

Pioneering the Future of
High-Performing Organizations

A
RADICAL
Enterprise

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A RADICAL ENTERPRISE

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To Charlie, Ruby, and River,
and to the radically collaborative future you may inherit.

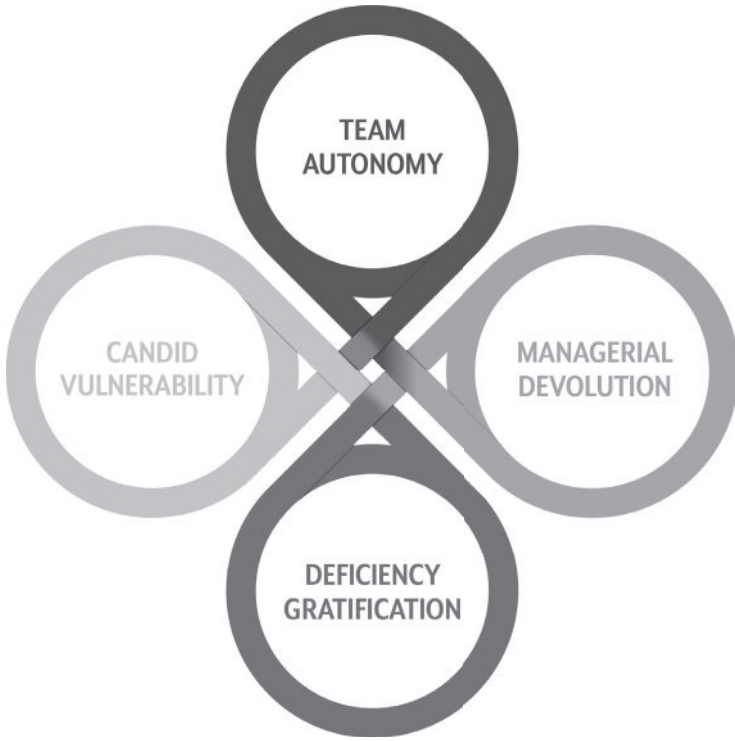


Figure 1: The Four Imperatives of Radical Collaboration

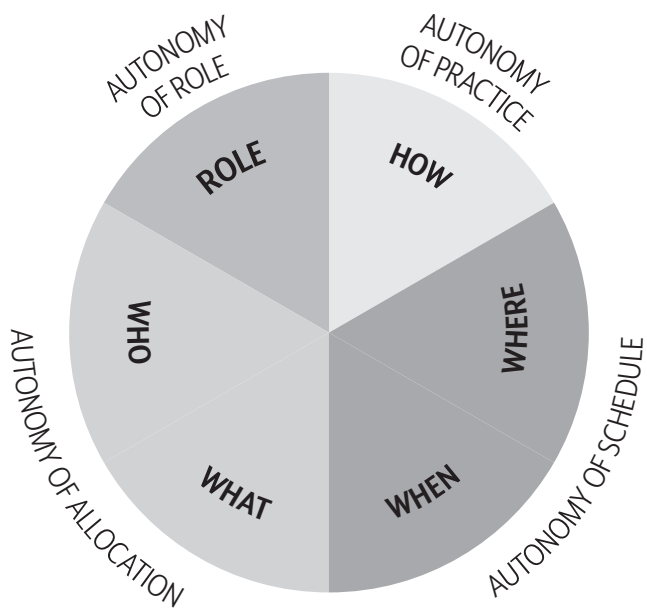


Figure 2: The Six Core Dimensions of Team Autonomy

Table 1: Radically Collaborative Pioneers

Name	Description	Demographics	Started with Radical Collaboration (RC) or Transformed?	Notable for ...
Buurtzorg	Number one home health-care provider in the Netherlands.	15,000 people. Founded in 2006. Started in Netherlands, now in 25 countries.	Started with RC.	Broken up into thousands of small, self-managing teams of nurses who self-manage everything from nursing, to hiring, to customer acquisition and facilities.
CivicActions	Open-source government consultancy.	100 people. Founded in 2004.	Started with RC.	One of the first fully distributed technology companies. Notable for decentralized, grassroots-organizing culture.
cLabs/Celo	Cryptocurrency company focused on creating the conditions for prosperity in developing communities around the world.	150 people. Founded in 2018. Based in Berlin, Buenos Aires, and San Francisco.	Started with RC.	Notable for use of Holacracy.
GrantTree	Helps organizations acquire government R&D grants.	65 people. Founded in 2010. Based in London.	Transforming toward RC.	Notable for pioneering self-managed pay.
Haier	Number one appliance manufacturer in the world.	80,000 people. Founded in 1920.	Transformed to RC.	Notable for radically collaborative structure of self-managing microenterprises.
Haufe-umantis	Collaboration and talent-management software company.	200 people. Founded in 2002. Based in Switzerland.	Transforming toward RC.	Notable for transitioning from dominator hierarchy, to workplace democracy, to self-management/ radical collaboration.
Matt Black Systems	Manufacturer of airplane instruments.	30 people. Founded in 1973.	Transformed to RC.	Notable for fractal organizational model.

