but nothing more. Tom could have given many more years—perhaps his finest years—but the organization that used to engage his body, mind, spirit, and passion will not benefit from his contribution.

He will give his best to something else.

Could there be a stronger contrast in cultures between the ineffective organization Tom has “retired” from and the highly effective team at the Bakerloo Line?

The Challenge of Human Capital

Four blocks from the White House in Washington, D.C., an Art Deco office stands at the intersection of New York Avenue and 12th Street NW. The majority of the building’s second floor is home to the Partnership for Public Service (PPS). Over a decade ago, Samuel J. Heyman founded this nonprofit, nonpartisan organization to revitalize the United States federal government by transforming how the government works. He wanted to inspire a new generation of people to public service, similar to how John F. Kennedy had inspired him some forty years earlier.

Each year, PPS, with assistance from the global management-consulting firms Deloitte Consulting LLP and Hay Group, compiles and analyzes the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings. The rankings draw from
the Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and provide specific information about employee satisfaction and commitment.

In May 2014, PPS President and CEO Max Stier presented his assessment to the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Programs and the Federal Workforce. Stier’s comments expressed several causes for concern. “Government-wide, federal employee job satisfaction and commitment dropped for the third year in a row, tumbling three points to a score of 57.8 on a scale of 100. This represents the lowest overall Best Places to Work score since the rankings were first launched in 2003.” Stier contrasted the level of satisfaction and commitment of federal workers to those in the private sector, which improved 0.7 points in 2013 to 70.7, according to the Hay Group. Stier’s testimony provided a litany of issues that impact the development of the federal workforce, including effective leadership, compensation, and performance-management processes, and provided legislative recommendations for Congress focused on the government’s human capital.4

Human capital.

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What does that mean? *Human* capital? Don’t they mean *financial* capital? Isn’t it *financial capital* that organizations are concerned about? Why are they worried about human capital? Why is that a top-of-mind issue?

Let’s tackle the financial-capital question first. There is no doubt that finances matter: a vision without the necessary resources to make it happen is just a hallucination. However, as necessary as funding is, it is equally insufficient. Throwing money at a problem doesn’t guarantee a successful outcome, nor does trying to operate like a business guarantee a government organization’s success. Jim Collins said it well: “For a social sector organization, however, performance must be assessed relative to mission, not financial returns. In the social sectors, the critical question is not ‘How much money do we make per dollar of invested capital?’ but ‘How effectively do we deliver on our mission and make a distinctive impact, relative to our resources?’ ”

We have found that public-sector leaders across North America, Asia, Europe, and all corners of the world agree that their top priority is developing employees with the skills, knowledge, and experience to create tremendous value for the organization, its mission, and those it serves—in other words, developing human capital. They know about the dramatic difference between team members on the Bakerloo Line team and employees like Tom. The ultimate mission
essential in the public sector belongs to organizations that can get the best contribution possible from the best people they can find. In simple terms, it means inspiring and motivating people to bring the best they can give, to the point where they fight through rush hour on the Bakerloo Line for you!5

It raises the question, “Why is there no outbreak of great cultures in the public sector if so many leaders and employees are aware of both the problem and the opportunity?”

Let’s explore one of the problems: *The majority of government workers in the United States are not engaged or are actively disengaged from their work.* According to Gallup, it’s 71 percent. That means leaders have failed to motivate and inspire more than 7 out of 10 of their workers. Consider this: In the United States government alone, there are 2.7 million civilian workers. That means that nearly 2 million of them are not engaged in their work.6


Imagine extrapolating this number to include public-sector workers at all levels of the government (federal, state, and local) and not-for-profit organizations in countries around the world. Even a conservative figure suggests millions of people like Tom—each one unique, with talent, skill, and passion, and great contributions to make—are mentally and emotionally retired.

When Dr. Stephen R. Covey spoke to his audiences around the globe, he would always ask, “How many of you honestly believe that the vast majority of the people in your organization possess more intelligence, talent, capability, creativity, and resourcefulness than their present jobs require or even allow?” In every case, nearly every hand went up.

“How many of you honestly believe that the vast majority of the people in your organization possess more intelligence, talent, capability, creativity, and resourcefulness than their present jobs require or even allow?”
—Stephen R. Covey

Why is this so? Because too many leaders don’t know how to engage people. When leaders don’t know exactly
how to do something, they can default to the things they do know how to do—budget, project management, operations, etc. Oftentimes in a highly regulated environment, these are also the things that are most constrained and, ultimately, especially in the case of budget, not in a leader’s Circle of Influence®. A leader’s job is to establish an operating system that allows people to contribute their very best, consistently and compellingly. And because intentionally building and maintaining a winning culture is completely within a leader’s Circle of Influence, this is also his or her most powerful lever for achieving results.

