



# THE AGILE CULTURE

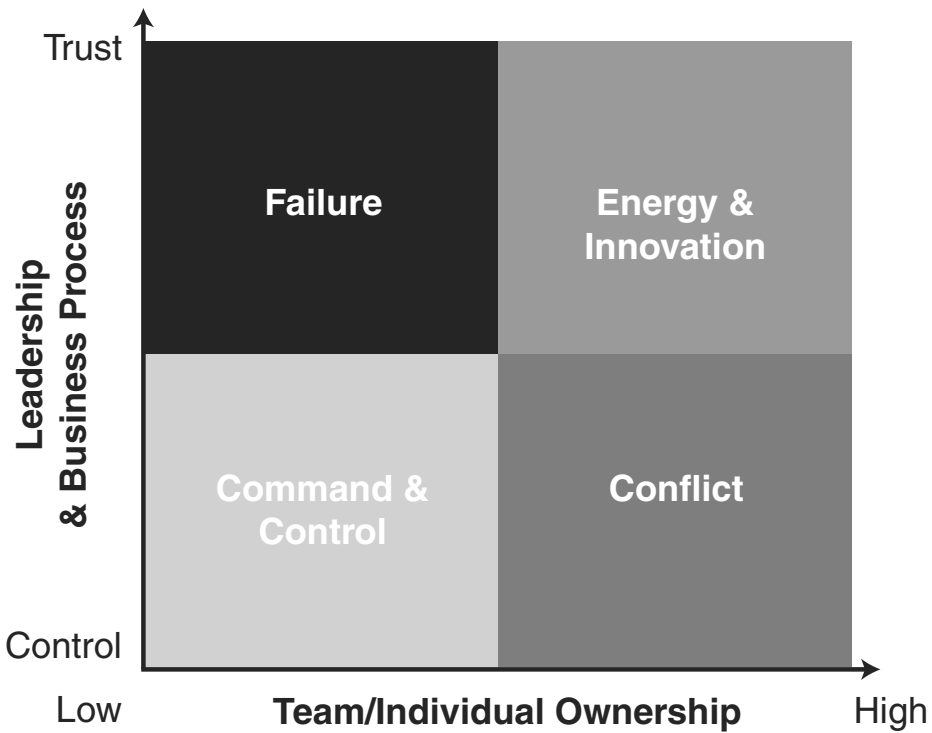
LEADING THROUGH TRUST AND OWNERSHIP

POLLYANNA PIXTON | PAUL GIBSON | NIEL NICKOLAISEN

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**THE TRUST-OWNERSHIP MODEL**

## **Praise for *The Agile Culture***

“This is the Agile book I’ve been waiting for. Enough with the rituals of process. Let’s get into what really matters—creating the culture that teams need to thrive.”

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**—Hendrik Esser, director of portfolio and technology management, Ericsson**

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**—Christine DelPrete, senior director of technology, Amirsys, Inc.**

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# THE AGILE CULTURE

## LEADING THROUGH TRUST AND OWNERSHIP

***Pollyanna Pixton***  
***Paul Gibson***  
***Niel Nickolaisen***

◆ Addison-Wesley

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*To my mother, an amazing woman. And to the McKinney family, who  
have taken me in as one of their own.*

—Pollyanna Pixton

*I dedicate this book to my wife, Carrie, who has been my companion, my  
help, and my support for the last forty years and without whom none of  
this would have been possible.*

—Paul Gibson

*This is dedicated to my family and friends—the people who have helped  
me have a wonderful life.*

—Niel Nickolaisen

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# FOREWORD

“It’s all about the people . . .”

Change, or any transformation activity, is daunting. As experts tell us, “You don’t change people, you can only change the process.” So how do we, as leaders, motivate and inspire our employees and organizations to change?

