



# The Orange Revolution: How One Great Team Can Transform an Entire Organization

*Adrian Gostick , Chester Elton*

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From *New York Times* bestselling authors and renowned leadership consultants Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton comes a groundbreaking guide to building high-performance teams.

What is the true driver of a thriving organization's exceptional success? Is it a genius leader? An iron-clad business plan? Gostick and Elton shatter these preconceptions of corporate achievement. Their research shows that breakthrough success is guided by a particular breed of high-performing team that generates its own momentum—an engaged group of colleagues in the trenches, working passionately together to pursue a shared vision. Their research also shows that only 20 percent of teams are working anywhere near this optimal capacity. How can your team become one of them?

Based on a groundbreaking 350,000-person study by the Best Companies Group, as well as extraordinary research into exceptional teams at leading companies, including Zappos.com, Pepsi Beverages Company, and Madison Square Garden, the authors have determined a key set of characteristics displayed by members of breakthrough teams, and have identified a set of rules great teams live by, which generate a culture of positive teamwork and lead to extraordinary results.

Using a wealth of specific stories from the breakthrough teams they studied, they reveal in detail how these teams operate and how managers can transform their own teams into such high performers by fostering:

- Stronger clarity of goals
- Greater trust among team members
- More open and honest dialogue
- Stronger accountability for all team members
- Purpose-based recognition of team members' contributions

The remarkable stories they tell about these teams in action provide a simple and powerful step-by-step guide to taking your team to the breakthrough level, igniting the passion and vision to bring about an Orange Revolution.

## The Orange Revolution: How One Great Team Can Transform an Entire Organization Details

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## From Reader Review The Orange Revolution: How One Great Team Can Transform an Entire Organization for online ebook

### Donovan says

I loved this book! I think what made it especially good was I read it with my fabulous team and it cemented with research (350,000 people) what I have always believed - that success comes mainly from teams. It summed up a and put into words a number of leadership ideas that I've had in my mind for years, but never fully articulated, that it is important to have the team focused on a common cause and purpose, that it is a collaborative effort where the team recognizes each other and holds each other accountable and the importance of truly bringing the team together and cultivating an environment of trust and responsibility.

I believe one of the fundamental keys to a leaders success is that everyone on their team is engaged and that without a fully engaged team success or at least world class success will be non-existent (or at least fleeting). The team needs to be passionate about what they do and passionate about their mission. For my team that is empowering managers to lead and take responsibility for their own teams - their development, their performance and their success. It is also about helping managers drive engagement on their teams. It is something my entire team is passionate about and I think made it especially wonderful to read this book together as a team.

In this book, Chester and Adrian take what they've culled from thousands and thousands of survey's and the condense it into some simple principles and nuggets of wisdom. They made this easily readable by adding in stories of many teams.

A year ago when I joined this team someone asked what I would do if things didn't change and I said that for starters, my philosophy was that as an associate working for a company that you weren't happy with you had three options - accept things the way they are, change things or leave. I told her that I would give it a full year and I believed the only answer was to change things. It's now been a year and we are well on our way to becoming a team that will literally transform the entire organization. Our little team of less than twenty has direct influence over thirteen thousand associates and approximately 300 managers.

While The ORANGE Revolution didn't really tell us anything we didn't know, it did help focus us and each chapter led us into wonderful areas of discussion and reflection (we read a chapter each week and talked about it for 30 minutes).

I'd highly recommend this book to anyone who works on a team - it doesn't matter if it is a work team, a sports team, a volunteer team or a community or church team - this book will give you great tips for taking your team to the next level.

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### Matt says

This was a great read. It wasn't a read that I kept telling myself I couldn't put down, though. While the text is definitely geared toward the business world, creative thinking throughout your reading will allow the reader to adapt the concepts to any organization. I think that is why I had to read a little, then think a little, then read some more, then think some more...you get the picture.

### **Amy says**

I received this book from my boss. He gave it to our entire 19-person team. The Orange Revolution is chock-full of great ideas. I'm glad I own the copy, because I needed to underline, circle, and dog-ear passages. It's definitely a book that I will keep close by and refer to in making decisions and implementing ideas. A must-have for any person or company interested in robust communications and a strong corporate environment.

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### **Jennifer says**

If you've talked to me about work lately, you've probably heard me talk about this one.

I think it's great - practical, understandable, and one that anyone - manager or not - can start putting into practice.

The central message is to start focusing on 3 things: Wowing your patrons and co-workers, having continuous open and honest communication, and cheering each other on.

The authors have lots of research to indicate that having these 3 things in place will affect staff engagement, innovative ideas, and the bottom line.

An excellent book that I will likely re-read again and again.

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### **Ellie says**

Good ideas and team philosophies, but they seemed kind of obvious/duh to me; maybe I've just always worked on good teams? Many of the things that they suggest in this book are either things that are already happening in my organization or things that I have literally no control over.

I listened to this one and I'm pretty sure the authors narrated it - they definitely think that they are maybe more hilarious than they actually are. Could also use some better editing for some weird breathing parts.