The Government Executive Media Group explains that the research conducted by Gallup, along with the results of the PPS Best Places to Work rankings, clearly show that leaders play a key role in growing employee engagement, empowerment, and appreciation. Unfortunately, Government Executive also reports that empowerment ranks an abysmal 43.8 out of 100 among government leaders. Some cast the issue aside, arguing that the low score is a function of the unique challenges to government organizations, which include pay, policies, and systems. There is some truth to this claim. The systems can be very challenging at times; you can’t just show a poor performer the door. Others suggest that the score is the result of the growing competitive cauldron in the public sector—outside pressures, diminishing resources, and increased scrutiny.
True, some of these leadership challenges are unique to the idiosyncrasies of the public sector. Engaging people is a tough job in the public sector, but it’s a challenge in the private sector as well. According to a survey on global CEO performance by Stanford University’s Center for Leadership Development and Research, engaging people is rated the “top weakness” of CEOs. Some leaders, like Tom’s boss, actively discourage people. Mostly, though, they just don’t have the skill to lead people. After reviewing the Stanford study, *Forbes Magazine* concluded that “CEOs are doing a lousy job when it comes to people management.”

Leaders know they’re not doing a good job managing their people, and it troubles them. They need to capture the hearts and minds of their people to build a team like TfL’s Bakerloo Line. It’s the biggest job they have, but they don’t know how to do it. And it’s not just a senior leader’s problem; leaders at all levels struggle with it, particularly those who are new in their supervisory roles.

Let’s face it, there is no outbreak of winning cultures in the public sector. While culture makes all the difference, too many organizations leave building their culture to chance. We’re reminded of the quote by acclaimed management

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expert Peter Drucker: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” Understanding this is key to creating a successful organization.

**Being Deliberate in Building Culture**

How much time and energy do we devote to strategic plans and initiatives, metrics, goals, and project planning? Look around your office. Do you have posters announcing goals, email signature blocks attesting to the newest initiative, and strategic plans with your organization’s acronym emblazoned across the cover?

But have you ever forgotten to address culture during a key strategic shift? Ever experienced a culture pushing back on a strategy or a change-management initiative? We recall hearing a long-term devoted public servant speaking to her team in the hallway after a new political leader’s election and inspiring “call to action” speech. She said, “Be respectful, and know that we can wait out any of this leader’s strategies…we’ve done it before and we can do it again.” That’s culture pushing back. People cross their arms with the intent of waiting things out—and the “meeting after the meeting” undermines all of your well-intended efforts.

A great culture must be leader-led, designed intentionally, and have an established framework of behaviors and language that aligns the performance of everyone in the organization. Everyone must know how to win and fully understand the
why behind the what. It is not enough to simply state the path forward; a great leader must deliberately invite every person into that way forward. Everyone must lead. Can you imagine if everyone in your organization behaved like a leader? What results could you achieve?

A great culture must be leader-led, designed intentionally, and have an established framework of behaviors and language that aligns the performance of everyone in the organization.

That’s the reason for this book. The Ultimate Mission Essential for public-sector organizations is the paradigm that everyone on your team should be a leader. Too many see leadership as a title. But leadership is a choice, not just a position. This doesn’t mean the organizational chart is thrown out the window; it simply means all people take ownership of ensuring success.

Leadership is a choice, not just a position.

The first step is adopting the mindset that everyone on your team can lead. It’s your job to make them leaders and
to inspire them to embrace their roles. This happens by establishing a framework (or an operating system, which we’ll discuss in Chapter 4) for getting the job done effectively. This framework should be ubiquitous and not role-specific. It demands that leaders “show up” and model the culture, rather than talk about it in generic terms (or worse yet, “talk at” team members about it). It will develop high-character and high-competence leaders at every level of the organization. It will give everyone a common language and a set of behaviors they can depend on as they work to achieve results year after year.

The People Behind the Activities

You and your people are your organization’s only sustainable competitive advantage. No matter which segment of the public sector you work in, when the people quit work for the night, your competitive advantage quits too. The brains of a contributor like Tom can shut down anytime, even during work hours. You might say, “What about our mission? organizational structure? internal rewards program? work processes? computer systems? Aren’t they advantages that will overcome the public sector’s growing competitive cauldron?”

Obviously, competitive advantages can come from many sources, but the bottom line is that none of those advantages
exist apart from what people actually do. Your mission, your structure, your rewards programs—whatever your resources and capabilities—are all the product of people working together. If they don’t work well, your advantage is gone.