Command and control leadership limits creativity, broad thinking, and the ability for us, as leaders, to get the most out of the talent in the organization. The Millennials that we hire today are very social, and they interact and learn through social means in a very virtual and boundaryless hierarchy. Large organizations, by their very own weight, are not nimble. But in today’s social/cloud/mobile world, organizations need to experiment and pivot more rapidly. To compound this dilemma, process tends to govern too tightly, with every exception or edge case being overmanaged. Process becomes a controlling means to an end and not a guideline. Organizational outcomes tend to be measured in vanity metrics. Trust is completely eroded, and creativity is muffled.

Dealing with this requires a shift in our leadership model: a move from command and control to a collaborative model that builds trust and pushes ownership and decision making deeper into the organization, while retaining a good balance of process and policy. The outcomes demonstrate an organization with energy and creativity, surfacing the talent and resilience to innovate and pivot as the business dictates.

I like this book, and the authors, because these ideas have been applied successfully with groups within IBM and within elements of Pitney Bowes. With the help of many employees who piloted the initial workshops, the authors polished many of the early models and refined them to the point where they were able to publish them for this book. Additionally, the authors provide metrics that can help you know whether you are on the right path to building a high-performing, collaborative team and creating a culture of trust.

Now, what do I have to say about the authors and why I admire them for writing this book? Paul Gibson and I worked together from 2007 to 2010 at IBM. He is truly a proper British gentleman. He helped me with the Agile adoption initiative—during which we trained, in 18 months, more than 8,000 employees on Agile approaches—resulting in over 60 percent of projects using Agile. The success of the Agile adoption is directly correlated to his passion and commitment to the IBMers and their wanting to get off the dreaded six-month project death marches. As we rolled out Agile at IBM, it highlighted the need for better communication and collaboration. This is how I met Pollyanna Pixton and Niel Nickolaisen.

The mold was broken when Pollyanna Pixton was born. For a person of short stature, she packs a mean bark but no bite, and a sense of having fun all the time. Her passion is improving leaders and giving them tools to succeed. I met her at an Agile conference and sat through her “Collaborative Leadership” lecture, in which she spoke about moving away from command and control to collaborative leadership. I thought this would dovetail nicely with the work Paul and I were doing at IBM. Pollyanna had cofounded Accelinnova with Niel, so they came as a package deal. Niel, another proper gentleman, but from Utah, created a model to help teams set priorities and backlogs, and that ensured that teams were building value, not just building stuff. When an opportunity presents itself, I fondly goad Pollyanna as she and Niel teach collaborative leadership. I tell the participants that Niel’s content is “hard but straightforward” and Pollyanna’s is the soft, fluffy stuff. If you want to see a short woman, dressed in black, go ballistic, just tell her that she teaches only “soft” stuff.

These three folks are dear friends who have helped me through my own transformation, and I thank them for that. The models illustrated in this book show how leaders can overcome obstacles (people or process) they face to build a culture of trust and high-performing collaborative teams.

I hope you enjoy the book and have the opportunity to apply the concepts. I certainly make every effort to apply them at each company I’m at or to each client I’m working with.

—*Sue McKinney, vice president, engineering backup and recovery at Symantec, and former Pitney Bowes and IBM vice president of development*

# PREFACE

Given today's rapidly changing business cycles, it is essential that leaders transform their organizations to be value-driven, responsive, and incredibly agile. The largest barrier to Agile adoption is not knowing how to change the culture to one focused on learning how to delight customers. This book provides and explains tools and models that leaders can use to create the vision for and implement this culture transformation.

It is not easy to go from a date-driven, internally focused culture with its false certainties to a value-driven, customer-focused, agile culture. Given the choice, most people choose the status quo. Many people go kicking and screaming through the transformation. Some people or organizations won't make the transition at all. Through our experiences in technology companies (IBM, Pitney Bowes, and others) adopting Agile, we have developed a set of proven tools to help organizational members at any level create a culture that embraces and fosters Agile methodologies and delivers products customers love. These tools lead to a culture of continuous innovation, transparency, trust, living with uncertainty, proactive risk management, and improved decision making.

