

Dialing in to the Hidden Hierarchy: An Analysis of Culture as Content in Popular Press Business Books

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This study investigates differences observed among popular press business books (b-books) written by multiple authors, mixed-gender authors, male vis-à-vis female authors, books published by the Harvard Business School Press compared to other presses combined, and books published between 1980 and 2006. 110 b-books were randomly selected from a population of 1,200 library b-books. These b-book variables were compared based on a depth of culture content measure (dependent variable). Using One-Way ANOVAs, five null-hypotheses were tested. Publication eras differed significantly, with $p = .041$. The number of co-authors on a b-book differed significantly, with $p = .032$. The emergent theme in the b-books appears to be leaders must be dialed directly in to hidden hierarchies of their organizational cultures in order to steer them towards fortitude.

INTRODUCTION

Edgar Schein has cast more light on *Organizational Culture and Leadership* as an academic subject than perhaps any other scholar in recent times. The second edition of his book, published in 1992, considered classic managerial reading, continues to spark new ideas on what exactly organizational culture is, how leaders should examine the “artifacts,” “espoused values,” and “basic underlying assumptions” as layers of organizational culture: Schein articulates what roles leaders play in shaping their cultures. Kotter and Heskett (1992), in their book *Corporate Culture and Performance*, lay the groundwork for the study of corporate culture as a field of academic research—obviously linking it to literatures on organizational development. However, culture as content in popular press business books (b-books) was made mainstream in part by Deal and Kennedy (1982); their b-book *Corporate Cultures: the Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* is the first to define and segregate “corporate culture” from the broader denotation of “culture” found in dictionaries.

This study’s purpose was to investigate through content analysis if any mean differences existed in the depth of culture as content (dependent variable) found in nearly three decades of these b-books. Books purely on economics and marketing were excluded from this study in order to delimit its aim and scope to general business and management topics, especially since culture normally branches from organizational development. Publication dates for b-books examined

ranged from Alfred D. Chandler Jr. and Herman Daems's *Managerial Hierarchies* published in 1980 to Judith E. Glaser's *The DNA of Leadership* published in 2006. This range was delimited because very few b-books included content on "culture" or corporate culture prior to 1979 (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). The 29 B-books with five or more layers of culture content, as observed in the index of each book in this study, are listed in descending order in Table 1.

TABLE 1
POPULAR PRESS BUSINESS BOOKS LISTED BY THE DEPTH OF CULTURE
MEASURE IN DESCENDING ORDER

POPULAR PRESS BUSINESS BOOKS	Culture Layers
1. <i>Riding the Waves of Culture 2/e</i> (1998), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner	55
2. <i>Organizational Culture and Leadership 2/e</i> (1992), Edgar H. Schein	51
3. <i>The New Corporate Cultures</i> (1999), Deal & Kennedy	32
4. <i>People, Performance & Pay</i> (1996), Flannery, Hofrichter, & Platten	29
5. <i>Corporate Cultures</i> (1982), Deal & Kennedy	24
6. <i>Powerhouse Partners</i> (2004), Dent & Krefft	24
7. <i>Mastering Strategy</i> (2003), Rigsby & Greco	23
8. <i>The Value Profit Chain</i> (2003), Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger	23
9. <i>Evolve: Succeeding in the Digital Culture of Tomorrow</i> (2001), Rosabeth Moss Kanter	21
10. <i>Corporate Culture and Performance</i> (1992), Kotter & Heskett	20
11. <i>Corporate Culture/Team Culture</i> (1997), Sherriton & Stern	19
12. <i>Naked Conversations</i> (2006), Robert Scoble & Shel Israel	17
13. <i>Tough Choices</i> (1986), Barbara Ley Toffler	15
14. <i>The DNA of Leadership</i> (2006), Judith E. Glaser	15
15. <i>Fad-Free Management</i> (1996), Richard G. Hamermesh	12
16. <i>The Change Masters</i> (1983), Rosabeth Moss Kanter	9
17. <i>Deep Change</i> (1996), Robert E. Quinn	9
18. <i>What's Next</i> (2002), Kelly, Leyden, & Global Business Network	9
19. <i>The Flight of the Creative Class</i> (2005), Richard Florida	9
20. <i>Winning the Service Game</i> (1995), Schneider & Bowen	8
21. <i>Built to Last</i> (2002) Collins & Porras	8
22. <i>The Witch Doctors</i> (1996), Micklethwait & Wooldridge	6
23. <i>When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups</i> (1999), Leonard & swap	6
24. <i>Made in China</i> (2005), Donald N. Sull	6
25. <i>The Organizational Life Cycle</i> (1980), Kimberly, Miles, & Associates	5
26. <i>In the Age of the Smart Machine</i> (1988), Shoshana Zuboff	5
27. <i>Women, Mentors, and Success</i> (1992), Jeruchim & Shapiro	5
28. <i>The Change Monster</i> (2001), Jeanie Daniel Duck	5
29. <i>The Leadership Challenge</i> (2002), Kouzes & Posner	5

In *The Ultimate Business Library*, Crainer (1997) identified "a collection of fifty of the greatest books of management." (p. 1) Whether or not this list of 50 books is definitive begs the question; even so, there can be no denial of the contribution to the evolution of management and

thought many of the authors listed have made. Their lasting contributions continue to impact the management literature. Many of these authors' writings helped shape perspectives in management: 1) classical, 2) behavioral, 3) quantitative, 4) systems, and 5) contingency. Surnames of management theory elite are names easily recognized: Drucker, Follett, Mayo, Barnard, McGregor, Schein, Kotter, Vroom, are just a few.

