

Culture Decks Decoded: Transform Your Culture into a Visible & Tangible Asset



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ONE of the strangest of our social media age is that employee handbooks have had a digital era makeover and now – as online culture decks – are the key tool driving the market-leading competitive advantage of the big name C21st companies using them. When it comes to landing prospective talented employees and deep pocketed investors, the candour and honesty of these glorified employee handbooks sees them deliberately written and designed to either magnetically attract or strongly repel.

Netflix kicked off the online culture decks trend (in 2009) when CEO Reed Hastings posted his company's 125-page slide deck. Facebook's COO Sheryl Sandberg praised the Netflix culture deck, "it may well be the most important document ever to come out of the valley." Since that time it has been viewed over 18 million times.

For Netflix the culture deck provided the clarity of purpose and ambition that attracts A+ talent and investors. According to Hastings, it provides "a bill of rights for employees" while it also simultaneously serves as the central tool for keeping the "cultural norm" as Netflix scaled as "it honestly tell[s] the truth about how companies really operate".

Though it contains many strong red-in-tooth-and-claw statements – for example, "adequate performance gets a generous severance package" and "we are a team, not a family" – this transparency quickly and easily clarifies the purpose, culture and strategy of the organization for those wanting in or out (and admirers) alike.

The Netflix culture deck has inspired many imitators and is now widely used to by successful companies such as LinkedIn, Hootsuite, Etsy and Hubspot (amongst others) to state and define their own unique DNAs.

A culture deck is the most important secret weapon for any company today. Brett Putter's new book *Culture Decks Decoded: Transform Your Culture into a Visible, Conscious & Tangible Asset* showcases, investigates and explains current best practice.

In the book, Putter explains why a company's culture is either a strategic asset or a potential liability. How canny leaders invest in their culture and do so because they understand that it is the only sustainable competitive advantage in their business that they have complete control over, and why in creating the best companies, culture is a critical business function and needs to be deliberately managed as such.

Company culture is as important as finance or sales ... but it's not managed at all – never mind in the same way – it explains why company cultures become poisonous over time. Putter discusses that when culture is ignored or neglected, it remains invisible, subconscious, and intangible – but with tangible results. A non-prioritized culture can evolve into a dangerous liability that hinders all efforts to grow the business.

Putter guides the reader to develop a thoughtful culture deck that will delivery many competitive advantages, and explains that from day one of a business, culture develops and becomes embedded when decisions which are made prove to be successful.

Divided into 18 main chapters, *Culture Decks Decoded: Transform Your Culture into a Visible, Conscious & Tangible Asset* is a handbook that starts by looking at CEO leadership and why nine out of ten CEOs do nothing about their culture because they don't know how to, and more disturbingly, they often don't know why they should bother.

As more leaders realize the significant impact that their company culture has across every aspects of their business – and most significantly on whether someone decides to work for and ultimately stay with the company for an extended period of time or not – more leaders are creating and opening sharing culture decks that help to make their company culture a more visible, tangible and conscious asset that in turn helps to attract and retain the best talent as well as partners, investors and clients.

Putter goes on to explain that company culture is "as unique as a strand of your DNA ... in designing your culture deck, you should create the structure, design and content that works for your special culture and organization."

As always, however, borrowing from what others have successfully done before will enable you to avoid re-inventing the wheel, and I am glad to say that in *Culture Decks Decoded: Transform Your Culture into a Visible, Conscious & Tangible Asset* Putter has packed in a full range of examples to show how to make and successfully use culture decks within any business.