## Value Proposition

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This book is a handbook on how to create, move to, and maintain a culture of energy and innovation. We cover

- Creating a culture of trust.
- Helping teams take ownership and not taking it away from them.
- Aligning the goals of the teams with the business goals of the organization.
- Dealing honestly with ambiguity and uncertainty.

We start by setting the stage in Chapter 1, *Unleashing Talent*, by discussing why we need to unleash the talent of everyone in the organization and why the combination of a culture of trust and everyone knowing and owning results is the foundation for innovation and motivation.

Then we turn to an in-depth discussion of the Trust-Ownership Model in Chapter 2, *Trust and Ownership*. In Chapter 3, *Building Trust and Ownership*, we look at how to create, maintain, and move to a culture of high trust/high ownership. This includes the need for business alignment and for dealing honestly with ambiguity and uncertainty. The tools you will need for trust and ownership are found in Chapter 4, *Trust Tools*, and Chapter 5, *Ownership Tools*. In Chapter 6, *Business Alignment Tools*, we cover tools to help you ensure your goals and the goals of the team are aligned with the goals of the business. Chapter 7, *Dealing Honestly with Ambiguity*, presents the tools to deal honestly with ambiguity and uncertainty.

It is not an easy transition. Many people don't want to change. Many believe that if things are working effectively enough as they are, why should they do something differently? When this happens, we call it "hitting the wall"—a term we use to describe any obstacles and resistance you find to changing the culture. Where the walls might appear and what to do about them are covered in Chapter 8, *Tools to Deal with Walls*.

Metrics are important in assessing and driving progress, but metrics can be a wall if they work for the old culture but do not work for the new state. We dedicate Chapter 9, *Metrics*, to developing metrics for the optimal culture and discuss why they are important.

Finally, we provide an extensive case study in Chapter 10, *Case Study*, that covers all the principles in this book, helping you to see how you can use them in your organization.

Because many of the tools have multiple uses in getting you to Energy and Innovation, Appendix A, *Quick Reference Guide*, is a quick reference highlighting which point (trust, ownership, alignment, or ambiguity) the tool applies to and in which chapter its use and description can be found. Appendixes B through E provide worksheets, processes, and metrics for helping you move in the right direction.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Group Acknowledgments

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As a group, we would like to thank Todd Little for pushing the edges of our model, asking hard questions, and helping us sort through the ins and outs of our ideas. He was a great help in scaling our ideas and giving focus to the book. His review comments were invaluable.

Marty Cagan has been a champion of agile cultures for many years. We were delighted when he reviewed our book and passed on valuable insights to make this work even better.

John Lynch, Hendrik Esser, and Steven “Doc” List reviewed from an “agilista” leadership point of view, as their work is in the development of leaders who support agile teams and methodologies. Their contributions helped us clarify many sections and concepts for our readers. We also had excellent reviewers and editors from Pearson who spent hours helping us get our ideas correctly on paper.

We have a much better book because of the help from them all. Thank you.

## Pollyanna Pixton

---

About my coauthors: The world is so lucky to have Paul Gibson in it. His view of the world and his wise words have expanded the way I see things without criticism. “It’s not complicated” are words from him that always bring ideas to light. Niel has been in my corner for many years, always asking “How can I help?” What great friends, with such integrity and honesty, always pushing me to learn more and try to be humble.

I have the support of many amazing friends: Sue McKinney, who provided the opportunity to us to try out these tools in the organizations

she has led. Greg Carlisle, over distance and time, has always been there with kind words, encouragement, and love. Imogene and Michael Rigdon have seen me through so much of my life's journey with understanding, compassion, and fun. Sally Bosken saved my sanity in high school and has been there ever since with the right words and a good laugh when needed.