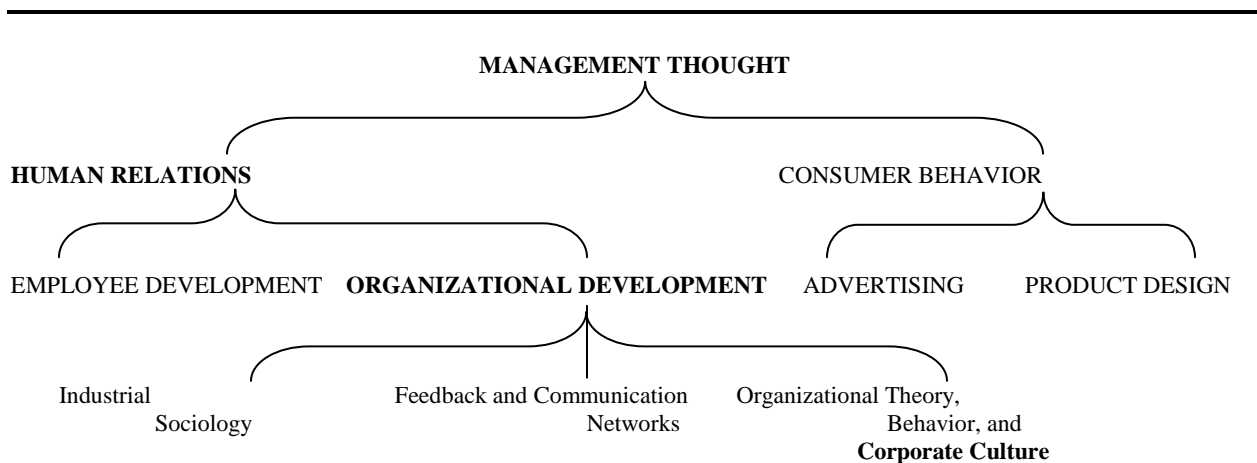
Denying the contributions made by Frederick W. Taylor (scientific management), Max Weber (bureaucratic management), and Henri Fayol (administrative management) to the Classical Perspective would be akin to a surgeon denying the existence of the human heart. Authors of classic b-books in management: Chester Barnard (1968), Mary Parker Follett (1941), Elton Mayo (1933) and Douglas McGregor (1960) are also credited with the theories (in some cases their practical consultative approaches) leading to the behavioral perspective. These early perspectives continue to shape management thinking, and today nearly every management textbook published includes a chapter on the evolution of management thought.

In 1951, Elliot Jaques's *The Changing Culture of a Factory* was published; the b-book was based on an extensive study of democratic practices at the United Kingdom's Glacier Metal Company—what appears to be an early effort to link issues of corporate culture directly to organizational development. Prior to 1979, not very much scholarship was written on “corporate culture.” In fact, “The first scholarly work to focus on organizational culture appeared in 1979” and “Andrew Pettigrew's ‘On Studying Organizational Culture’” was that work, published in *Administrative Science Quarterly* (Kotter & Heskett, 1992, p. 187).

Contribution to the Literature

One researcher, Aronoff (1975), was able to trace the behavioral perspective through a content analysis of 28 general management textbooks published between 1910 and 1974. With correlation analyses, Aronoff was able to show terms specific to the behavioral perspective increased pervasively over the years marking the steady increase of jargon relating to the behavior perspective influencing general management textbooks. Figure 1 presents a modified version of the map provided by Aronoff (1975) concerning the areas in general management textbooks he examined.

FIGURE 1
ARONOFF'S MAP OF THE AREAS IN GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEXTBOOKS
MODIFIED FOR CULTURE ADVICE GIVEN IN B-BOOKS



Therefore, this study contributes to the literature because it systematically analyzes culture content as observed and measured in the indexes of 110 randomly selected b-books, ranging from 1980 to 2006. It determines if culture content in these b-books has some element of consistency (emergent theme). Also, this study compares means to determine if significant differences exist on the culture content measure across several demographic variables—variables assumed to influence content. The results of the data analyses and hypotheses testing could lead to some meaningful advances in the literature about corporate culture content in b-books; b-books take a long time to write; they take a long time to read. Researchers reluctant to read 110 b-books on corporate cultures for one study would benefit by knowing what the authors' of these b-books, as a whole, are saying about the subject—what is the consistent advice they are giving. Some interesting research questions were answered.

The Research Questions

First, is there any difference in culture content and the era in which a b-book was published? Second, do b-books written with multiple authors differ when at least one author is male or female (multiple mixed-gender authors)? Third, do male vis-à-vis female authors differ in the amount of culture content they cover? Fourth, does culture content differ in terms of the number of authors who compose one book? And, fifth, does a b-book published by the Harvard University Press differ in the depth of culture content measure compared to non-Harvard presses combined?

A content analysis of the amount of content on culture as observed in these b-books would reveal some interesting unknowns about authors' writing b-books over the years. The majority of b-books examined offer a cornucopia of advice to their readers on actions managers/leaders can take on changing culture for organizational development purposes. Kotter and Heskett (1992, p. 92) found in their research among top corporations "Leadership from one or two people at the very top of an organization seems to be an absolutely essential ingredient when major change occurs." Corporate culture can be purposely changed by top management to make them more performance enhancing. Therefore, several research questions could be answered by analyzing the rich source of data observed in the b-books. In order to answer the aforementioned research questions, five null hypotheses were tested.

Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Means of three publication eras (1980s, 1990s, and 2000-2006) of b-books do not differ on the depth of culture content measure.

Hypothesis 2: Means of b-books with mixed-gender multiple authors (at least one male or female amongst them) do not differ from books written by same-gender authors on the depth of culture content measure.

Hypothesis 3: Means for male and female b-book authors do not differ on the depth of culture content measure.

Hypothesis 4: Means for b-books with one, two, or three authors do not differ on the depth of culture content measure.

Hypothesis 5: Means of b-books published by Harvard Business School Press do not differ from b-books published by non-HBS presses (combined into one group) on the depth of culture content measure.

RESULTS

Methodology, Sample, and Descriptive Statistics

The sample size of 110 b-books was adequate to assume a normal distribution. “Statistical theory also shows the standard deviation of a sampling distribution is inversely related to the sample size. That is, the larger the sample size, the smaller the standard deviation of the sampling distribution” (Henry, 1990, p. 39). Also, “For a sample size of 100, 95% of the sample means fall within ± 1.96 standard deviation units. A sample size of 10 (9 degrees of freedom) would require ± 2.26 standard deviation units” (Henry, 1990, p. 40.).

