

## DETAILS



### *The Road to Flourishing*

Eight Keys to Boost Employee Engagement and Well-Being

April 19, 2022 | \$25, 216 pages, hardcover | 978-1-5140-0246-9

## Cultivating a Healthy Workplace Culture

Many organizations find themselves spinning their wheels in work cultures filled with toxicity, dysfunction, conflict, and fear. Unengaged employees drag down productivity, and ineffective management undermines morale. How can we create workplaces where people don't just struggle to get through the day, but actually thrive and love what they do and where they work?

Al Lopus, cofounder and CEO of the Best Christian Workplaces Institute, has studied hundreds of organizations to discover eight key drivers in companies with a healthy culture and engaged employees. He gathers best practices from across a range of companies and ministries to demonstrate how people at all levels can work together to accomplish work that matters. The eight scientifically based drivers are listed below and further defined in a dedicated chapter in the book:

- Fantastic Teams
- Life-Giving Work
- Outstanding Talent
- Uplifting Growth
- Rewarding Compensation
- Inspirational Leadership
- Sustainable Strategy
- Healthy Communication

In addition to learning more about the key drivers with specific examples, seasoned leaders, emerging leaders, pastors, and those in a position to enact cultural change also have the opportunity to answer survey questions found in the back of the book to begin to get a picture of the health of their own organizations and think about developing an action plan to cultivate a healthier workplace culture for their colleagues and employees.

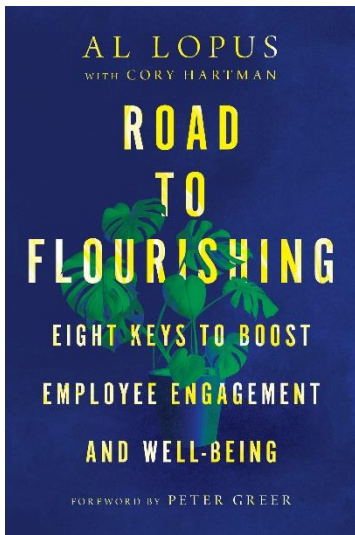


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What makes for a flourishing workplace? With compelling case studies from the Best Christian Workplaces Institute along with enlightening personal anecdotes, Al Lopus demonstrates how companies and ministries can accomplish work that matters by building fantastic teams, cultivating life-giving work, attracting and retaining outstanding talent, and much more.

## Resiliency in the Face of Volatile Change

The more an organizational culture is flourishing, then, the more energy, diligence, and joy your employees bring to what they do. They're more honest, more trusting, and more unified with one another, which sparks extraordinary cooperation and creativity. They become single-mindedly committed to the organization's mission because they believe that their organization cares about them. They believe that they can be truly productive for things that matter through their organization, and that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. They go the extra mile and choose to put their discretionary effort into what they do. They look forward to coming to work every day because of the vitality they find there. A team full of employees like this can't help but produce at a level of effectiveness that far exceeds the output of a mediocre culture.

Unsurprisingly, if a flourishing culture engages workers, a culture that isn't flourishing disengages them. There's a wide range of suboptimal cultures, from modestly healthy to downright toxic, and as an organization slides down the scale, the consequences become more and more apparent. People become dissatisfied with their jobs; they merely do what they need to do to get by. Innovation disappears. Interpersonal conflicts sprout and escalate. Some people begin actively undermining leaders. Employees take off all the time they can get, and for both legitimate and illegitimate reasons sick time soars. Turnover increases, and in particular top performers find work elsewhere. Because the best people are gone, productivity drops sharply and goals aren't met. Poor outcomes proliferate and revenue declines.

From time to time I hear the dismissive criticism that culture is "soft stuff" that doesn't affect the bottom line. Or I hear the assumption that employee well-being has to do with soothing whiny workers by putting gourmet coffee in the breakroom or rewarding them with a spa day. Tell that to the hard workers at FMA. Look back at what they told me was causing the most problems for their work experience: wasted talent, job insecurity, mismanagement, inefficiency and disorganization, lack of accountability, and distrust of senior leadership. Is there anything *soft* about this list? These are the sorts of things that keep the most hardheaded executives in the most demanding industries up at night.

You might not believe it, and they might not say it directly, but more than anything, your employees care about the effectiveness of your ministry, school, or business. The workplace culture they want is one that makes the organization succeed. They can work without perks, but they can't work without purpose and promise. In my experience if someone in an organization isn't taking practical impact seriously enough, it generally isn't the employees but the leaders.

The health of an organization's culture is important at all times. Nevertheless, it is especially important for the times we're living in.

We're currently living through a major generational transition in organizations. Much was made of the entry of the millennial generation into the workplace twenty years ago. Among those millennials are today's frontline managers, and baby boomers are rapidly retiring while Generation Z is emerging into the workforce. When leadership roles are filled by adept technology users who want to know every day that they are liked, the rules are changing. The shift to a workplace where personal fulfillment, access to influence, and meaningful mission are workers' baseline expectations is almost complete. For these employees culture isn't an afterthought; it's the whole enchilada. Like it or not, they're not willing to work for a toxic organization merely out of an abstract duty to do God's work or provide for their family.