Todd Little provided insights into our models in this book as he tried to “break” them, looking to ensure we have it covered. He has been a pal of constant conversation and exchange of ideas for years. When I stumble, he is there to catch me and assists me with seeking self-forgiveness.

Leo and Jean Gallagher are the true definition of the word “neighbors.” They are always there when I need something, offering support, kindness, stromboli, and the “occasional” bottle of wine.

I have spent many long hours working alone with only my delightful dog, Missy, to keep me company. Throughout all my ranting and raving, she never complained. What a perfect companion.

## **Paul Gibson**

---

First, thanks to all my colleagues and friends I have worked with throughout my career. You have individually and jointly taught me so much.

Thanks to the leaders I have worked with, who inspired, trusted, and challenged me with great opportunities. Your guidance and examples are the foundation of this book. Especial thanks to Geoff Robinson, Kristof Kloeckner, Bill Woodworth, Pat Sultz, and Sue McKinney, who all showed me just how good leadership can be.

Thanks to Ted Rivera, my coconspirator in our round-the-world Agile training sessions. I learned so much from Ted, and it was a special time of my life that I will never forget.

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Finally, I owe so much to my coauthors, Pollyanna and Niel. They opened my eyes to the power of collaboration and culture. Their experience, knowledge, and insight have been profound, their discussions always rewarding, and their friendship delightful. Without them, this book would never have been written.

---

## Niel Nickolaisen

---

I would like to acknowledge my close and fun working relationship with both Pollyanna Pixton and Paul Gibson. I met Pollyanna about ten years ago, and knowing her has led to many interesting learning experiences. Paul Gibson is one of the great people on the face of the earth. The world would be a much better place if everyone were like Pollyanna and Paul. I would also like to thank my staff and the president of my organization, who gave me the time to contribute to this book—and I promise the writing never got in the way of my work! I have had the pleasure of working with and learning from a variety of great leaders—without them, I would be nothing.

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# UNLEASHING TALENT

## The Big Ideas

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- In today's rapidly changing world, we need to unleash the talent of everyone in the organization.
- The combination of a culture of trust and everyone knowing and owning results is the foundation for innovation and motivation.

## Who Moved My World?

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Perhaps it has always been this way: Some organizations rise and then fall; others do well, plateau, and then somehow hang around; still others bring it together and then stay for a long time as leaders. However, today these cycles move *so* much faster. We often joke that the title of the next great business book should be “Good to Great to Gone.”

In our quiet moments we ponder the reasons for this acceleration in hopes of finding ways leaders can help their company succeed.

Certainly the ubiquity of technology drives part of the change. Every aspect of life is now digital: the books and newspapers that some of us still read; the games we play; the way we communicate with each other and our customers—it has been years since we *wrote* a letter. The work tools are now all digital. We review and approve expense reports from the tiny screens of smartphones—usually while pretending to listen to coworkers during a meeting! A common theme among technology analysts is that the technology part of the marketing budget will soon outgrow the budget of the IT department.

Consider also the ways in which we are incredibly connected. We can collaborate with almost anybody in almost any way at any time. We now

pull off major projects with people we never meet in person. The ease and fluidity of collaboration mean that ideas flow much faster and get implemented much faster. All of this has us hurtling onward.

We also think the instant availability of any and all services contributes to the constant dynamic nature of this new normal. There is no need to wait for the things that used to take some time—and thought. If you need a new business application, one exists for you from someone. If you need to create a new application, the development, test, and production environments are just a website and a credit card away.

The net result is constant change at an increasing pace in an environment of incredible uncertainty.

Just a few years ago, a major consumer technology company was declared to be the most innovative company on the face of the earth. Today, the same people who made that claim are saying that the company has lost its way. What happened? A competitor developed a new product that is taking market share away. We suspect this cycle will continue and include other companies that come up with something new and amazing.

With technology everywhere and changing all the time, our jobs, customers, and competitors can change in an instant. In this world of rapid change and ambiguity, what hope do we have of keeping up? What can we possibly do?