Methods common in the social science literature were used to analyze the data. All data were analyzed using the software SPSS 15.0. Furthermore, the five null hypotheses were tested using One-Way ANOVAs. One-Way ANOVA is a robust way to analyze variables when there is only one independent categorical variable with two or more levels being compared on one dependent variable measured at least on the interval or ratio scale (Kachigan, 1991). The statistical analyses presented in this study were based on 110 randomly selected b-books drawn from a population of 1,200 university library database business titles. The descriptive statistics were compiled and frequencies and percents are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR B-BOOKS WITH FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTS

<i>B-Books = 110</i>	<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Female Authors	14	12.7
	Male Authors	86	78.2
	Total	100	90.9
	<i>Mixed Gender</i>	<u>10</u>	<u>9.1</u>
	Total	110	100
Mixed Gender	Same Gender	100	90.9
	Mixed Gender	<u>10</u>	<u>9.1</u>
	Total	110	100
Multiple Author Books	One Author	67	60.9
	Two Authors	36	32.7
	Three Authors	<u>7</u>	<u>6.4</u>
	Total	110	100
Publication Era in Years	1980s	39	35.5
	1990s	37	33.3
	2000 to 2006	<u>34</u>	<u>30.9</u>
	Total	110	100
Harvard Business School Press	Non-HBS Press	88	80.0
	HBS Press	<u>22</u>	<u>20.0</u>
	Total	110	100

The mode was 47 of the 110 b-books examined had zero culture content or any corresponding synonym for culture mentioned (corporate culture, organizational culture, etc.). One b-book had 55 layers of culture content. There were 17 b-books with only one layer of culture content. The mean for 110 b-books was 4.85 layers of culture content with a standard deviation of 9.58. The dependent measure (depth of culture) is considered ratio-scale data: unlike temperature measured

in Fahrenheit or Celsius, which easily shows an arbitrary zero-point when converting one scale to the other, there was a true zero value for the culture content measure. The layers of culture measure were compiled and frequencies and percents are presented in Table 3.

Forty-seven of the 110 b-books sampled had no mention of the word culture in the index; for example, *Improving Supervisors' Effectiveness* (1985) by Jack J. Phillips was coded as having a zero amount of the culture measure. A b-book with culture mentioned only once in its index and not having any subordinate layers received a code of one. A b-book with culture and one subordinate point, say climate as its first subordinate point, received a code of two: culture plus one layer. And, the data was coded accordingly thereafter. Some books were rife with the culture measure.

Riding the Waves of Culture 2/e (1998) by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner had 55 layers of culture, *Organizational Culture and Leadership 2/e* (1992) by Edgar H. Schein had 51 layers of culture, and *The New Corporate Cultures* (1999) by Terrence Deal and Allen Kennedy had 32 layers of the depth of culture content measure as found in the index count. Depth of culture was measured by merely counting culture and the number of layers that appeared in the index of the b-book itself. This was a true ratio level measure, because 47 of the b-books selected covered no culture at all. The depth of culture content was a simple measure to observe and code. The table of contents and indexes of each of the 110 b-books was examined. (See Appendix for a list of the 110 books sampled across three eras)

TABLE 3
LAYERS OF CULTURE OBSERVED IN INDEXES OF THE 110 B-BOOKS

Culture Content Layers	Number of B-Books	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	47	42.7	42.7
1	17	15.5	58.2
2	12	10.9	69.1
3	3	2.7	71.8
4	2	1.8	73.6
5	5	4.5	78.2
6	3	2.7	80.9
8	2	1.8	82.7
9	4	3.6	86.4
12	1	.9	87.3
15	2	1.8	89.1
17	1	.9	90.0
19	1	.9	90.9
20	1	.9	91.8
21	1	.9	92.7
23	2	1.8	94.5
24	2	1.8	96.4
29	1	.9	97.3
32	1	.9	98.2
51	1	.9	99.1
55	1	.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	

Furthermore, books purely on economics or marketing were excluded to delimit the scope of this study to general business and management. Since the volume of published b-books is proportionate across three publication eras, it was easy to generate a population of 1,200 library b-books for three eras: 1980, 1990, and 2000-2006. The goal was to have roughly the same number of b-books for each era, but randomly and systematically selected. Sampling was made more systematic by searching titles by “date” and “business” and “management” and drawing b-book titles systematically as possible from 400 b-books published in 1980, 400 b-books published in 1990 and 400 b-books published from 2000-2006.

There were no problems finding adequate numbers of b-books published after 1980; it was not until after 1982 with the publication of Peters and Waterman’s book *In Search of Excellence* the main-stream publishers thoroughly understood there is a huge consumer market for popular press business books (Crainer, 1997) *In Search of Excellence* broke b-book sales records (Kotter & Heskett, 1992, p. 9). Generating a population of 1,200 b-books published between 1980 and 2006 and systematically sampling was easy because of the large volume of b-books published after 1980. Indexes for all 110 b-books sampled were examined on the culture content measure and hypotheses were then tested.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 was rejected: means of three publication eras (1980s, 1990s, and 2000-2006) of b-books differ significantly on the depth of culture content measure. There were 39 books published in the 1980s; there were 37 books published in the 1990s; and there were 34 b-books published between 2000 and 2006, with means of 1.97, 7.46, and 5.29 respectively, with $p = .041$. ANOVA Results are shown in Table 4. A Tukey’s Post Hoc Test revealed the significance was between the 1980s and 1990s b-books, with a $p = .033$. The -5.485 difference in means confirms “corporate culture” was a relatively new topic for the 1980’s b-book authors; furthermore, the significant mean assures these differences are more than by chance alone. B-books authors of the 1990s wrote significantly more on culture than b-book authors of the 1980s—not surprisingly. Yet, the 1990s authors are statistically no different than 2000-2006 b-book authors. Given the 17 years from 1990 to 2006, culture content does not appear to be a trend or fad; instead, it appears to have become common subject matter of the b-books.

TABLE 4
ANOVA TEST FOR MEAN DIFFERENCE OF B-BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 1980s, 1990s,
AND 2000-2006 ON CULTURE DEPTH

Decades	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	581.150	2	290.575	3.297	.041*
Within Groups	9431.222	107	88.142		
Total	10012.373	109			

* Denotes $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 2 could not be rejected: means of b-books with mixed-gender multiple authors (at least one male or female amongst them) do not differ from books written by same-gender authors on the depth of culture content measure. There were 100 books written by same gender author(s) and 10 written by mixed-gender authors with at least one male or female amongst authors, with means of 5.02 and 3.10 respectively, with $p = .548$. ANOVA Results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
GROUP STATISTICS FOR SAME GENDER AND MIXED GENDER B-BOOK
AUTHORS ON CULTURE DEPTH

Mixed Gender Authors	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33.513	1	33.513	.363	.548
Within Groups	9978.860	108	92.397		
Total	10012.373	109			

Hypothesis 3 could not be rejected: means for 86 male and 14 female b-book authors do not differ on the depth of culture content measure. Women b-book authors wrote fewer b-books between 1980 and 2006. With means of 4.91 and 5.71 respectively, women obviously wrote more culture content, but, that difference was not statistically significant. ANOVA Results are shown in Table 6. Men and women authors are statistically the same.