Table 1: Radically Collaborative Pioneers, cont.

Morning Star	Largest tomato processor in the world.	4,000 people. Founded in 1990.	Started with RC.	No managers, no set roles or responsibilities. 100% self-managing structure redesigned annually through CLOUs (colleague letters of understanding)
Nearsoft (now Encora)	"Nearshore" software consultancy.	450 people. Founded in 2006. Based in Mexico. Acquired by Encora in 2020. Currently the Mexican division of Encora.	Started with RC.	"No" rules: No bosses. No "employees." No titles. No secrets. Motto: "Freedom in the Workplace."
Pod Group	Enterprise network operator (ENO) for Internet of Things	25 people. Based in San Francisco. Founded in 1999.	Transformed to RC.	Notable for self-managing culture and self-managed pay.
TIM Group	Fintech org focused on trade advice and investment recommendations.	London-based. Acquired in 2018. 50-person self-managing group at time of acquisition.	Transformed to RC.	Notable for gradual, employee-led transformation toward radical collaboration via a management reading group.
Viisi	Fintech org focused on mortgage advice.	40 people. Based in the Netherlands. Founded in 2010.	Started with RC.	Notable for implementing the Deming pay system.
W. L. Gore	Innovation organization focused on industrial and chemical innovation	Over 11,000 employees. Founded in 1958. Based in Delaware. Revenues in excess of \$3 billion.	Started with RC.	One of the first radically collaborative companies in the world. Open allocation process for teams and new innovation projects.

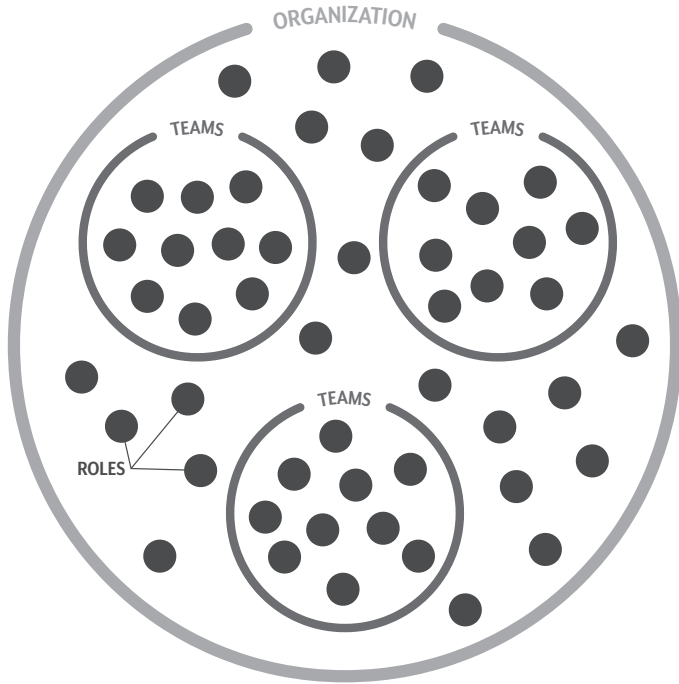


Figure 3: Holacracy-Powered Organizational Structure

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I wrote the final paragraphs of the last chapter, I cried. At the time, I didn't know why I was crying. Perhaps it was simply the catharsis of finishing. Although I wrote the manuscript for this book in eight weeks, I had been reading, researching, and writing for years. I have thousands of pages of notes, interviews, chapter fragments, and false starts. To have all of that finally coalesce into a coherent body of writing was both an achievement and a relief.

It's also possible that my tears were tears of exhaustion. I began this particular manuscript in January 2021, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although I had no job during that winter, my wife worked from home full time and our three children, aged two to ten, were with us twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. I spent the daylight hours caring for our toddler, while also trying to keep our two older children signed on and engaged in their virtual classrooms.

Since it wasn't possible to work on my manuscript so long as our children were awake, I got up everyday at 4:00 AM and wrote through the wee hours while drinking dangerously large amounts of coffee. I'm naturally a morning person, so this proved possible. However, it didn't prove sustainable. By the time I finished the manuscript eight weeks later, I was sleep deprived beyond the help of caffeine. I *needed* to finish. In that light, perhaps tears were to be expected.

My tears may also have had something to do with isolation. A number of authors have described the writing process as lonely. Stephen King, for example, had this to say in his memoir: "Writing is a lonely job. Having someone who believes in you makes a lot of difference. They don't have to make speeches. Just believing is usually enough."¹ I've been fortunate enough to have lots of people who believe in me. My publisher, my editor, my friends, my family, and of course and most importantly of all, my wife and partner Nicole. Having that kind of love and support didn't eliminate the loneliness, but it certainly made it bearable. So maybe my tears were tears of gratitude for the support I have received and for the end to the self-imposed isolation that constitutes the writing process.

