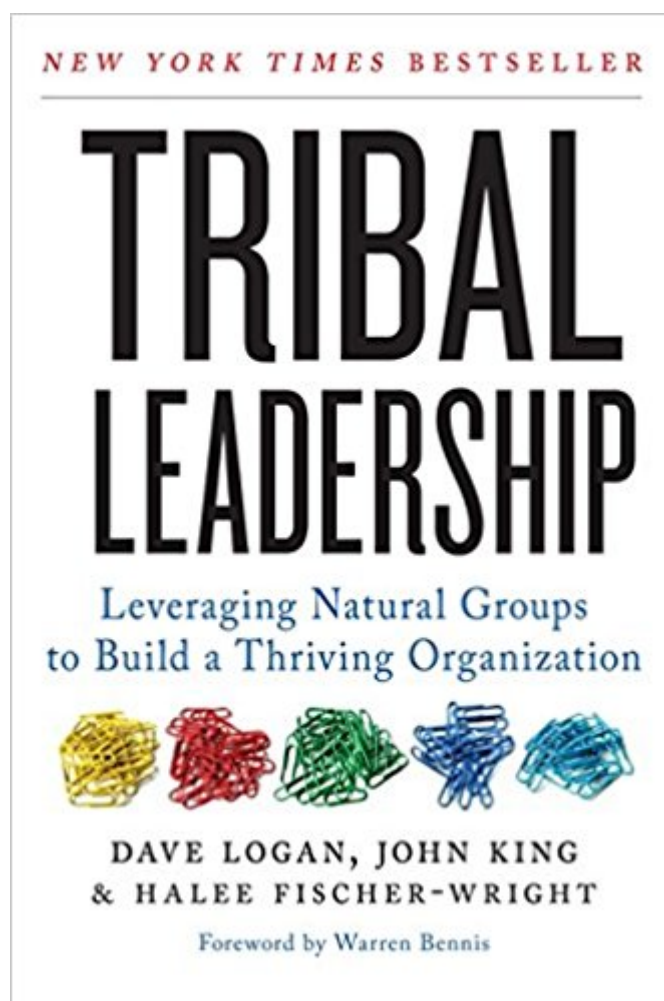


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# Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups To Build A Thriving Organization



## Synopsis

“Tribal Leadership gives amazingly insightful perspective on how people interact and succeed. I learned about myself and learned lessons I will carry with me and reflect on for the rest of my life.”  
—John W. Fanning, Founding Chairman and CEO Napster Inc.  
“An unusually nuanced view of high-performance cultures.”  
—Inc.  
Within each corporation are anywhere from a few to hundreds of separate tribes. In Tribal Leadership, Dave Logan, John King, and Halee Fischer-Wright demonstrate how these tribes develop—and show you how to assess them and lead them to maximize productivity and growth. A business management book like no other, Tribal Leadership is an essential tool to help managers and business leaders take better control of their organizations by utilizing the unique characteristics of the tribes that exist within.

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## Customer Reviews

The authors, management consultants and partners of JeffersonLarsonSmith, offer a fascinating look at corporate tribes—groups of 20–150 people within a company that come together on their own rather than through management decisions—and how executives can use tribes to maximize productivity and profit. Drawing upon research from a 10-year study of more than 24,000 people in two dozen organizations, they argue that tribes have the greatest influence in determining how much and what quality work gets done. The authors identify the five stages of employee tribal development—Life sucks, My life sucks, I’m great and you’re not, We’re great

and Life is great – and offer advice on how to manage these groups. They also share insights from the health care, philanthropic, engineering, biotechnology and other industries and include key points lists for each chapter. Particularly useful is the Tribal Leader's Cheat Sheet, which helps determine and assess success indicators. Well written and enlightening, this book will be of interest to business professionals at all levels. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Tribal Leadership gives amazingly insightful perspective on how people interact and succeed. I learned about myself and learned lessons I will carry with me and reflect on for the rest of my life.” (John W. Fanning, Founding Chairman and CEO Napster Inc.) “[A]n unusually nuanced view of high-performance cultures. . . . [S]hare the book with your Type A's and prima donnas, as it expertly describes the tension between loners who perform exceptionally and those who perform exceptionally but who measure success as part of a team.” (Inc.) “[T]he most thorough and unique book to come along pertaining to organizational dynamics in quite some time.... Whether you're trying to move an organization forward or trying to move forward yourself, Tribal Leadership is a great place to begin your efforts. (Business Lexington) “Leaders of both for profit and non-profit organizations, including politicians, and can benefit from perusing Tribal Leadership.” (McClatchy-Tribune News Service)

Very interesting ideas about getting past the limiting mindset of success as "me against you" to a team approach and the possibility of then getting past that, the "us vs. them", to a richer model of "we/us vs. the problem we want to solve or the need we want to address". How to include and value, and thereby get the most from, all collaborators in a group endeavor. I was a bit put off, though, by the "cultural appropriation" of the authors' use of the concept of "tribal"- I had imagined the book would center around leadership models in actual Native American tribal structures, many of whom have a lot to teach us!

This book reminds me of Jim Collins book Good to Great in that both are presenting findings from lengthy research studies. While Collins book talked more about their underlying methodology, Tribal Leadership shows five cultural levels and describes the transition from one to the next. Briefly, the five stages are: 1. Life sucks 2. My life sucks 3. I'm great 4. We're great 5. Life is great As tribes

(groups of 20 to 150 people) improve culturally through the five levels, values change and a noble cause for the organization is found. The discussion about how tribes can get stuck in the interaction between stages 2 and 3 was interesting and explains why there are so few organizations at the higher levels. The big aha moment for me in this book was the discussion of developing three person relationships (triads) and how this can be vastly more effective for an organization than the 1:1 relationships found at lower levels. My recommendation: read this book, share it with others, and tell them I said so.