TABLE 6
ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR MEAN DIFFERENCES FOR MALE AUTHORS V. FEMALE
AUTHORS ON CULTURE DEPTH

Males and Females	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.847	1	7.847	.080	.778
Within Groups	9660.113	98	98.573		
Total	9667.960	99			

Hypothesis 4 was rejected: means for b-books with one, two, or three authors differ significantly on the depth of culture content measure. There were 67 single authors, 36 dual authors, and 7 b-books with three authors, with means of 2.94, 7.78, and 8.00 respectively, with $p=.032$. The number of authors is statistically different when it comes to depth of culture covered in the b-books they write. A Tukey's Post Hoc Test revealed the significant difference was between b-books written by single and dual authors, with and $p=.037$. Looking at the mean difference of -4.84 between single and dual authors, there appears collaborative writing of a b-book for some reason evokes a greater need to include culture as content. In fact, the significant mean assures us there is more than a chance alone difference between single authors and dual authors on the culture content measure—meaning the group of single authors wrote far less on cultural content than the dual authors. B-books with two and three authors did not differ on the culture content measure. ANOVA Results are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7
ANOVA TEST FOR MEAN DIFFERENCE OF B-BOOKS WRITTEN BY ONE, TWO,
OR THREE AUTHORS ON CULTURE DEPTH

Number of Authors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	622.389	2	311.195	3.546	.032*
Within Groups	9389.983	107	87.757		
Total	10012.373	109			

* Denotes $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 5 could not be rejected: means of b-books published by Harvard Business School Press do not differ from b-books published by other presses on the depth of culture content measure. There were 22 Harvard University Press b-books and 88 b-books from other presses, with means of 2.45 and 5.44, respectively, with $p=.192$. The Harvard Business School Press did not differ statistically from the other publishers of b-books (as a combined group including Jossey-Bass, McGraw-Hill, Perseus Books, and The Free Press, just to name a few) when it comes to the amount of culture content covered in the b-books they published. This is interesting since Harvard Business School Press represents 20 percent of the 110 b-books randomly systematically selected and examined in this study. The evidence shows there is no apparent bias on including the culture content of b-books the Harvard Business School Press published. Harvard, therefore, is not influencing b-book authors on this area of knowledge even though they publish a very large volume of b-books. ANOVA Results are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8
ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR MEAN DIFFERENCE OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS B-BOOKS V. NON-HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS B-BOOKS ON CULTURE DEPTH

Harvard Business School Press	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	157.202	1	157.202	1.723	.192
Within Groups	9855.170	108	91.252		
Total	10012.373	109			

DISCUSSION

Culture Content in B-Books

In a good number of management circles, leading cultural change is an elusive phenomenon to which every manager seems to pay lip-service. Some managers' rue over the lack of culture conducive to goal achievement and performance; on the other hand, when these same managers' responses to their own problems are put under a microscope of scrutiny few of them are assessing meaning prior to decision making. In a sense, managers' calling for change in culture are not acting accordingly; they attempt to resolve business problems but fail to apply knowledge on cultures of reliability in their problem solving activities (Weick, 2001).

Paying lip service to having a better culture is no substitute for shaping it. Starting from the very top, one or two top managers can change culture (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). A manager sitting around all day trying to figure out how to shape culture is not the same as a manager sending precision messages (symbolically, formally, and informally throughout the organization) and achieving desired responses in changed values, beliefs, and core assumptions. For example, ask any accountant, marketer, financier, or information technologist to explain the concept "time is money" and they will each give unique answers.

From the accountant's perspective, the phrase would mean greater revenues generated from fewer expenditures. The marketer would explain it as meaning boundary spanning activities targeting new markets with broad or narrow scopes. To the financier, the phrase would mean unique opportunities to leverage assets with favorable returns with managed risks. To the information technologist, the phrase would mean stream-lining human systems in relations to technological interfaces necessary for efficiencies. These specialists' opinions are important because what they believe adds to the value profit chain: "adaptive cultures do not account for

100% of performance, but they provide a strong foundation for successful strategies that deliver value to all important constituencies” (Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger, 2003, p. 229). Rigsby and Greco (2003, p. 214) in *Mastering Strategy* support these assertions of the inextricability of culture to accomplishing strategy: “It may not seem as apparent, but culture can affect your success as much as finance or technology. Culture, like these factors, can provide the fuel or the brakes.” All the same, their perspectives will always be influenced by the organizational cultures where they work.

Managers share one thing in common: they all need to work within a cultural landscape of a hidden hierarchy with visible and invisible layers of complexity in the values, beliefs, norms, and shared assumptions of the corporation. These cultural layers are related to the bottom-line. Dent and Krefft (2004, pp. 13-14) argue bottom-line business results are rooted in culture: “How the members of an organization go about determining what kind of culture they need to accelerate company growth is itself a cultural gauntlet.” Flannery, Hofrichter, & Platten (1996, pp. 23-24) wrote: “work culture” can mean an effective compensation program:

Before any new compensation program is designed, there must be a clear understanding of the organization: its current values, its structure, its people, as well as its goals and vision for the future. Without that knowledge, it is impossible to successfully change from the traditional, tightly conforming, highly rigid organization of yesterday into the flexible, diverse, continually evolving organization of tomorrow.

Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger (2003, p. 227) argue “Corporate culture, as characterized by core values shared throughout the organization, can drive performance.” It is clear b-books’ organization and corporate culture content is broad, spanning all tiers and functions of management. Corporate culture as a topic for academic investigation is fairly new. Nevertheless, since 1979, much has been written.

Dialing in to the Culture of the Hidden Hierarchy

There is no such thing as organization without culture. While managers navigate through the maze of possible ways to shape culture, their grasp of corporate culture can alleviate many of the pitfalls managers encounter daily in their efforts to get results. The term “corporate culture” came into vogue in the late 1970’s: “culture” comes from social anthropology of late nineteenth and early twentieth century studies of primitive man (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