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### **Thomas Ehardt says**

Overall a really good book. I actually flipped between reading the hardcover and listening to the audio book.

As for the content (which is what I used for my rating), it was pretty solid. From the title, it seems as if the book will cover transforming an organization from an orange team. That being said, what the book does cover, it covers very well and in a fast-paced, straightforward manner.

About me: I'm a member of a "breakthrough team" and not in management.

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## Lucas says

Loved it.

Characteristics of the best managers

- 1) Goal setting (knowing where you are going)
- 2) Communication (wise use of your voice and ears)
- 3) Trust (believing in others and being trustworthy)
- 4) Accountability (doing what you say you will do)
- 5) Recognition (appreciating others' strengths)

The rule of 3: cultivating a team

- 1) Wow: team members must hold themselves and each other to a world-class standard of performance
- 2) No Surprises: all team members must engage in open communication with one another, establishing clarity of expectations, freely debating issues, disagreeing if they have good reason to, and sharing ideas
- 3) Cheer: team members must root for each other, which includes appreciating great work, providing support, and avoiding disparagement

Six ingredients to world-class results

- 1) Dream
- 2) Believe
- 3) Risk
- 4) Measure
- 5) Persevere
- 6) Tell stories

No Surprises: Mastering Communication

- 1) Communicate pre-, present, and post-
- 2) Acknowledgment and respect
- 3) Availability
- 4) Accepting ideas
- 5) Responsiveness
- 6) Broadcasting vitals (deadlines, goals, responsibilities, progress are always in view and members are aware of the objectives of their teammates and the team as a whole)
- 7) Offer help, ask for help
- 8) Create face-to-face time

See Chapter 8: 101 Ways to Bring your Team Together

- 1) Shared experiences (training opportunities, outings, social events)
- 2) Shared symbols (organizational brands and emblems, team names, attire)
- 3) Shared challenges (projects, hurdles, milestones)
- 4) Shared rewards and recognition (team celebrations, individual rewards)
- 5) Personal balance (life outside of work)
- 6) Shared voice (values, goals inside lingo)
- 7) Shared knowledge and skills (teaching, learning, developing)
- 8) Shared competitors (identifying rivals, nemesis, villains)
- 9) Shared fun (laughing, bonding)
- 10) Shared environment (office space, behaviors, traditions)
- 11) Shared relationships (familiarity, caring, interpersonal skills)

Best role for the manager and senior leader in the creation of esprit de corps

- 1) Allow it: If you see it happening, give permission to allow it to grow. Keep in mind that you may think a few mavericks are joining forces to create trouble. But with like-minded counterparts, has-been trouble-makers can become breakthrough team leaders.
- 2) Train it: Don't assume any of this comes naturally. Create development opportunities for people to understand how to find and build their breakthrough teams. Teach them how to create opportunities for honest elephant-in-the-room discussions - giving people a chance to discover others who may share passions, perceptions, etc.
- 3) Find it: Look for teams operating at outlier levels or those with the potential to do so and foster appropriate situations and conditions for their success. Your job is to realize the breakthrough team exists and allow it to exist - not to control it.
- 4) Reward it: Show the teams that you notice their shared vision and passion, and that you appreciate it. Don't wait for a final outcome to say thanks, but reward every step toward success along the way. Frequent recognition will only make the team achieve more.
- 5) Promote and profile it: Realize that all employees want to be part of a great team. Promote members of outstanding teams, and communicate how their commitment to each other boosted the organization as a whole. Let others learn from their success.

Make sure to apply these to teams inside and outside the office. Families, friends, neighbors, church groups, etc. can all benefit from Wow, No Surprises, and Cheer!

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## **David says**

The Orange Revolution is one of the first books that I read which addresses building powerful teams. These powerful teams thrive even in hostile work environments. The key points I gathered about creating an influential team are create an environment for honest communication, encourage team mates in their roles and serve people beyond their expectations (e.g. hand written notes of appreciation).

I have to confess when the authors mentioned Zappos I rolled my eyes. This is because Zappos is mentioned in the last five books on business, marketing, etc. I have read. I assumed that I would hear the same analysis as to why they are successful. I was wrong. Gostick and Elton discussed the team perspective of Zappos and just displayed another competitive advantage to their business model.

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## **Ashley says**

I had to read this book for work and was really expecting it to be full of ridiculous catch phrases and buzz words and lacking in any real substance (my general expectations of most business books). It was the opposite--very good, extremely useful, and full of really great ideas on how to run and/or participate on a high functioning and collaborative team. I probably highlighted or earmarked half the book, and I definitely plan on referring back to it frequently.

I left my last job for a host of reasons--poor management, aggressive and mean-spirited "teammates" (I've learned to use that word more lightly after reading Orange Revolution), and a lack of clarity around goals or mission areas (or, really, any transparency about what anyone was doing, at any job level of the team, at any point in time). At the time, these felt very personal and insurmountable, and so I left the company. What I liked about this book was that it told numerous stories that were very similar to my experiences, which made me a) feel like they were less personal and just stuck in a low-functioning and poorly managed system; and b) gave me the assurance that there is literally no reason a company or team needs to function that way. So,

this book has been helpful to me, moving forward, to understand how to approach a team environment in a way that does not either accept or contribute to this type of negative environment.