I had heard this book mentioned a few times while listening to Michael Hyatt's podcasts and knew that I was going to read it. Little did I know the amount of insight this book would have on my understanding of how tribes (businesses, organizations, teams) operate. Not only that, but that the key to understanding where they are at, and how to try to move them forward is a matter of listening to their language. I will definitely be rereading this book as often as I can, to refresh the points, and to make sure I am doing my best to help those I work with to reach that next level. A great book for anyone that wants to improve their leadership abilities.

This book will open the door to communication for any leader trying to change the culture of their organization. It's simple, effective, and easy to read. The amazing thing about this book is how it teaches you (and your team) how to recognize the meaning of the language that everyone uses and quickly determine their level of commitment to the team effort. IT'S SIMPLY TRUE! The power of the book lies in the way it helps the reader better understand the reasons we choose the words we do to express ourselves. Leaders quickly learn to change their speaking habits which will immediately create greater influence on the team and also, helps them easily identify non-productive members of the team. I highly recommend this book for any organization or company.

To begin the authors define a tribe as "a group between 20 and 150 people. Here's the test for whether someone is in one of your tribes: if you saw her walking down the street, you'd stop and say "hello"". The continue: "Tribes in company get work done - sometimes a lot of work - but they don't form because of work. Tribes are the basic building block of any large human effort, including earning a living. As such their influence is greater than that of teams, entire companies, and even superstar CEOs. In companies, tribes decide whether the new leader is going to flourish or get taken out. They determine how much work gets done, and of what quality." The key question is then what makes the difference between tribes that excel and others that do not? The authors argue it is

the presence of Tribal Leaders. The continue by defining what tribal leaders do: "Tribal Leaders focus their efforts on building the tribe - or more precisely, upgrading the tribal culture...Divisions and companies run by Tribal Leaders set the standard of performance in their industries, from productivity and profitability to employee retention. They are talent magnets, with people so eager to work for the leader that they will take a pay cut if necessary...Their efforts seem effortless, leaving many people puzzled by how they do it. Many Tribal Leaders, if asked can't articulate what they are doing that's different, but after reading this book, you will be able to explain and duplicate their success."The book's main focus after having defined the tribe and Tribal Leadership is to "give you perspective and tools of a Tribal Leader: someone who can unstick the conveyor belt - and make it run faster for whole groups of people, no matter which stage they're in. The result is more effective workplaces, greater strategic success, less stress, and more fun." This conveyor belt is an analogy for what the authors define as the tribal stages 1 through 5. Each stage is characterized by certain language and behavior.

Stage 1: "The person at Stage One is alienated from others, expressing the view that "life sucks."Stage 2: "Stage Two people are surrounded by people who seem to have some power they lack. As a results, their language expresses "my life sucks."Stage 3: "The person at Stage Three is connected to others in a series of dyadic (two-person) relationships. the language of this stage expresses "I'm great," and in the background - unstated - is "and you're not."Stage 4: "The person forms structures called triads, in which they build values-based relationships between others. At the same time, the words of Stage Four people are centered on "we're great" and, in the background, "and they're not." The "they" is another tribe - in the same company or in another.

Stage 5: "A person at Stage Five expresses "life is great." Five shares the same characteristics of Four, except that there is no "they." As a result, these people form ever-growing networks with anyone whose values resonate with their own. The only Stage Five cultures we have observed (in corporate settings) exists as long as a history-making project lasts or as long as the tribe is so far ahead of its competitors that they are irrelevant."Simply put the role of Tribal Leaders is "do two things: (1) listen for which cultures exist in their tribes and (2) upgrade those tribes using specific leverage points."A very interesting, educative and fun read. It helps one look at companies through a new viewpoint with a specific focus on the culture and relationships/dynamics within it. It is filled with practical real-life examples and applications and backed by substantial empirical research. Highly recommended!

Below are excerpts from the book that I found particularly insightful:

1- "People at Stage Three approach leadership as though it were a set of tasks they could check off their to-do list (e.g., "set the vision," "get alignment," and "listen with intention"). The moment leadership becomes cookie-cutter, it isn't leadership at all - it's management. By making

the person aware that he's behaving in a Stage Three fashion toward leadership, you might help him see that he isn't a leader at all. This realization may propel him into the set of epiphanies of the next chapter."

2- "...The two most important aspects of owning Stage Four: identifying and leveraging core values, and aligning on a noble cause. Everything else the tribe does should be sandwiched between these constructs. Projects, activities, initiatives, processes - unless they are fueled by values and reach toward the tribal vision - should either be rethought until they are consistent with these guiding principles, or pruned. By definition, core values and a noble cause can never be "checked off," in the same way that companies complete an upgrade to computer technology."

3- "...Values must be core, and that means universal...Second, the unity resulting from core cause and a noble cause must be alignment, not agreement...Alignment, to us, means bringing pieces into the same line - the same direction."

4- "The Tribal Leadership Strategy Map: Start with core values and noble cause in the center, then move to outcomes and go counterclockwise around the model (assets and behaviors). Test Questions: Assets sufficient for the Outcomes? Enough assets for behaviors? Will behaviors accomplish outcomes?"

5- "An outcome, by contrast (to a goal), is a present state of success that morphs into an even bigger victory over time."

6- "A stage five tribe can work with any group that has a commitment to values that are core and that apply to everyone, even if those values are different from its own."

7- "While Tribal Leaders do their work for the good of the group, not for themselves, they are rewarded with loyalty, hard work, innovation, and collaboration. The tribe gets work of higher quality done in less time. The person is often seen as a candidate for top organizational jobs or for positions in government."

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