An organization can have a number of unique aspects, but if people don’t do the things needed to leverage them, sustain them, and live up to them, they will evaporate. Your organization may have well-refined processes, but if your people couldn’t care less about maintaining them, the whole thing is a house of cards. The behavior of your people is the ultimate source of your competitive advantage.

No matter what you think your competitive advantage is, people create it, sustain it, leverage it, and make it work. If they are as engaged as the people of the Bakerloo Line, they will pull the organization forward if they have to. But if they are like Tom—unexcited about the organization, uncaring, indifferent, even alienated from it—your competitive advantage will disappear. If they are not giving their best efforts to your strategy, you can forget the dazzling wording of your mission or the compelling reason the organization exists. If there are enough Toms on your team—and the evidence shows there are many Toms, despite what you may think and no matter how they smile at you as you pass—no matter how many times they nod their head
in seeming agreement with your goal, your competitive advantage is over.

The sum of what everyone does every day is called “culture.” It is what the majority of the people do the majority of the time. It’s a reflection of an organization’s collective behaviors, the language and behaviors of its people, and the spoken and unspoken values, norms, and systems that exist. Another way to frame the top-of-mind issue in the Partnership for Public Sector’s efforts is, “How do I build a winning culture?” Clearly, it’s a crucial question: Dr. Stephen R. Covey once said,

“The only sustainable competitive advantage that will long endure is the core competency of a high-trust\(^8\), principle-centered organizational culture of committed people aligned to a common vision. Your competitors will copy your marketing, your product, your systems, your structure, your strategy, but they cannot duplicate the unique advantage of the trust, \textit{esprit de corps}, and performance of your people.”

The leader’s main job is to build that kind of culture, and it is the behavior of the leader that determines the culture. Author and world-renowned business coach Ram Charan said, “The culture of any organization is simply the collective

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8. More will be said about how to establish a high-trust culture in Chapter 8.
behavior of its leaders. If you want to change your culture, change the collective behavior of your leaders.

Culture is the reason a Bakerloo Line worker keeps things on track and gets the job done. Culture is the reason a nurse stops a medical procedure if she spots a quality problem. Culture is the reason military-aviation ground crews run to meet an arriving plane. Culture is the reason a nonprofit leader travels halfway around the world to meet with volunteers supporting the organization’s cause. These are the behaviors of highly engaged people in a high-trust culture: it’s just what they do.

But culture is also the reason a great potential contributor like Tom comes to work every day, smiles and nods, and contributes nothing.

According to Harvard professor Clayton Christensen, “It is common to describe culture as the visible elements of a working environment: casual Fridays, free sodas in the cafeteria, or whether you can bring your dog to the office…. Those things don’t define a culture. They’re just artifacts of it.” Culture is much deeper. It is the habitual, instinctive behaviors of people. They are rooted in the character of people.

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That’s why to gain the mission essential that counts most—a great culture—you need to go deep. Human behavior is the product of human character and mindset. It’s the product of paradigms—the ways people see themselves and the world around them. To change the culture, you have to change people’s paradigms.

Here’s a simple example of what we mean by a paradigm that drives behavior. Shawn tells this story: “When my wife and I were newly married, we shared one car. She would drop me off at school in the morning before going to her job several miles in the other direction. Then she would drive back at noon to take me to my afternoon job and return to hers. At the end of the day, she would circle back and we would go home together. We put a lot of miles on our car that semester.

“One day, I needed to be at school early and had a lot of pressing projects at work in the afternoon, so we went carefully over the schedule that morning. I had no margin for error, so when I stepped into the parking lot, I knew she’d be there this time. She wasn’t—and my temperature rose. I waited and waited and waited. I worried that maybe something had happened to her. A crisis at work? But after an hour, I determined that if nothing *had* happened, something *would* happen once she finally showed up!
“Then, after two hours and fifteen minutes of pacing and fretting and fuming—a stunning insight! *I had driven the car myself that day!* My wife was waiting for *me*! I gulped hard, trying to think of something to say to her.

“We both chuckle about it now. The point is, I had perceived the situation in a way that didn’t fit with reality, and when my paradigm suddenly shifted, my behavior shifted too. I went from fuming and snarling to groveling and whimpering. That’s the power of a Paradigm Shift.”

Patrick shares a story about a public-sector leader who practiced a “kiss up, kick down” mentality. He said “yes” to everything his boss said without clarifying expectations and then would force his people to work on projects everyone knew were going nowhere. He had competent, capable people reporting to him, but he wasted their energy rewriting sentences on documents no one would read and building presentations no one would see. His unwillingness to ensure that he knew the desired outcomes of an effort caused his people to stop contributing. They stopped thinking; stopped acting without his specific direction. He had disengaged once-amazing contributors and had no idea his view of things was his downfall.