Catharsis. Exhaustion. Isolation. Gratitude. All of that undoubtedly contributed to my emotional state at the time. But as I reflect now, I realize that my tears were an experience of something else as well. My writing process is usually slow and halting, in which I laboriously transform my words, sentences, and paragraphs from jumbled and confused to ordered and precise. (This may partly explain why it has taken me years to complete this project.)

But unlike the rest of the manuscript, those final paragraphs flowed out of me abruptly. There was no hesitation over word choice, no puzzling over presentation or order. The ideas, metaphors, and messages rolled out my mind and off my fingertips as if fully formed. I began crying before I finished, but the words kept coming, unabated. For a moment, it was as if the room had faded away and nothing else remained save the characters appearing on my screen. My field of perception was “all figure, no ground,” as Maslow would put it. In other words, finishing the manuscript was a “peak experience,” a self-actualizing moment of realization and transcendence that was deeply meaningful and transformative—and I have many people to thank for it.

I'll begin with Rob Mee, the founder of Pivotal Labs and the eventual CEO of Pivotal Software. For reasons that I'll never understand, he asked me several years into my tenure at Pivotal Labs if I'd be interested in writing a book about Pivotal's ways of working. He did this on what seemed to me to be the spur of the moment, yet his willingness to take a chance on me has nonetheless altered the course of my life in ways both profound and profoundly fruitful. Although the particular book that he envisioned never quite came to fruition, and although Pivotal itself was not destined to last, Rob set me on a journey that has taken me to distant shores of knowledge and new horizons of being. I am forever grateful to him.

I'd also like to thank several of my fellow “pivots” (as Pivotal employees were called), including Rebecca Jean, Luke Winikates, Ben Christel, Joseph Palermo, Tom Kennedy, and Sam Mirza. An early, though ultimately abandoned, version of this manuscript detailed a week within the lives of these six “pivots” as they worked on radically collaborative teams. Their willingness to give me access to their experiences, emotions, thoughts, and sentiments during the course of a week, followed by in-depth interviews about their backgrounds, gave me new insights into the nature of radical collaboration that continue to influence me today. Although my writing eventually went in new directions that could no longer incorporate their

experiences, I am indebted to them all for the time, knowledge, and experience they shared with me.

I'd also like to extend special thanks to another "pivot," Elisabeth Hendrickson, author of *Explore It! Reduce Risk and Increase Confidence with Exploratory Testing*. In addition to being a cherished mentor to me during my time at Pivotal, Elisabeth also introduced me to her friend and author, Gene Kim, and by extension, to the IT Revolution publishing company. Although I had a basic concept for the book and the beginnings of the manuscript, I was a first-time author. Without the belief and support of Elisabeth, you, my dear reader, would not be reading these words today.

My editor, Anna Noak, deserves my endless gratitude. She encouraged me, stuck with me, and leveled with me for years until I finally had a manuscript worthy of publication. As an author, I was a complete novice when I began with her, and although I know that I still have much to learn about the craft of writing, I also know that this manuscript has been improved immensely by her insights, suggestions, critiques, and clarifications.

There is a special place in my heart for my early readers: John Ryan, Phil Goodwin, and Wiley Kestner. They were kind enough to read this manuscript *before* Anna Noak applied her editorial gifts to it; and their critiques, insights, and reactions helped me not only understand where the text was weak, but also prepared me for the rewarding yet challenging task of developmental editing that lay ahead. Furthermore, since they read each chapter as soon as I completed it and since they quickly gave me feedback and encouragement, they became a deficiency-gratifying support group for me during the writing process, one that I could not have dispensed with. Thank you, my friends.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Nicole, who has encouraged me, supported me, and counseled me along this journey every step of the way. She has been my first reader, my biggest fan, and my closest confidant throughout this process. Writing a book is a tremendous, almost absurd, investiture of time and impacts everything else within your life, including your job and your family. I could never have completed this book without Nicole's support and love. She is truly the O. G. radical collaborator.

RADICALLY COLLABORATIVE PIONEERS: AT A GLANCE

Buurtzorg: Number one home health-care provider in the Netherlands. Fifteen-thousand colleagues. Founded in 2006 in the Netherlands, now in twenty-five countries. Broken up into thousands of small self-managing teams of nurses who self-manage everything from nursing, to hiring, to customer acquisition, and facilities.

CivicActions: Open-source government consultancy. One hundred people. Founded in 2004. One of the first fully distributed technology companies. Notable for decentralized, grassroots-organizing culture.

cLabs: Cryptocurrency company focused on creating the conditions for prosperity in developing communities around the world. One hundred fifty people. Founded 2018. Based in Berlin, Buenos Aires, and San Francisco. Notable for holacracy.

GrantTree: Helps organizations acquire government R&D grants. Sixty-five people. Founded in 2010. Based in London. Notable for pioneering self-managed pay.

Haier: Number one appliance manufacturer in the world. Eighty-thousand people. Founded in 1920. Notable for radically collaborative structure of self-managing microenterprises.

Haufe-umantis: Collaboration and talent-management software company. Two hundred people. Founded in 2002. Based in Switzerland. Notable for transitioning from dominator hierarchy, to workplace democracy, to self-management/radical collaboration.

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