

# Getting Organizational Transformation Right

LED BY:

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Former President and CEO, Campbell Soup Company

## A CONVERSATION BETWEEN:

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Chief Customer Officer,  
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Ric Lewis  
SVP Systems, IBM

**Growth is imperative in a changing world, yet to successfully transform, you must take care of existing business while migrating to a new strategy. Doing this as a senior leader requires preparing your people before implementation and then holding them strictly accountable to the new goals.**

*“We’ve got to do more building the capacity of our organization to grow and celebrate joy in the workplace so that they can give each other the energy they need to fight. If you focus on the workplace, everything else will lift.”*

- Doug Conant

## Build the workplace strategy

Alongside great financial and marketplace strategies, you must build great workplace strategies to ensure that all plans and their subsequent adaptations can be executed.

Are your strategies realistic?

Do they stand up to scrutiny?

Do your strategies allow you to be strict about delivering on commitments while still caring for the people carrying out the work?

*“A good, well-executed strategy beats a brilliant, poorly executed strategy every time. Most of you have brilliant strategies your organizations can't adequately execute.”*

- Doug Conant

## A CONVERSATION BETWEEN (cont.):

Lisa Madion  
SVP Corporate Services,  
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Krishna Prasad  
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Courtney Yeakel  
Chief Product Officer,  
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Andrea Young  
President, Customer  
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## BOOK RECOMMENDATION

**The Wisdom of Teams,**  
John Katzenbach

### Spend disproportionate time on people

As a senior executive, you are totally dependent on other people. Almost every decision in the organization is made without your involvement. The few decisions communicated to you will likely be packaged to seem better than they actually are.

Build trust with the enterprise before you need it. Create an environment that acknowledges how dependent the transformation strategy is on people and their responsible decisions. Ensure that you have competence, character, and chemistry among your top leaders.

- **Confidence:** They must know what they are doing.
- **Character:** They must do what they say they are going to do.
- **Chemistry:** They must play well together.

People take time to adjust to a new strategy. If they are unable or unwilling to meet the new standards, give them the option to move to a place where they can contribute or help them find another job.

*“You can't talk your way out of something you behaved your way into. To expect the organization to put it on its back and turn it around in a nanosecond is a fool's errand.”*

- Doug Conant

### Address the individual en masse

If the individual doesn't feel like the company has their best interests at heart, then it's unlikely they will prioritize the company when the transformation gets tough. Strengthen resilience and loyalty by addressing the four L's: living, loving, learning, and leaving a legacy.

Living: Create good working conditions in both the physical and psychological sense.

- **Loving:** Acknowledge the value that people provide.
- **Learning:** Provide opportunities to grow.
- **Leaving a legacy:** Show the impact people have beyond the company's growth and profitability.

## CASE STUDY

### Seek guidance

Doug created an advisory group of 25 informal leaders who met with him quarterly to review the strategy and its execution.

All his direct reports knew which 25 people he was talking to and were encouraged to have their own informal groups.

*“Gallup found that people need positive feedback from their manager at least once weekly. Not a high standard.”*

- Doug Conant

### Get traction within three years

In the first year, you have the grace that progress is slow while phasing out legacy strategies and processes. During the second year, small wins of the new strategy emerge, new opportunities arise, and understandably, small adjustments must be made. In year three, you will be fully responsible for the transformation, which has implications for what you do in year one.

### Metrics matter

Design mission-critical metrics to support your core strategies. Ensure that they align from the factory floor up to the board. Everybody should know what needs to be delivered in the current period to realize the strategic plan two or three years down the line.

*“You can't manage it if you can't measure it. Be very tough-minded on standards while you demonstrate that you care about the people.”*

- Doug Conant

Take time to ensure that everyone understands the goals that apply to them. You can't hold people accountable for standards if they don't know what the standards are.

### Use the power of informal leaders

Identify the people in your organization who are not on the executive team but who everybody in the company will talk to when they hear about the transformation plan. Whose opinion do people seek? These are your informal leaders.



## CASE STUDY

### You get what you celebrate

Doug sent 10 to 20 handwritten notes daily to his employees for a decade, over 30,000 handwritten notes.

Across 38 countries, employees had handwritten notes from the CEO pinned in their cubicles.

During the hard transformation, Doug celebrated all the small wins and the good things.

## EXTRA READING

### [How to Find Joy in Your Work,](#)

Conant Leadership

Engage them in the development of the transformation strategy upstream. If they feel part of it, they will advocate for it. Learn from them to get to the heart of what is required to transform the company

*“The informal leaders can make or break the implementation.”*

- Doug Conant

## Celebrate success

The bigger the transformation you undertake, the higher the anxiety of the enterprise and the more people need to be reassured that they're doing something right. Don't neglect to celebrate what is working while you try to fix what is not.

## Find joy

Own the transformation in a way that will make you feel good. Draw up the circles of control, influence, and concern and map where each of your challenges lies. Focus only on what you can control.

*“Victim mentality won't work. Enjoy the ride.”*

- Doug Conant

Take care of yourself first. Be intentional about your physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health. If you don't arrive at work with authentic energy, expecting your teams to is hard.

Be passionate about what you do. People are counting on you. What do you enjoy most about your job? Don't rush to solve the next problem. Take time to engage with what stimulates you the most.

Create some joy every day in the workplace. Show people you are approachable, and that there is room to be light while taking on ambitious challenges.



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