We propose that in the midst of this accelerating change, some things become very important.

## **The Power of Trust and Ownership**

---

Now more than ever, we need to unleash the talent of individuals, teams, and organizations. This might be the only hope we have to not just survive but thrive. But, too often, we put a wet blanket over the fire of innovation and motivation. In the midst of uncertainty, we attempt to control outcomes by controlling actions. In a state of fear, we insist on obedience to what has worked in the past—even if it no longer works. We somehow believe that rigidity results in predictability. Worried about the future, we become opaque rather than transparent with our teams. And when push comes to shove, we doggedly trust just ourselves and our instincts.

We have always believed that no one person can know everything and needs to rely on the talents of others to be successful in a role, on a project,

or in the marketplace. With the increasing pace of change, trusting each other is critical. It is impossible for a person to know it all and do it all when it is all different.

We maintain that highly motivated individuals and teams who are passionate about delivering results will figure out what to do and make sure the right things get done. If such people understand what needs to be done and why it needs to be done and have the tools to succeed, miracles seem to happen. And, given the ambiguity that accompanies the decisions we make, we need such miracles.

We wrote this book for two reasons. First, we want to share with you the power of leading with Trust and Ownership. Second, we would like to provide you with specific, pragmatic tools we have used—and believe you can also use—to create a culture of Trust and Ownership. The combination of Trust and Ownership unleashes individuals, teams, and organizations to do amazing things—even and particularly in the face of rapid change and uncertainty.

Let's start with an example of how one rather unremarkable e-commerce team used Trust and Ownership to do something that had never been done before.

The company was deeply worried about customer retention. In parallel, the e-commerce product team had low credibility. After all, thought company management, customer retention is low because the web team is just not that good. When we say that the e-commerce team was unremarkable, we mean that the team was stocked with good, solid, hard-working, capable people. Not a single member of the team would have initially been considered some king of e-commerce or a customer retention superstar. The team had been through its share of turmoil. The company had tried different leaders and structures. They had moved the team into and out of different parts of the company. But not much changed. Some members of the team found other jobs and quit but most stuck around. Like we said, rather unremarkable. Finally, because nothing else had worked, the company became desperate and moved the team to be part of the information technology (IT) department. After all, e-commerce used technology; therefore, IT seemed the natural place for the team. This was not a conscious move but it started the team and the company on the path to doing what had never been done before.

The head of the IT department, the chief information officer (CIO), was not sure what to do with the team and so put the entire lot into the application development team. Steve, the newly announced manager of

the application development team, took the change in stride and, not knowing any better, treated the e-commerce team like everyone else in his group. Let's pause for just a moment. He treated them like everyone else in his group. What did that mean? Steve was a leader who believed in the power of Trust and Ownership. He did not pretend he knew much about e-commerce (although he did). He did not believe the word on the street that the e-commerce team was ineffective or rudderless. He treated them the same way he treated everyone else. Steve figured that all the team needed to thrive was to own the results (but what results?) and to be trusted.

Steve met with each member of the team individually and then met with them as a group. In every encounter with them, he affirmed that he knew they were talented and knew what to do. He spent time with them explaining the company's goals and how both the IT department and the application development team directly supported those goals. He encouraged them to think big—really big. He asked them to link their work to the company goals. He shared his concerns about customer retention. He did not offer solutions but asked questions like “When it is too late to recover a lost customer?”, “When do you think a customer first starts to think about leaving us?”, “What are the indicators that a customer is trending away from us?”, and “How soon could we pick up those indicators?”

Steve posed such questions at what seemed to be random times. During a project review, Steve might gaze out the window and ask, “I wonder if there is a way to detect customer dissatisfaction before customers even make their dissatisfaction known to us?” He would then return to whatever he had been doing. But the team got the message; Steve was somewhat consumed with customer retention.