I really appreciate that this book understands that a high-functioning team is easy to achieve in any work environment--while it does require some investment in time and team buy-in, it requires little in regards to company resources. For example, a lot of the book talks about how high-functioning teams are successful because team members respect each other both personally and professionally. Orange Revolution advocates for getting to know your colleagues more deeply than just what they have to offer you at work--a successful team is not only comfortable discussing personal lives, but takes the time to get to know people personally. That personal connection can really help build a level of trust and commitment that is not accessible when the mindset is that there should be a barrier between life and work. With commitment to each other and the team, you have increased engagement, camaraderie, and improved work output.

These ideas sound so easy and obvious, but are not things that many of my previous places of employment have taken the time to understand. I am excited to work on a team/in an office that buys into the idea of an Orange Revolution and expects me to do the same. I will gladly live by and be held accountable to these rules.

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### **Krista says**

How can you rally team members around a common cause and make amazing things happen in your organization? By using "Wow", "No Surprises", and "Cheer"! Great stories in this book like Zappos.com and the Blue Angels. I totally agree that for people to be committed and perform at their best, they need to feel trusted, excited, and motivated and that's what this book shares. Fairly easy read. There's even a whole chapter on ideas to kickstart your team to becoming an "orange" breakthrough team.

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### **Adrienne says**

Great examples of the importance of recognition in the workplace.

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### **Gene Babon says**

This is a book about carrots, the authors' catchphrase for employee recognition. In particular, the term "Orange" is used to describe the overall characteristics, rules and behaviors of great teams.

Leaders of Orange Teams that achieve enhanced business results are generally seen as stronger in the following four areas:

- ~ goal setting (knowing where you are going)
- ~ communication (wise use of your voice and ears)
- ~ trust (believing in others and being trustworthy)
- ~ accountability (doing what you say you will do)

When leaders combined these Basic 4 leadership characteristics with frequent purposed-based recognition, return on equity was more than three times higher than expected, and team morale was more than twice as

high.

Recognition is a powerful accelerant to The Basic 4. It's a divider between good teams and great teams. In fact, the number one reason people leave organizations is that they don't feel appreciated.

The Basic 4 + Recognition characterizes the "softer" side of business, the side that matters most to most people.

This book would have been a success had the key take-home points stopped at The Basic 4 + Recognition. However, the authors went one step further to introduce The Rule of 3:

- ~ Wow (commit to a standard of world-class performance)
- ~ No surprises (all team members are accountable and each member knows what to expect from the others)
- ~ Cheer (team members cheer others and the group on to victory)

An additional chapter lists 101 Ways to Bring Your Team Together.

While this additional information is useful and practical it tends to distract from the core message of The Basic 4 + Recognition.

Bottom line: We all work harder when someone is paying attention to our efforts. If you are in a leadership role, pay attention -- daily. If you are a member of a team, pay attention -- daily. Recognize the members of your team and cheer for your teammates -- daily. The Orange Revolution begins with you.

For addition reading I suggest starting with the five-star predecessor to this book, *The Carrot Principle*. Also consider the five-star *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*.

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### **Alison says**

Though the fundamental principles of "Orange" are rather obvious---that is, recognition and strong communication are the basis of exemplary teams---these topics are treated over and over in management books for good reason: lots of managers ignore them. My armchair psychoanalysis is that ego is mostly to blame (managers think they are too important to praise others, or are too busy thinking about themselves), but I think you could also trace it to general social ineptitude: some people just feel awkward about approaching others, even for benign reasons. So, while Orange is certainly not groundbreaking, it's good to be reminded of just how much can be accomplished when we intentionally make time to communicate with each other: listening, recognizing talent, praising good work, and talking about shared goals.

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### **Heather says**

This has some really great ideas. You don't need to be a team leader in order to get benefit from it -- in fact, one of the main thrusts of the book is the Power Of Everyone.

Are there ideas that I actually plan to implement? I don't know. But one that it reminded me to do more of was recognition. I already believed that recognition was critical for a healthy, well-functioning team, but got busy and wasn't giving it the attention it deserved, work-wise. I therefore re-recognize the need for recognition and am endeavoring to recognize my coworkers/reports more often. Again. :)

## **Ben Love says**

Originally wrote: “I read the Carrot Principle a while back and saw this new book by the same crowd advertised all over Atlanta airport – so I thought I’d give it a try. I’m growing to adore data-based business analysis books (with Good to Great still being the ultimate).”

This book surprised me. A well written book packed with very, very useful information about team dynamics and how the best companies get it right. Lots of data included that seems obvious to me know, but only once it was pointed out.

This is one of the few books that will definitely (and positively) alter the way I work with everyone around me.

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