

# Meet 61 Experts Shaping How We Understand Workplace Culture Today

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By Shawn Murphy Shawn Murphy is CEO of WorqIQ , a boutique consulting/advisory firm. His company helps businesses create a positive experience of work by raising leaders' workplace intelligence. His latest book, The... Full bio @ TheShawnMurphy CEO, WorqIQ @ TheShawnMurphy

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When you think of your workplace culture, what descriptions come to mind? Do those descriptors support business growth? What words describe how the culture helps facilitate great work from employees? If your culture inhibits both organizational and employee growth, then a culture of mediocrity settles in.

The tricky reality with culture is it's difficult to articulate a common definition of the current reality. Initiate conversations about what needs to change and you'll hear myriad variations. What's more, culture change takes time, money, and many founders and executives lose patience with the pace of it. Yet, we know from decades of research that culture is central to many desirable business outcomes: growth, profit, and innovation, for starters.

Certainly, there is no shortage of experts with an opinion and methods to shape and change workplace culture. (Full disclosure: I'm one of those experts with an opinion and methods.)

If there are so many leaders in the space, why aren't more workplace cultures extraordinary?

- As long as humans are involved in doing the work, culture change will be messy
- Change triggers our fear response and not all of us respond positively
- Culture is context and context is extremely nuanced
- The influencers of culture, social trends, technology advancements, and global and local economy and political trends, are always evolving

While the realities of changing a culture come with an arsenal of challenges, there is hope. There have been significant advancements in academic research, highly visible CEOs successfully showing new ways to partner with employees, and practitioners and consultants sharing their solutions and insights about more effective culture change solutions.

What follows is a list of men and women shaping how cultures change today. Some are experts in purpose, positive psychology, values-based leadership, grit, workplace intelligence, employee experience, and that's just some of the ways to evolve your workplace culture.

The list is comprehensive but imperfect. Because of the quality and quantity of people helping improve organizational life, I can't go into detail on every person. Those featured below are some of my personal favorites and also have unique, specialized input into the discipline of changing workplace culture. My goal, though, is not perfection. Rather, it is to point you in the direction of people who might help you deepen your understanding of how to change your company or team's culture.

Let's get to work.

## Featured Academic Practitioners

**Teresa Amabile:** How life outside of work influences performance at work

**Kim S. Cameron:** How virtuous practices and transformational leadership shape culture

**Angela Duckworth:** Why grit is essential for high performing employees

**Stew Friedman:** How to integrate your work and personal lives in a meaningful way

**Sonja Lyubomirsky:** The role happiness plays in improving the human experience

**Martin Seligman:** How positive psychology can influence leadership actions to bring out the best in employees and generate greater results

**Emma Seppala:** How to integrate wellbeing, compassion, social connection, and mind-body practices to build positive workplaces

**Edgar Schein:** No list on workplace culture is complete without Edgar Schein. He catapulted our understanding and the important role culture plays in business and people success.

**Bob Sutton:** Notorious for his no BS view on awful managers. It's a refreshing take that is unfortunately too relevant today.

**Paul Zak:** The role of trust is central to positive, healthy cultures. Paul Zak has specialized in understanding what the triggers of trust are and the role of trustworthiness in great cultures.

Other great academic practitioners include **Herminia Ibarra**, **David Burkus**, **Adam Grant**, **Brené Brown**, **Chip and Dan Heath**.

## Featured CEO/Practitioners

**Bob Chapman:** CEO of Barry-Wehmiller, Chapman embodies the belief that a major corporation can still be family-oriented. He's masterful at tapping into our humanity to foster a positive culture.

**Ricardo Semler:** Chairman of Semco Group, Semler transformed the company by shifting the culture to be democratic and resilient.

**Gary Ridge:** CEO of WD-40, Ridge has helped the company culture become closer and successful through a tribal leadership mindset. Check out the link in Ridge's name above to learn more.

**Jason Fried:** CEO of a software-as-a-service company, Basecamp, Fried leads the way showing entrepreneurs how to rethink the workplace and the relationship with employees.

**China Gorman:** Formerly the CEO of Great Place to Work, Gorman now takes her vast experience and help organizations evolve into more human-centered cultures.

Be sure to check out these CEOs who are also leading the way to more human-centered workplace cultures: [Jim Haudan, Root, Inc](#); [Aaron Hurst, Imperative](#); [John Mackey, Whole Foods](#); [Tony Hsieh, Zappos](#); [Jim Clifton, Gallup](#); [Rich Sheridan, Menlo Innovations](#); [Kip Tindell, former CEO of Container Store](#); [Ari Weinzweig, Zingerman's](#), [Eric Mosely, Globoforce](#).

## Featured Practitioners/Consultants

**Jurgen Appelo:** How to strengthen the art and skill of management

**Mark Babbitt:** How to boost leaders' workplace intelligence

**Chuck Blakeman:** How to rehumanize your workplace through counter-intuitive wisdom

**Chris Edmonds:** How to build a great culture through an Organizational Constitution

**Rob Catalano:** Use technology to help improve employee engagement

**Frederic Laloux:** A complete rethink of culture and how business and people can work together

**Whitney Johnson:** How to disrupt yourself to achieve greater results

**Michelle McQuaid:** How to leverage positive psychology to shift your culture

**Jacob Morgan:** How to shape the employee experience, a longer lasting approach to culture and its many facets

**Cy Wakeman:** How to overcome workplace drama... a desperately needed solution in too many workplaces

These are also amazing practitioners/consultants making a difference for their clients and leaders: [Joanna Barsh](#), [Laszlo Bock](#), [Josh Allan Dykstra](#), [Mark Fernandes](#), [Bill Jensen](#), [Josh Levine](#), [Kevin Kruse](#), [Tim Kuppler](#), [Jason Lauritsen](#), [Tim Leberecht](#), [Scott Mautz](#), [Nilofer Merchant](#), [Tom Rath](#), [Tony Schwartz](#).

Every person listed above has a body of work to devour and study. Changing workplace culture is key to thriving in a dynamic business world. Be mindful that your approach actually moves your company forward. Any of the women and men above have much to offer in terms of helping you chart a path forward.