Steve showed the team he trusted them. This did not mean he was soft or a pushover. If the team told Steve that they would get something done by Friday, Steve expected it would be done by Friday. If it was not done by Friday, he wanted to know why. Steve did not accept excuses. If the team did not deliver, Steve wanted to know what the team would do differently the next time to make sure that they would keep their commitments. But if the team told Steve what they would get done, he left them alone to do their work.

Steve pushed ownership to the team. If the team had a problem, Steve would help them diagnose the issues without telling them what to do. He would say things like “This one is going to be a real challenge. I am really interested in what you come up with the solve it.” At first, the team

was not comfortable with this approach—after all, the team had been kicked around enough that their confidence was low. But as time went on and they resolved issues, their confidence grew. As confidence grew, the team started to think about customer retention. After all, they were the e-commerce team. Customers used their products to search, review, reject, and purchase the company’s products. If they did not have insight into the mind of the customer, who did?

As the team worked on various projects, they thought about how those projects might be used to somehow, someday improve customer retention. The only data available to the team were traditional web analytics and click stream data. This helped them understand the navigation and friction points with customers. Could they leverage this to improve customer retention? In their product and project planning, they started to brainstorm about customer retention. They started by asking some “what must be true” questions. In their case, what must be true in order to detect which customers are thinking of leaving us? They jotted down things like

- We need to know their previous buying patterns.
- We need to know their previous website navigation patterns.
- We need to know their full customer service history.
- We need to know what products they returned.
- We need to be able to match the patterns of similar customers.
- We need to profile customers into behavior patterns.

In reviewing their list, they realized there was a whole bunch of information that they needed but did not have—yet.

Their next what must be true question was “What must be true in order to get this information?”

This list included

- We need to rope people into the project who can get us the information.
- If we don’t have the information, we might need to develop ways to get the information.

Their final what must be true question was “Even if we have the information, what must be true in order to use it?”

They had only one answer to this question: We need analytical tools that we can use to profile and then predict the behavior of individual customers.

At this point it was time to talk with Steve. The team met with Steve and walked him through their approach and logic. Steve offered a suggestion here or there and then asked, “What do you need me to do in order to move this forward?” The team needed someone on the project who could get the team the information. They would also need Steve to allocate budget for any analytical tools. Steve told the team that a member of the data team had expressed interest in doing some type of customer analytics and told them to see if they could convince this person to join. As you might expect, this person came immediately on board.

Having assembled the team, the group now needed to figure out how to operationalize their approach. They were dealing with an incredible amount of uncertainty. First, would the approach even work? Second, could they get the data they lacked? Third, would the data be meaningful enough to provide insight? Fourth, would the analytical tools work? Fifth, would the analytics yield answers that would increase customer retention? How could they best deal with this massive uncertainty? It was time to spend more time with Steve.

The team presented these challenges and asked for advice. “Hmmm,” answered Steve, “when I am confronted with a lot of uncertainty, I think of how I can break things into phases. During each phase, I eliminate at least one element of uncertainty. So you might want to think of what small steps you can take now—no need to invest a great deal of resource until you have more confidence that this will work—to find out what will and will not work. You can then increase your investment as uncertainty declines.”

The team got back to work and laid out what they thought was a logical, phased project plan that moved the project toward the end goal while also reducing the uncertainty of the future phases. They returned to Steve and showed him the plan. Steve asked some questions that helped the team refine the phases and they started work.

In the first phase, the team assembled the data they thought they needed. Most of the data was available but not in a consumable form. So the team took a slight detour and added a phase that incorporated data conditioning to the project. The first phase also identified a significant gap in the data. In order to group customers into similar patterns and profiles, the team wanted to get demographic and psychographic data that the company simply did not have. How could they get this? How much of this data did they need? And could they get by without it?

They identified their options:

- They could, at a pretty high cost, buy the data. But it might be foolish to incur the costs on an analysis that might not even work.
- They could buy the data for a subset of customers and use this as a test to validate the approach.