Paradigms drive practices. For example, if you’re part of a culture that believes in the value of activity over results, you’ll probably spend hours in conference rooms talking about
all the work you are doing, but little about the outcomes you actually accomplished. In the end, a paradigm based on a false principle will fail you. Your practices or behaviors will bring you down.

**Paradigms drive practices.**

Clayton Christensen said, “A culture can be built consciously or evolve inadvertently.” Which do you prefer for your team or organization? You can consciously build a culture like the Bakerloo Line, or you can let it devolve into a disengaged team of Toms.

Is your organizational culture working for you or against you? We are inviting you to design your culture deliberately.

**How to Effectively Change Behaviors**

In many public-sector organizations, the typical approach to changing people’s behavior is to reward or threaten them. This is what Stephen R. Covey called “the great jackass theory of human motivation—carrot and stick.” The problem with this approach is that it treats people like animals, and it works only on the surface and only temporarily. Like Tom, people who are threatened develop a paradigm of fear, so

they act out of fear. They will “work” for an organization, but they will never give their heart. They will never speak honestly, contribute freely, or do more than required. They will never, ever tell you what they really think.

They will be motivated all right (motivated to evade responsibility), but they will never be inspired. In today’s workplace, many workers are afraid, and they act like it. They take little initiative, they avoid responsibility, they keep their thoughts to themselves—they bring as little as possible to the table so they won’t get in trouble. This is the legacy of the Industrial Age. You will never capture people’s hearts by treating them like jackasses, but that’s how most managers lead.

You will never capture people’s hearts by treating them like jackasses, but that’s how most managers lead.

The secret to changing behavior is to change paradigms and enact highly effective practices built upon these new ways of thinking. That’s the purpose of this book: to replace unproductive paradigms with inspiring new paradigms and corresponding practices that will unleash new and extraordinarily productive behavior. That’s the job you must do now.
That’s the purpose of this book: to replace unproductive paradigms with inspiring new paradigms and corresponding practices that will unleash new and extraordinarily productive behavior.

The story of the Bakerloo Line proves that this job, while challenging, can be done and that the results are dramatic. We helped this world leader in the Underground commuter transportation reach that ultimate competitive position in the public-sector level, and we can help you too.

**Five Key Practices to Success**

The common ways of thinking are often reactive and counterproductive. Consider. What kind of leader would you be if…

- No one but you felt a sense of responsibility for results?
- You didn’t understand the combined power of your team?
- You failed to execute your most important goals?
- You didn’t fully leverage the genius, talent, and skill of your team?
• There was a lack of trust in you, each other, or the organization?
• Your internal and external customers had no clear idea what kind of value you brought to them?
• There was little loyalty on your team to you, each other, or the organization?

FranklinCovey has over three decades of experience with hundreds of thousands of people in international organizations, small schools, and whole departments of government. They come to us to become highly effective organizations. We have five practices that show them how to do this, but it always begins with changed mindsets—paradigms—that will enable them to thrive. We have shown in this chapter that the first shift is seeing that your people are your ultimate competitive advantage and that you must engage them before you can successfully move forward. To do this, it is not your job to simply be the leader, but to make everyone a leader. Once this shift has occurred, it is time for you to shift your thinking in five key areas:
### Common Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Highly Effective Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create and post the mission statement in all public areas.</td>
<td>1. Find the Voice of the organization and connect and align accordingly (a.k.a. Lead With Purpose).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a great strategy.</td>
<td>2. Execute your strategy with excellence.</td>
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<td>Do more with less.</td>
<td>3. Unleash and engage people to do infinitely more than you imagined they could.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Become the provider/employer of choice in your industry.</td>
<td>4. Be the most trusted provider/employer in your sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfy customers.</td>
<td>5. Create fervent loyalty with customers.</td>
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Why these five practices? Each one is based on fundamental principles that never change. The principles of proactivity, execution, productivity, and trust underlie every great achievement: nothing has ever been accomplished in human history without them. People who live by the opposite values—reactivity, aimless activity, waste, mistrust—contribute little to the success of the organization. Similarly, the principles of mutual benefit and loyalty underlie every successful relationship. People who live by the opposite values—indifference to others and disloyalty—create no
goodwill and work against the organization. The common ways of thinking are often reactive and counterproductive. We need this new model.