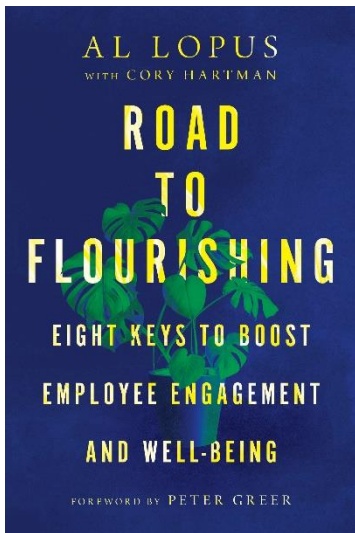


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The passing of generations isn't the only change. At the time of this writing, prognosticators are speculating about the shape of the world after the Covid-19 pandemic. We expect that many who were propelled into working from home—the acceleration of a preexisting trend—aren't coming back. That's only one feature of the changes foisted on Christian organizations; it is emblematic of the fast pace of change that characterizes our VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous). Even aside from the aftermath of the pandemic, the crisis itself freshly exposed how important it is that leaders be resilient in the face of volatile change, which the workplace is not insulated from.

For leaders to respond resiliently, they have to adapt with agility. At the same time, however, there are certain fundamentals about flourishing workplaces that persist through changing times. Grasping the keys to workplace performance and sustainability allows organizations to thrive as conditions evolve. It isn't about plugging in the same strategy that always worked before. It's about understanding the deep truths that shape every new workplace strategy that succeeds in emerging circumstances. No matter how circumstances change, if these key elements are nurtured, protected, and improved, workers engage their work and their workplace with verve and creativity. A workforce like this can find a way to overcome any challenge.

Unfortunately, it's hard to improve your culture if you don't know what it is. Everyone in a culture feels the culture, but that's not the same as naming it or measuring it. Worse, the higher you rise as a leader in any organization, the more distant you become from what is happening in the day-to-day realities and reactions of employees. If you don't measure your culture, it's easy to stop seeing to it; if you see the same lopsided picture on the wall every day, you stop recognizing that it's lopsided.

So for leaders to improve their culture they have to be able to identify what drives their organization to flourish and measure for it. I'm so convinced of this that I've spent almost two decades learning the features that drive flourishing cultures in Christian-led organizations, how to measure them, and how to guide organizations on their road to flourishing.

—Taken from chapter one, "From Toxic to Flourishing: The Eight Keys to a Transformed Culture"



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*"In [this book's] pages you will meet leaders who are actively shaping workplace culture. Whether you work within the nonprofit or for-profit sector, you will gain a greater awareness of your organization's needs and how to build a vibrant culture and an engaged team. Al shares stories from some of the countless organizations the institute has helped on their path to flourishing, and implementing his advice will help yours too."*

—Peter Greer, president and CEO of HOPE International, from the foreword

## **A Flourishing, Foundational Leader**

"I have a dream of seeing Christian-led organizations set the standard as the best, most effective workplaces in the world. If we want to cooperate with God in drawing the world to himself, we have nothing better to offer the world than flourishing Christian workplaces. They stand as a witness that life in Christ is truly a flourishing one! They are the best evidence that Jesus really did come so that people could have life to the fullest (John 10:10)—even in their work."

—Al Lopus, from the prologue of *The Road to Flourishing*

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Al Lopus is the CEO and cofounder of Best Christian Workplaces Institute (BCWI) founded in 2002. The Institute provides research-based measurement tools and culture-change advisory services with a single vision: to help Christian-led organizations set the standard as the best, most effective workplaces in the world.

At BCWI, Al has developed and conducted the broadest-ever employee engagement survey of Christian workers. The comprehensive Employee Engagement Survey includes more than 450 churches and over 1,100 Christian nonprofits and Christian-led businesses. Al has also developed a 360 Leadership Development process.

Al is a recognized author, speaker, and consultant helping Christian leaders and organizations flourish. He publishes a blog and hosts the *Flourishing Culture Podcast*, featuring tips from Christian leaders on how to build a flourishing culture.

Before cofounding BCWI, Al served for twenty-one years in several leadership roles with global human resource consulting firm Willis Towers Watson (now Aon). He served in key leadership roles in the Dallas office and managed the Denver and Seattle/Portland offices. Al also has a mission's heart. He the founding chair of the board of directors of the Nicolas Fund for Education, an organization that provides education for rural children in the highlands region of Guatemala. Al served on the Christian Leadership Alliance board for six years and is currently on its advisory board. He has served on the board for Virginia Mason Medical Center, a six-thousand-employee healthcare organization in Seattle.

Al is married to Kathy. They have two adult daughters, Lane and Christina. Al is active at Evergreen Covenant Church, where he has served as deacon and elder and has chaired the senior pastor search committee and strategic planning committee.



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