They had agreed to purchase the subset of the data when a member of the team asked, “How many of our employees are also customers? If there are enough of us, could we collect the data from employees and use that as our data subset?”

The data team ran a query that showed enough employees were also customers. But how would they get the employees to offer up their personal data?

The team went back to Steve and explained what they wanted. Steve thought, “Interesting idea but how do we get the employees to participate? We are pretty early in a very uncertain project. If we tell employees what we are doing, are we setting an expectation we might not meet? Or is this a way to get everyone invested in thinking about customer retention?” Steve offered to run the idea up the management chain. In selling the project, Steve kept things at a very high level and repeated, over and over, the experimental nature of what they were attempting. He assured everyone that their personal information would be secure (and it would).

Enough employees participated that the project moved forward. The team now had the data but needed to do the analysis. The company had some analytical tools but not anything that would do the type of profiling and predicting the project needed. What to do now? Someone suggested another meeting with Steve. Someone else said, “No, we can figure this one out ourselves.” Several team members volunteered to do the research to see what was available—at a very low cost—to do such analyses.

When the team got back together, they had identified a couple of open source options they could use to test their approach.

The results were encouraging. Several clear patterns emerged. Other patterns were mixed or confused. But the clear patterns were compelling enough to ramp up the investment and try data with non-employee customers. The company agreed to start by purchasing the external data for a subset of customers. The company also agreed to acquire advanced, non-open-source technology—on a trial basis—to do improved analytics on

customer retention. Over the next several months, the pilots and tests continued and expanded with improving results. Throughout all of this, Steve remained tightly connected to the project team, not to tell them what to do but to guide and focus them on the desired outcome—improved customer retention. Steve also removed any barriers and championed not just the project but the project team.

This happened more than two years ago. The company and team have continued to refine the approach and the results. The company's customer analytics are so good that the company can tell during the first customer interaction with their website, with high confidence, which profile matches the customer. This profile defines the customer's buying motivation and purchasing triggers. The company appeals to this specific motivation in everything they do with that customer. The profile also tells the company the customer behaviors that indicate if the customer is trending away from the company. If the customer is trending away, the company invokes an intervention strategy specific to that customer type. Across all customer profiles, customer retention has increased an average of 12 percent, which has added millions of dollars to the bottom line. Along the way, the rather unremarkable e-commerce team—composed of the same people who were foisted on Steve more than two years ago—are considered geniuses in the company. Others seek them out for their opinions on a wide range of topics.

How did such a team and company transformation happen? Through the power of trust and ownership. Steve trusted the team to perform and built a very strong sense of ownership for company, departmental, and team results. This unleashed the team to become more than they had ever been. The team was motivated and innovative. The wet blanket of micro-management was lifted off the team and life for everyone got better.

Please keep in mind that trust alone is not enough, nor is ownership. What matters is the combination of a culture of trust and a passion for delivering the right results.

## **Getting Started with Trust and Ownership**

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In today's incredibly fast-paced and competitive markets, how do we deliver products and services that delight? By unleashing the talent of every person in the organization and focusing them on shared ideas that generate meaningful business value and by trusting them. This creates a



place where they want to be, not have to be. As leaders we can then step aside and let them do their work.

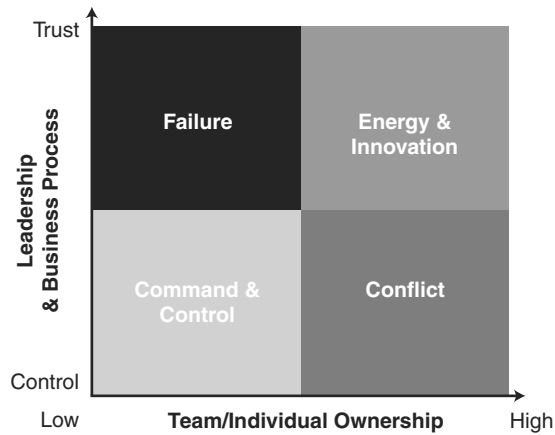
This sounds nice and possibly easy but many organizations fall short. We have seen them fail many times—too many times. The key to success is to create a culture open to the possibilities of change and innovation, one that can respond quickly to customer needs and wants, one that is agile.

