

Foreword by **DANIEL GOLEMAN**, author of *Emotional Intelligence*



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CHRISTOPH  
LUENEBURGER

A  
CULTURE  
OF  
PURPOSE

How to Choose  
the Right People and  
Make the Right People  
Choose You

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# A Culture of Purpose

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HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PEOPLE  
AND MAKE THE RIGHT PEOPLE  
CHOOSE YOU

Christoph Lueneburger

Foreword by Daniel Goleman

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*To Brigitte and Anne and Liv, who give me purpose*

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# Foreword

*Daniel Goleman*  
*Author of Emotional Intelligence*

Today's leaders face a conundrum: our systems of transportation, energy, construction, industry, and commerce are slowly degrading the handful of systems that support life as we know it on this planet. These negative impacts are unintended—those systems were developed long before we had any idea of their ecological consequences.

Carbon and the resultant climate change are the best known of these systemic harms, but their range is far greater than dangers to the planet's carbon cycle. They include a planewide buildup of toxic chemicals, a shrinking of biodiversity as species die off, and the acidification of bodies of water.

The human brain, unfortunately, does not attune well to these dangers to our species' long-term survival. Our brain's design for perception and for alarms of threat is attuned to the predators of an earlier age, not these subtle threats to our planet.

That leadership challenge is background to the constructs and tools Christoph Lueneburger offers here. In this leadership manifesto for the twenty-first century, he cites myriad ways



managers already have risen to the challenge of making their companies' cultures ever more sustainable.

Any leader who cares about sustainability will find a practical playbook here. Let me highlight two tools.

The first: a clear, evidence-based focus on the competencies that distinguish effective sustainability leaders. The relevant leadership competencies—what to look for in new hires, promotions, and development—include the abilities to lead change and to influence. In other words, the elite in this leadership group are managers who can persuade and motivate and who articulate a resonant vision.

This provides the psychological energy and fuel that leading change demands. For creating a more sustainable system of industry and commerce will inevitably require innovations ranging from simply changing B2B sourcing to reinventing basic technologies so that they are more earth friendly.

The other competencies that distinguish the best sustainability leaders are results delivery, commercial drive, and smart strategic thinking. In other words, changes toward a more sustainable operation must also make business sense. At their best, they can go beyond saving money to creating entirely new products and processes.

The second management tool, one that goes hand in hand with this strategy, is the “handprint,” the metric for all the ways an organization reduces its ecological footprint. Focusing on a company's handprint offers sustainability leaders a workaround for the adverse psychological effects of tracking carbon footprints. The footprint is always a negative value, a measure of the harm we do to the planet. This, psychologists

tell us, evokes negative feelings—guilt, shame, defensiveness, and the like. These are demotivating.

But the handprint tracks the *good* we do—it’s a metric for all the ways we are reducing our footprint. This is the appropriate measure for sustainability. And it makes us feel good about what we are doing. This positive motivation keeps us moving toward our goals and gives a sustainability leader a powerful tool for persuasion.

All of this makes a company’s sustainability strategy the core of a culture of purpose—a set of norms and practices for the common good. As sustainable practices foster a culture of purpose, one that enlarges its handprint daily, companies can better attract and retain the best talent among those generations that will bear the brunt of our past poor ecological habits. And having the best and brightest will help any company both in its immediate results and in its long-term battle to reverse the ecological tide.

Although the ecological crisis we face as a species can seem gloomy, I find great hope in the case studies presented here. To see the range of ideas, innovations, and more sustainable practices already promoted by leaders suggests that we are at the dawn of a new way of doing business—one with a realistic sense of how culture matters for the long term and an intelligent grasp of how a more sustainable mode can be good strategy.

Following this map, perhaps one day industry and commerce will go beyond sustainability to replenishing the earth.