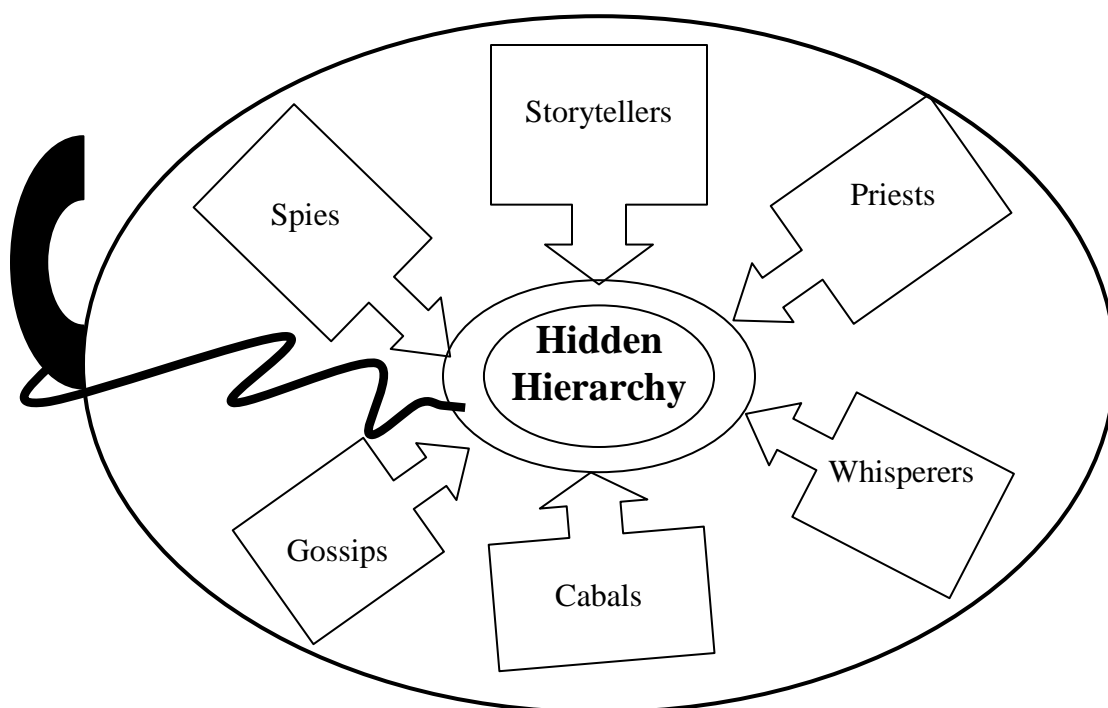
Kotter and Heskett (1992, p. 4) defined culture from the *American Heritage Dictionary* as “the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought characteristics of a community or population.” A decade earlier, Deal and Kennedy (1982, p. 4) defined culture from *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* as “the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends on man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations” or informally “the way things are done around here.” Shown in Figure 2 is a big-black-phone which illustrates managers’ perpetual need to be dialed into the “other jobs” employees do in addition to their formal assignments.

Gauging the Fault-line of Corporate Culture

Deal and Kennedy (1982) created the metaphors shown in Figure 2 to describe the various types of communication activities occurring in this cultural network of the hidden hierarchy.

These metaphors are used to describe each of the “other jobs” within a communication context. Spies are people who are loyal in the network, those who keep others informed of what is going on. A Storyteller is a person who can change reality by interpreting what goes on in a company to suit their own perception. Priests tend to be worriers responsible for guarding the company’s values, keeping the flock together. Whisperers work like Machiavelli from behind the throne, but, without a formal portfolio—the source of their power is the boss’s ear. Cabals plot a common purpose by joining together—these unions are for personal gain and advancement. And, Gossips will name names, know dates, salaries, and events that take place, and they carry the day-to-day trivial information cautiously appreciated by most.

FIGURE 2
DIALING INTO THE COMMUNICATIONS OF THE CULTURAL NETWORK OF
THE HIDDEN HIERARCHY



Essential for managerial success is their being keen on quality of communications radiating from the hidden hierarchy. Very important corporate communications take place through a hidden hierarchy, a network much different than the formal one. This is why the big-black-phone shown in Figure 2 is connected directly to the hidden hierarchy as a visual reminder to managers of the importance of being dialed into the loop on informal corporate culture. Furthermore, most executives will benefit from being enthusiastic about knowing what types of communications are taking place within the landscape of the deeper layers of corporate culture so they can act accordingly.

In the 1990s, corporate communication departments, typically run by professionals with degrees in journalism, often received inadequate support from senior management, and their formal employee-oriented publications often failed in their communications’ attempts; furthermore, line managers didn’t tend to keep corporate communication departments in the loop

on information crucial to the bottom line (Deal & Kennedy, 1999). In contrast to this view, and currently, communication is seen as the “metamechanism” that shapes and transmits the elements of culture that influences organizational performance (Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008). Much of the advice given by authors’ of the b-books examined for this study can be pulled together into a model, which helps to explicate an emergent theme on the advice they give on corporate culture.

An Emergent Theme of Corporate Culture

Communication and culture are intertwined in a complex way; they are inseparable because all culture must be transmitted across time. Communication is shaped by managerial and employee attitudes, beliefs, values and rituals; on the other hand, culture shapes the types and forms of communications existing within an organization (Lazidou, 2008). Communication and culture truly appear to be paradoxical. Managers can use focus groups, ethnographic research and communication analysis to better understand how communication creates and reinforces cultural patterns (Lazidou, 2008). Understanding the visible and invisible layers of corporate culture is critical for favorable organizational performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992) and interpreting meaning and decision making (Weick, 2001).

Kotter and Heskett (1992) reported corporate culture takes place within the visible and invisible layers; the more visible the culture the easier it is to change and the less visible the culture the more resistant the culture is to change. That same year, Schein (1992, p. 12) defined culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.” Schein’s definition is critical in understanding why the layers of culture influence organizational outcomes.

