



**Premise** – In the past, businesses made people conform to the organization’s needs. But the old paradigm has shifted. Now leaders must transform their organisations so that they attract the right people, keep them, and inspire them to do their best work. The authors identify and illuminate the six key organizational attributes (**DREAMS**) that will help leaders just do that.

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Obviously, I still recommend that you purchase and read this plus other seminal books I've summarised, examples include ...



**Towards more authentic organizations**

- Allowing people to be themselves (**diversity**) generates *commitment* & fosters *creativity*
  - **Radical honesty** facilitates *understanding* and awareness of what is going on
  - Magnifying strengths ensure that *people are developed*. If you build human capital, you add **extra value** to people rather than extract it
  - Organizations that foster **authenticity** know what they stand for. They are distinctive in terms of their identity and roots, their values, and their leadership. They provide people with a reason to believe. But perhaps the major positive is *trust* – a long term in the making, but easily destroyed
  - Where work feels **meaningful**, individuals experience a sense of *purpose*. Ultimately, they can connect what they do to an overarching cause
  - Organizations that establish **simple rules** create the conditions for *freedom*
- Put together these multiple benefits – commitment, creativity, understanding, personal development, trust, purpose and freedom – and you have created the fundamentals that underpin engagement at work. And we know that engagement is correlated with performance. The dream organization, then, is also the high-performing organization.

Organizations are defined by recurrent interactions – of varying degrees of formality – in pursuit of a purpose. Arguably, in a knowledge-based economy, the new task of leadership is less directly to excite others, more to orchestrate or to create environments where others can follow their authentic obsession.

**Let people be themselves** – amplifying differences instead of minimizing it. This is beyond mere diversity of gender, race, age and religion. We must strive for an organization that can accommodate differences in perspective, habits of mind, core assumptions & worldviews, and then go beyond accommodation to a place where difference is celebrated & leveraged to add value.

**Practice radical honesty** – communicating what’s really going on. Information is power, but companies no longer have control of it. In a world of WikiLeaks, whistle-blowing & FOI, the imperative should be to tell the truth before someone else does. When you do, you will begin to build long-standing trust – both inside & outside the organization.

**Build on people’s strengths and interests** – create extra value for everyone. The authors’ research shows that high performance arises when individuals all over the organization feel they can grow through their work – adding value as the organization adds value to them.

**Stand for something real** – putting authenticity at the core. There are 3 markers when looking at/for organizational authenticity:

- A company’s identity is consistently rooted in its history
- Employees demonstrate the values the company espouses
- Company leaders are authentic themselves

These lead to a sense of purpose, pride & higher levels of e’ee trust.

**Make it meaningful** – ensuring the daily work is intrinsically satisfying. Meaning from work is derived from a wider set of issues than those related to individual occupations. Specifically, employees know how their work connects to others’ work; how their work contributes to a longer-term goal; and a workplace that promotes a sense of belonging.

**Simplify the rules** – reducing the clutter and increasing clarity and fairness. The ideal company is not a company without rules. It is a company with clear rules that make sense to the people who follow them, and it remains ever vigilant about maintaining that clarity and simplicity.

**Diagnostic** – before thinking of change conduct a thorough diagnostic of your position (*scale*):

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Any item scoring 1 or 2 is worth attention. Any dimension with an overall score < 18 suggest this area requires improvement.

**Difference** – I can be myself here.

- I am the same person at home as I am at work
- I am comfortable being myself
- We are all encouraged to express our differences
- People who think differently from most do well here
- Passion is encouraged, even when it leads to conflict
- More than one type of person fits in here.

**Radical honesty** – You’re told what is really going on.

- We are told the real story
- Information is not manipulated
- It is not disloyal to say something negative
- My manager wants to hear bad news
- Many channels of communication are available to us
- I feel comfortable signing my name to comments I make.

**Extra value** – your strengths are magnified.

- I am given the chance to develop
- Every employee is given the change to develop
- The best people want to perform here
- The weakest performers can see a path to improvement
- Compensation is fairly distributed throughout the organization
- We generate value for ourselves by adding value to others.

**Authenticity** – you are proud of where we’re coming from & what we stand for.

- I know what we stand for
- I value what we stand for
- I want to exceed my current duties
- Profit is not our overriding goal
- I am accomplishing something worthwhile
- I like to tell people where I work.

**Meaning** – the work makes sense.

- My job is meaningful to me
- My duties make sense to me
- My work gives me energy and pleasure
- I understand how my job fits with everyone else’s
- Everyone’s job is necessary
- At work we share a common cause.

**Simple rules** – We believe in the rule.

- We keep things simple
- The rules are clear and apply equally to everyone
- I know what the rules are for
- Everyone knows what the rules are for
- We, as an organization, resist unnecessary rules and paperwork
- Authority is respected.

**Action points for leaders**  
There isn’t some kind of simple mechanical plan that will always work. The authors identify some critical success factors that make efforts to build great org’ns more likely to succeed, such as the:

- Support of *top mgt.*; and
- Presence of strong organizational *performance drivers*

They challenge us to build organizations in which individuals feel they can make choices that enable them to do their best work & be proud of it.

- Hire for difference – in people’s thought processes and life experiences, among other qualities
- Don’t allow HR to dominate recruitment selection and induction
- Be more tolerant of differences and how they are expressed
- Nurture the difference found in “characters”
- Design performance measures that allow for creative surprises and that acknowledge differences in the trajectories of development
- Seek a consensus around values, but allow for individual creative expression.

- Communicate honestly and quickly
- Use many communication channels
- Encourage radically honest conversations about people’s hopes and fears throughout the organization
- Keep communication as simple as possible
- Build in feedback loops

- Offer opportunities for adding extra value in people’s personal development as well as professional development
- Recognize that adding value to employees and generating value as an organization are not competing activities
- Help your star employees to shine and your weaker employees to grow
- Think in terms of adding extra value in your relationships with clients, customers and wider stakeholders
- Use outside opportunities for your organization to add value to individuals.

- Demonstrate your own authenticity
- Understand your own personal roots
- Communicate what you stand for and what you take pride in – clearly and simply
- Get authenticity feedback from others.

- Don’t assume your motives (and your sense of what’s meaningful) are shared by others
- Take in different experiences / get out of your comfort zone to find the meaningful
- Take every opportunity to connect your organization’s efforts and outputs to the wider community
- Restate in clear, simple and memorable ways the reason your organization exists
- Build communities at work.

- When things go wrong, resist the temptation to invent another rule
- Don’t ask others to do things that you wouldn’t do yourself
- Check how the rules affect all stakeholders
- Organizations should be as complex as they need to be - but no more
- Explain the purpose of the rules
- Be prepared to reexamine your underlying business processes.