You can see for yourself why these Paradigm Shifts and new practices are vital. You can come up with many other success factors, but these five are inviolable. Leaders must be able to (1) find the “voice” of the organization, (2) execute with excellence, (3) unleash the productivity of people, (4) inspire trust, and (5) engender loyalty with all stakeholders.

A paradigm is like an operating system for a computer. The machine will only do what the operating system allows it to do. If your paradigms are from the past, you’ll be using obsolete applications that aren’t up to the requirements of today.

As the graphic below shows, you need an overarching “leadership operating system,” like The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, to run today’s applications—the Paradigm Shifts we’ve listed. In this book, we’re going to invite you to adopt a new leadership operating system and to “download” the Paradigm Shifts to your own mind.
You will discover the key to a culture like the one that keeps the Bakerloo Line on track. By instilling *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* along with our other behavior-change solutions, we helped them build a culture of proactivity and resourcefulness. Around 100 million passengers ride the Bakerloo Line each year. The Bakerloo team succeeds in their increasingly demanding environment because of the kind of people they are, which is a reflection of the kind of leaders they have. The Bakerloo Line’s highly effective leadership produced highly engaged people, and you can’t calculate the value of that kind of engagement.

These Paradigm Shifts, practices, and operating system are absolutely fundamental to success now. Each requires changing people’s hearts and minds in fundamental ways.
Changing behavior is about the hardest challenge anyone ever faces. (If you don’t think so, just consider how hard it is for you to change your behavior.) It’s a great challenge, but the shift must be made. This book will show you how. The paradigms of the past might have been good for the times, but you can’t afford to live by them now. In the face of the public sector’s growing competitive cauldron, you will lose the ultimate mission essential: people who bring talent, passion, determination, and focus to the success of your organization and its mission.
Patrick Leddin, Ph.D.
Senior Consultant, FranklinCovey Associate
Professor, Vanderbilt

Patrick is an associate professor of Management Studies at Vanderbilt University and a senior consultant at FranklinCovey. He is an expert in the areas of strategy creation and execution, leader development, and organizational culture. He has worked with private and public sector clients in the United States, Canada, Asia, the Caribbean, and throughout Europe. Patrick has more than 25-years of leadership and project-management experience. He began his career as an officer in the United States Army, where he completed a number of the military’s most challenging leadership-development courses including airborne, ranger, and infantry officer schools, and he held leadership positions such as infantry platoon leader and company commander in the 82nd Airborne Division. While working for a Big Five consulting firm, he led project teams to design, develop, and implement project deliverables that exactly met client needs. He is the author of Oliver’s Spot: The Five Ps Leading Teams to Top Results and Oliver’s Spot for the Public Sector: A Leadership Story.
Shawn D. Moon
Former Executive Vice President, Strategic Markets
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Shawn is the former Executive Vice President of Leadership and Strategic Accounts at FranklinCovey, which included responsibility for the company’s Government Services division. For over thirty years, he has worked with clients across the globe, from Fortune 500 to governmental organizations, bringing his first-hand experience in leadership and management, sales and marketing, program development, and consulting services in both the private and public sectors.

Shawn is the author or co-author of several books, including *Fierce Loyalty: Earning the Love of Customers and Employees to Power Growth*, *Talent Unleashed: 3 Leadership Conversations to Ignite the Unlimited Potential in People*, as well as *The Ultimate Competitive Advantage: Why Your People Make All the Difference and 6 Practices You Need to Engage Them*. 
Your people make all the difference and this book offers five areas that are essential to engage them.

Praise for Building a Winning Culture in Government

“Over my 25 years with the United States Navy, I saw firsthand the power of creating a winning culture, where leaders and team members are effectively accomplishing a purposeful mission. I partnered with FranklinCovey and learned that creating such a culture doesn’t happen by chance; rather, it is deliberately designed. This book speaks to the inner workings of such a design.”

–LT CDR Mitch Seal, United States Navy (Retired)

“In today’s dynamic environment, creating an effective culture in every government organization is more important than ever before. Not only did Leddin and Moon address an important subject, but their story telling engages the reader and their approach NAILS IT!”

–Andrew “Skipper” Martin, Chief of Staff to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky (1995–2003), Chief of Staff to the Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky (1992–1995)

“Greatness in government is not just an obscure, elusive target. It is possible. In fact, it is necessary! Great people create great cultures, and Building a Winning Culture in Government is a mission essential for anyone in public service.”

–Mayor John Curtis, Provo, Utah

“Leddin and Moon have hit on a topic that has proven unwaveringly important throughout my career in public service—the importance of creating a winning culture.”

–Gwendolyn Sykes, Chief Financial Officer, United States Secret Service