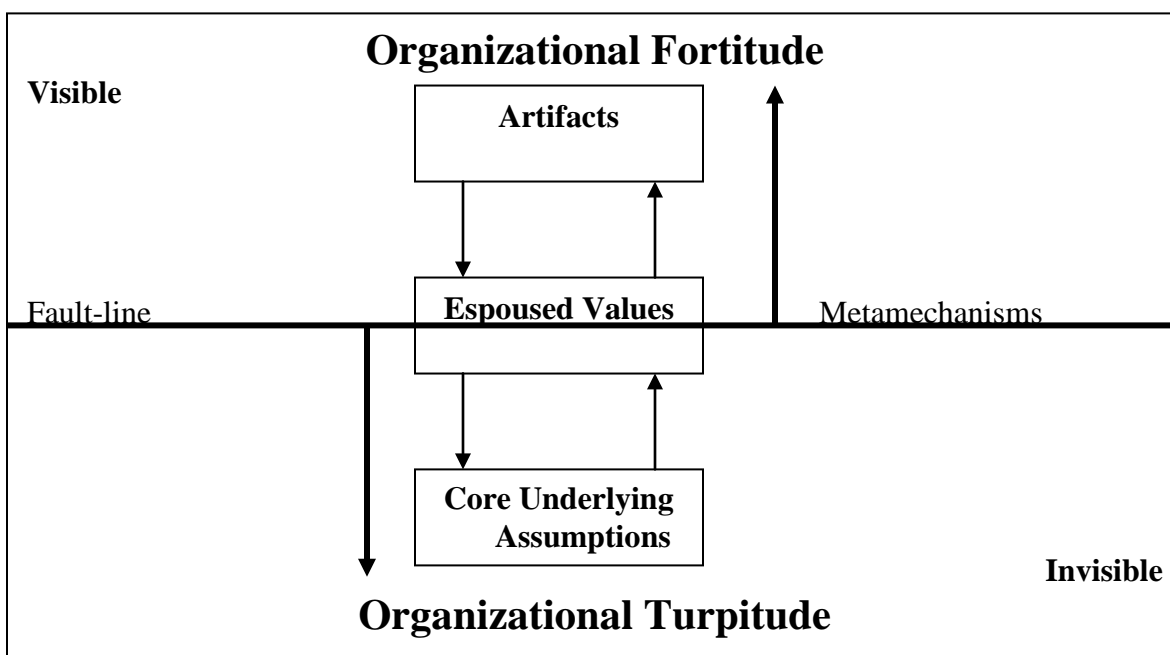
Schein (1992) described three levels of culture: (1) artifacts are all the phenomena that can be seen, heard, or felt when a person first encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture and this is the most visible layer; (2) espoused values are confirmed by shared social experiences of group members and this layer of conscious level culture can be used predict much of the behavior that can be observed at the “artifactual” level; and (3) basic underlying assumptions become embedded in culture when solutions to group problems work repeatedly and they become so basic they are taken for granted and these “invisible” elements of culture are very difficult to change.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) in their book *Riding the Waves of Culture* theorize managers in organizations the world over interact within three layers of corporate culture: (1) the outer layer—explicit products that are the observable reality of culture such as food, language, shrines, etc.; (2) the middle layer—norms, a mutual sense of a group’s right and wrong, and values, are those beliefs that determine or define what the group might think is good and bad; and (3) the core—assumptions about existence which are implicit to the members of the culture or when people organize themselves to increase their effectiveness at solving problems; these solutions are forgotten over time to become core assumptions of culture. To Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), these shared meanings are man-made and at the core of culture, yet, these meanings transcend the people in the culture. Obviously, they believe these layers of culture are reflected in all organizations across the globe.

In a somewhat different approach, Sherriton and Stern (1997) argue people are surrounded by culture any where they go in the world. The customs, pace, and behavioral patterns are both

subtle and obvious: all corporations have distinct cultures too. Sherriton and Stern (1997, p. 24) define “culture” from the *American Heritage Dictionary*: “the art, beliefs, customs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought created by a people or group of people at a particular time.” Yet, they define corporate culture more prescriptively as “the environment or personality of the organization, with all its multifaceted dimensions” (p. 26). They divide corporate culture into four aspects: (1) realized patterns—shared values and beliefs; (2) management styles and philosophies—what is actually said, done and rewarded; (3) management systems and procedures—what is actually in place; and (4) written and unwritten norms and procedures—messages memorialized in writing and those understood from social interactions but not written down. The Culture on Organizational Outcomes Model (COOM) shown in Figure 3 is a model developed to synthesize what all these b-book authors’ are saying.

FIGURE 3
CULTURE ON ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES MODEL (COOM)



The COOM is an illustration of an emergent theme that attempts to tie together the commonalities of the culture contents found in the 110 b-books examined. The COOM shows communication’s role in corporate culture and the two potential outcomes resulting from communications taking place on the fault-line of the hidden hierarchy which transform into metamechanisms. This model is mostly born from the contents presented in four very important books on organizational and corporate culture: Deal and Kennedy’s (1982) *Corporate Cultures: the Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*, Kotter and Heskett’s (1992) *Corporate Culture and Performance*, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (1997) *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*, and Schein’s (1992) *Organizational Culture and Leadership*.

In the COOM, corporate culture spans the visible and invisible layers which include artifacts, espoused values and core underlying assumptions. The deeper managers probe for meanings of communicative actions taking place within these layers the better their understanding of the

fault-line (hidden hierarchy); the better they are able to interpret meaning, anticipate issues and make decisions to change, redirect, or even destroy elements of culture. Fault-line communications (informal cultures of the hidden hierarchy), as shown in the COOM, determine if an organization will swing in the direction of fortitude or turpitude. These metamechanisms are the hinges upon which organizational outcomes swing. These hidden corporate cultural communications incrementally steer in the direction in which the entire organization will turn. Corporate culture is passed along or transmitted through these communicative actions taking place on the Fault-line.

The COOM is a depiction of the direction cultures can steer the entire organization, based on a fault-line of healthy or unhealthy communication practices occurring within the hidden hierarchy. Garnett, et al (2008) found through an analysis of “culture-rule-oriented culture” and “mission-oriented culture” that organizational culture and organizational performance are influenced by communication. They argue communication acts as a “metamechanism” for shaping and imparting culture in mission-oriented organizational cultures; this in turn has an influence on performance. They argue task orientation, feedback, and upward communication have positive effects on perceived organizational performance in mission-oriented organizations but potentially negative effects on performance in rule-oriented cultures.

Top managers must consistently survey the types and levels of communications on the fault-line in order to gauge which aspects of those communications could shape and impart into culture potential hazards, which inevitably leads to an organizational outcome of turpitude. Schein (1992, p. 5) wrote: “Organizational cultures are created in part by leaders, and one of the most important functions of leadership is the creation, the management, and sometimes even the destruction of culture.” There is overwhelming evidence hazards in cultures gone awry have steered many corporations toward outcomes of turpitude.

Embedded cultures of corruption, unethical decision making, and malfeasance within organizations have received increasing attention over the last decade. Recent examples of questionable business ethics rooted in basic cultural assumptions include corporate scandals surrounding Bristol-Myers, Enron, Tyco International, World Com, Xerox, Merrill Lynch, Citigroup, Martha Stewart, and ImClone Systems, just to name a few. Moreover, a few CEOs of the aforementioned corporations are now serving prison sentences for their corruption and contributions to erosion in public trust. Is it possible juries, in these cases, convict some of these leaders because they deemed them to have the power to and the obligation to destroy the elements of their cultures that went awry?