What does this type of culture look like?

- Continuous definition of what is of value to customers and what will delight them, involving the customers and the entire organization.
- Delivering the right stuff when it is ready, when customers want to take it.
- Learning, learning, learning. Mistakes are accepted, not punished.
- Innovation is the accepted norm, not the exception.
- Everyone has what they need to succeed.
- Shared vision with all goals aligned with the business goals of the organization.

This works when the team has ownership of the solution (the “how” not the “what”) and when leaders trust the team and support processes that demonstrate that trust. That’s where we begin.

One look at the Trust-Ownership Model (Figure 1.1) makes it clear where everyone wants to be: Energy and Innovation. But are you there? If so, you may not need to read further.



**FIGURE 1.1** Trust-Ownership Model

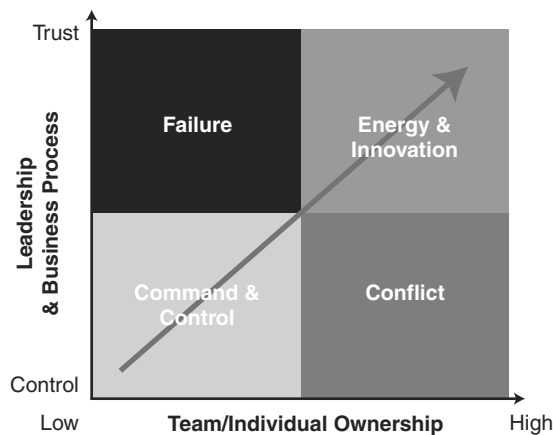
But most of our teams and organizations sit in the Command and Control state, because living in Failure or Conflict cannot last for long. If the team is in Conflict, they will eventually get tired of the fight and start doing what they are told, moving to Command and Control. In Failure, leaders are afraid the teams will not deliver, so they increase control, again moving to the Command and Control quadrant.

Energy and Innovation is severely hampered in the high-control environment/culture. Such a culture can limit productivity and revenues [1, 2].

Because we find most cultures in Command and Control, if we traverse the diagonal in Figure 1.2 from high control/low ownership to the high trust/high ownership state, we create a culture that maximizes delivery and innovation. The further along the diagonal your organization can move, the more successful the business is in delighting customers, delivering value early and often, and increasing revenue.

Integrity is the foundation. Where is the integrity in telling the team they “must have all this done by this date” when you haven’t asked the team if it is even possible? Or saying, “I want it done this way” without discussion and without considering there may be another, perhaps better, way? Setting unrealistic goals is dishonest and lacks integrity. Teams are very aware when this happens, and it leads to distrust and demotivation. Without integrity, you cannot create a high trust/high ownership culture.

However, the goals and purpose of all teams must align with the business goals of the organization. And to be a healthy organization, you must



**FIGURE 1.2** Moving to the green

deal honestly with ambiguity and uncertainty. With these things in place we have a high-performing organization, working together to provide value and delight customers.

## Book Conventions

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Before we move on to the next chapter, we'd like to describe our use of *we* and *I* in the stories and examples we use. The three of us (Pollyanna, Paul, and Niel) have worked together so much that we sometimes finish each other's sentences. We also sometimes work independently from each other. Writing this book created a bit of a challenge in how we relate our stories and experiences because sometimes we had the experience together and, at other times, the story belongs to only one of us. In an attempt to minimize the confusion but also be accurate in telling the stories, we developed what we hope is a simple rule of thumb. If two or all three of us were involved, we use *we*; if only one of us had the experience, we use *I*.

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