Recently, Merrill Lynch and AIG used federal bailout (TARP) funds to pay their executives multi-million dollar meritless bonuses; these are very good examples of embedded core underlying assumptions in cultures that hinged these organizations on fault-lines of turpitude. The aforementioned corporations had cultures where the core underlying assumptions of greed became so deeply embedded—precepts so habitual—that the organizational outcomes of turpitude were inevitable. Philosophers view precepts as habitual responses to ethical choices. Toffler (1986) provides perhaps the most accurate description of the juxtaposition of choices on rules and culture:

Organizations provide two broad categories of information that shape and communicate precepts which guide the organization. The first is written down in policy manuals and rules or procedures manuals. The second, often called the “culture,” refers to values

explicitly or implicitly espoused, and encompasses the understanding of “the way we do things around here.” (p. 24)

In the COOM, every organization has a point of direction on the fault-line where culture will steer the direction of organizational outcome to fortitude or turpitude. The thick arrows are indications of the direction of the organizational outcome to which fault-line communications (metamechanisms) take it. In the COOM, the deeper unhealthy fault-line communications are rooted the less visible they are and they are much harder to change. Top managers must be able to root-out the potential disasters these fault-line cultures can steer their organizations by being dialed directly in to the hidden hierarchy. Toffler (1986, p. 26) also argues values and styles affect the identification and management of ethical problems, causing unintentional ethical dilemmas; that is “some organizations have a set of beliefs and/or a way of doing things that can result in managers resorting to ethically dubious tactics simply to get the job done.”

Unfortunately, leaders sometimes are the architects of the cultures of turpitude. Dent and Krefft (2004, p. 14) assert: “Some cultures rot, emaciated by the omnivorous microbes of denial, fear, dishonesty, and delusion. Other cultures prosper, invigorated by the irrepressible catalyst of creativity, risk taking, integrity, and self-evaluation. Most often, cultures are paradoxical systems containing both productive and counterproductive characteristics.” Recently, bankers were playing hot-potato with sub-prime mortgages, even though nearly every bank executive knew the risks. The questions then become clear: What elements in some financial institutions’ cultures steered them towards fortitude amidst the sub-prime lending free-for-all and what elements in other financial institutions’ cultures steered them towards turpitude (falsifying documents, hiding audit documents from the SEC, repackaging bad debt, ostracizing whistle blowers and those refusing to violate law, policy and procedure, etc)? Despite the pitfalls, cultures can be a source of reliability in assessing meaning.

Weick (2001) lay down the most comprehensive, yet, condense explication of the paradox of centralized and decentralized organizational control through what he calls cultures of reliability. Weick argues meaning is distinct from decision making by asserting meaning precedes decision making. He argues first managers must understand the nature of what is happening before they can decide on what to do about it. His assessment is that even though centralized and decentralized authority is both necessary, cultures can make decentralized decision making more reliable. His view is that storytelling and storytellers can be stabilizing sources associated with organizational outcomes. Leaders have a responsibility to know about and change culture continually.

Top managers must be at all times dialed directly in to the hidden hierarchy of their organizations. Carr, Hard, and Trahan (1996, p. 98) wrote: “Change management experience teaches that when it comes to a showdown between the current culture and the change objective, the culture always wins. In an organization’s culture, values are one of the most important aspects and a key driver of individual behavior.” Being in the loop as these fault-line metamechanisms are forming and affecting outcomes is a way for top management to effectively gauge and anticipate and dislodge the potential hazards of unhealthy communications (symbolic and explicit) resulting in cultures that go awry; these cultures could potentially steer an entire organization toward turpitude if left unfettered.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, One-Way ANOVA tests were used to compare means of demographic variables believed correlated to the dependent variable: culture content as measured in b-books' indexes. The eras in which b-books were published differed, with $p = .041$; therefore, culture content in the b-books does not appear to be a fad or trend. It is probably safe to surmise that culture as content will continue to be a part of the repertoire of knowledge modern b-book authors will include in the future. Means differed for the number of authors on a b-book, with $p = .032$. Single authors were statistically different than dual authors. The Harvard Business School Press b-books were no different than other publishers. Gender made no difference and having at least one male or one female amongst multiple authored b-books made no difference on the culture content measure. These are interesting findings for many reasons.

Practitioners buy a lot of b-books and perhaps they are reading them to gain knowledge on how to become better managers. The list of b-books in the Appendix is evidence they span the full assortment of management topics, from compensation to strategy to leadership. The production of business books over the last twenty-five years has been enormous and they are selling like hot-cakes. Thus, we know there is a market for b-books. And, apparently, better ways to change corporate culture is a part of knowledge managers are willing to purchase. The 110 books sampled had an average of 4.85 layers of culture content with a standard deviation of 9.58 layers.

Popular press business books might not be the first place academicians (or scholars of management thought) go looking for the latest scientific knowledge on corporate culture insights. Yet, to the contrary, business practitioners often buy b-books as a first-stop-shop and read them to try and find answers for many problems they face in business—including issue of corporate culture for organizational development purposes. These business practitioners are not necessarily reading highly specialized academic journals (*The Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *the Academy of Management Review*, *MIS Quarterly*, etc.) to gain new knowledge.

Many practitioners don't have the background or training to benefit from reading such journals. This is possibly why there is a huge market for popular press business titles. As shown through content analysis, b-books contain much wisdom on organizational and corporate culture. The COOM is an attempt to explicate the commonalities of culture content as observed in the 110 b-books into an emergent theme. It shows top managers must be dialed in at all times to the fault-line of the hidden hierarchy in order to steer the direction of organizational outcome.

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Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. (1998). Riding The Waves Of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity In Global Business, 2/e. New York: Mcgraw Hill.

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APPENDIX

Books	Publication Dates
Managerial Hierarchies (1980), Chandler, Jr & Daems	1980
The Organizational Life Cycle (1980), Kimberly, Miles, & Associates	1980
The New Rational Manager (1981), Kepner & Tregoe	1981
Theory Z (1981), William Ouchi	1981
Corporate Cultures (1982), Deal & Kennedy	1982
Megatrends: Ten Directions Transforming Our Lives (1982), John Naisbitt	1982
The Change Masters (1983), Rosabeth Moss Kanter	1983
Managing (1984), Harold Geneen	1984
How to Measure Human Resources Management (1984), Jac Fitz-enz	1984
The Way of the Ronin (1984), Beverly A. Potter	1984
Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge (1985), Bennis & Nanus	1985
The Managerial Grid III (1985), Blake & Mouton	1985
The New Competitors (1985), D. Quinn Mills	1985
Human Resource Accounting (1985), Eric G. Flamholtz	1985
Improving Supervisors' Effectiveness (1985), Jack J. Phillips	1985
At any Time (1985), Morton Mintz	1985
The Deming Management Method (1986), Mary Walton	1986
High-Improvement Management (1986), Edward E. Lawler III	1986
The Frontiers of Management (1986), Peter F. Drucker	1986
Made in Japan (1986), Akio Morita with Reingold & Shimomura	1986
Lead On! (1986), John Haggai	1986
Tough Choices (1986), Barbara Ley Toffler	1986
The Dynamics of Taking Charge (1987), John J. Gabarro	1987
The Corporate Warriors (1987), Douglas K. Ramsey	1987
Productive Workplaces (1987), Marvin R. Weisbord	1987
Empire (1987), Lewis J. Paper	1987
Juran on Planning for Quality (1988), J.M. Juran	1988
In the Age of the Smart Machine (1988), Shoshana Zuboff	1988
Office Hours: A Guide to the Managerial Life (1988), walter Kiechel III	1988
Why Work: Leading the New generation (1988), Michael Maccoby	1988

The Pursuit of Innovation (1988), George Freeman	1988
Built By Japan (1988), Fumio Hasegawa	1988
Spin Selling (1988), Neil Rackham	1988
When Giants Learn to Dance (1989), Rosabeth Moss Kanter	1989
The Age of Unreason (1989), Charles Handy	1989
The New Realities (1989), Peter F. Drucker	1989
Managing across Borders (1989), Bartlett & Ghoshal	1989
Dinosaur Brains (1989), Albert J. Bernstein & Sydney Craft Rozen	1989
<u>The Executive Odyssey (1989), Frederick G. Harmon</u>	<u>1989</u>
The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal (1990), Beer, Eisenstat & Spector	1990
Good Intentions Aside (1990), Laura L. Nash	1990
The New Self-Directed Work Teams, 2/e (1990), Orsburn & Moran	1990
Championship Management (1990), James A. Belohlav	1990
The Challenges of Organizational Change (1992), Kanter, Stein, & Jick	1992
Corporate Culture and Performance (1992), Kotter & Heskett	1992
Organizational Culture and Leadership 2/e (1992), Edgar H. Schein	1992
Women, Mentors, and Success (1992), Jeruchim & Shapiro	1992
Visionary Leadership (1992), Burt Nanus	1992
Breakpoint (1992), Paul Strebel	1992
Untangling Organizational gridlock (1993), Michele L. Bechtell	1993
Organizing for the Future (1993), Galbraith & lawler	1993
The Wisdom of Teams (1993), Katzenbach & Smith	1993
The Age of Paradox (1994), Handy	1994
Competing for the Future (1994), Hamel & Prahalad	1994
Managing Customer Value (1994), Bradley T. Gale	1994
The Rise and Fall of Strategic Management (1994), Henry Mintzberg	1994
Managing in a Time of Great Change (1995), Peter F. Drucker	1995
The HP Way (1995), David Packard	1995
Being Digital (1995), Nicholas Negroponte	1995
Winning the Service Game (1995), Schneider & Bowen	1995
Deep Change (1996), Robert E. Quinn	1996
Co-opetition (1996), Brandenburger & Nalebuff	1996
People, Performance & Pay (1996), Flannery, Hofrichter, & Platten	1996
The Witch Doctors (1996), Micklethwait & Wooldridge	1996
Fad-Free Management (1996), Richard G. Hamermesh	1996
Corporate Comeback (1997), Robert H. Miles	1997
The Death of Distance (1997), Frances Cairncross	1997
Corporate Culture/Team Culture (1997), Sherriton & Stern	1997
The Human Equation (1998), Jeffrey Pfeffer	1998
Driving Change (1998), Wind & Main	1998
Riding the Waves of Culture 2/e (1998), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner	1998
Maslow on Management (1998), Abraham H. Maslow	1998
Creating Value in the Network Economy (1999), Don Tapscout	1999
The New Corporate Cultures (1999), Deal & Kennedy	1999
Information Rules (1999), Shapiro & Varian	1999
<u>When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups (1999), Leonard & swap</u>	<u>1999</u>
Leading the Revolution (2000), Gary Hamel	2000
Peak Performance (2000), Jon R. Katzenbach	2000
Change is the Rule (2000), Winford E. "Dutch" Holland	2000
Surfing the Edge of Chaos (2000), Pascale, Millemann, Gioja	2000
The Working Life (2000), Joanne B. Ciulla	2000
The New Art of the Leader (2000), William A. Cohen	2000
The Arc of Ambition (2000), Champy & Nohria	2000
CEO Succession (2000), Carey & Ogden	2000
Evolve: Succeeding in the Digital Culture of Tomorrow (2001), Rosabeth Moss Kanter	2001
The Agenda: What Every Business Must Do to Dominate the Decade (2001), Hammer	2001
The Change Monster (2001), Jeanie Daniel Duck	2001
Whoosh: Business in the Fast Lane (2001), Tom McGehee	2001
Good to Great (2001), Jim Collins	2001
The Leadership Challenge (2002), Kouzes & Posner	2002
What's Next (2002), Kelly, Leyden, & Global Business Network	2002
Execution: The Discipline of Getting things Done (2002), Bossidy & Charan	2002

Word of Mouse (2002), Riedl, Konstan, & Vrooman	2002
The Phoenix Effect (2002), Pate & Platt	2002
The DNA of Success (2002), Jack M. Zufelt	2002
The Power of Corporate Communication (2002), Paul A. Argenti & Janis Forman	2002
Built to Last (2002) Collins & Porras	2002
Pipe Dreams (2002), Robert Bryce	2002
Mastering Strategy (2003), Rigsby & Greco	2003
The Value Profit Chain (2003), Keskett, Sasser & Schlesinger	2003
The Innovator's Solution (2003), Christensen & Raynor	2003
The New Mainstream (2004), Guy Garcia	2004
Powerhouse Partners (2004), Dent & Krefft	2004
The Leadership Integrity Challenge (2005), Edward E. Morler	2005
The Flight of the Creative Class (2005), Richard Florida	2005
Many Unhappy Returns (2005), Charles O. Rossotti	2005
Made in China (2005), Donald N. Sull	2005
The DNA of Leadership (2006), Judith E. Glaser	2006
Leadership Divided (2006), Ron A. Carucci	2006
<u>Naked Conversations (2006), Robert Scoble & Shel Israel</u>	<u>2006</u>

