Managing Tech Teams:
Four Unique Rules for Success

David Maxfield, Joseph Grenny, and Chase McMillan

VitalSmarts®

Managing Tech Teams: Four Unique Rules for Success

"Yes, I'll take the job." With this statement, you've joined the exciting Tech world as a manager. The "management" part won't be new to you. You've been a successful manager for a few years. But you scratch your head after hearing the following comments on your first day:

"Ask Sunil. He's been here like 18 months—knows everything."

"The smart people here build the product. The rest worry about the organization."

"Always assume a guy on your team today will be your boss in another company tomorrow."

Comments on day two move you from curiosity to concern. You wonder whether your previous experience is relevant.

"Code wins arguments here—not position."

"Lose one hotshot engineer today and you'll have an exodus tomorrow."

"I'm here to change the world not attend meetings."

By day three, you sense you haven't just changed zip codes—you've changed planets.

"My husband and I work at competitors. I hide my travel plans from him so I don't disclose trade secrets."

"Yeah—he's contributing nothing, but leave him be, we can't lose him to our competitor. Plus he has too many options."

You smiled wryly at the end of day one. Day two, you felt disoriented. Today, you're downright queasy.

Every industry swears it is unique—that its business environment requires a distinct set of leadership skills and practices. But no sector can make the case for uniqueness better than Tech. Tech's combination of high-velocity competition, complexity, global talent, and interdependence among rivals is unmatched. Dense geographic concentration in regions such as Silicon Valley, Seattle, Boston, and Bangalore foster even more cultural idiosyncrasies.

While exotic anecdotes about Tech culture make for fun social commentary, we at VitalSmarts wondered a) **are they real?** and b) **do they matter?**

Specifically, we set out to uncover whether differences between the cultures of Tech and non-Tech companies are simply a matter of degree or of kind. And second, we wondered if the differences change the physics of management. Are there unique competencies required of managers to thrive in Tech companies?

The Research

The first step in our research was to define two groups: Tech companies and a second group we call non-Tech companies.

We thought we could understand Tech better if we compared and contrasted it to non-Tech. Comparisons often throw differences into relief. For example, to understand the qualities of a chair, you might compare it to a stool or a sofa.

Today, you could argue that every company is a technology company. After all, every company *uses* technology, and nearly every company has an IT or IS department that employs technology workers. Even traditional companies such as retail and banking depend on continuous improvement in sophisticated technology to survive. So, we had to find a way to filter our targeted group of Tech companies from the rest. We wanted a test, for example, that could look for measurable cultural differences between a pure tech company in the retail space like Amazon and a more traditional company in the same space like Wal-Mart.

We decided to limit our definition of Tech companies to those that *create* technology as a product or service. The principle business of our Tech companies is to manufacture electronics, create software, or provide products and services related to information technology. In other words, for these companies, technology and information *are* their primary business. This definition of Tech encompasses organizations like Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, Intel, Oracle, Uber, etc.

We combined the many other companies that *use* Tech products and services—companies such as Allstate, Boeing, Chevron, Kroger, Pfizer, Starbucks, Wal-Mart, etc—labeled this comparison group "non-Tech"[1].

Again—our first research question was, are cultures really different in one group versus the other, and if so, in what way?

---

[1] Healthcare organizations are over-represented in the VitalSmarts database, and were excluded from either category.

Data Collection

We began by interviewing leaders from across the Tech sector. We promised anonymity and confidentiality, so we won't name names. But our interviews included senior and mid-level managers across large and medium-sized Tech companies—both inside and outside of Silicon Valley. We also included senior HR managers from many of these same companies.

Our initial question was, "Imagine one of your favorite nieces has joined your company as a manager. She has been a successful manager at a non-Tech company, but this will be her first job in the Tech industry. What advice would you give her?"

The conversations built from there. We did not use a fixed set of interview questions. Instead, we encouraged the leaders to expand on their advice, adding details and examples. For example, one leader described the unique dilemma she faces when she has a brilliant engineer who she doesn't want but who she is terrified to lose to a competitor that is racing to market alongside her organization. Another leader described how disconcerting it is to work in an environment where being a VP means nothing when pitted against a mercurial game designer with his own agenda.

Each leader identified the challenges he or she felt were most important and unique to Tech companies. As the interviews progressed, we developed categories that captured similar challenges. By the end of the interview phase, we synthesized a list of recurring challenges and reduced them to seven that emerged as trends across the body of interviews.

Next, we created a survey to test our seven challenges. The survey included thirty questions that combined into seven scales, each capturing one of our seven challenges. The questions measured the frequency, severity, and solvability of each challenge. The scales were reliable (Cronbach's alpha of .66 or better).

We collected survey data from 827 Tech subjects and 2,800 non-Tech subjects. These subjects were drawn from our VitalSmarts database, and included individual contributors, managers, and HR professionals.

Below are the descriptions of the seven challenges, together with the results of the survey.

1) **It's Gotta Be Cool:** Employees in this industry are drawn to elite companies and path-breaking projects. If their current company isn't seen as the "coolest," isn't on top of the latest technologies, or isn't getting top coverage in the press, then people move to companies that are. Similarly, if their current job doesn't put them on the coolest projects or on the most coveted teams, then people move on.

Results: Our Tech subjects confirmed this pattern with an above-average score. In addition, they were significantly more likely than our non-Tech subjects to rate this pattern as especially challenging ($p < .0001$). These results suggest this pattern is important, and is uniquely challenging within Tech companies.

2) **Relentless Pressure:** Employees in this industry face relentless pressure. They work long days and during weekends and holidays. They must deliver on tight timelines, quick turnarounds, and short project cycles. Their jobs are intense, expectations are demanding, and the pace never slows.

Results: Our Tech subjects confirmed this pattern with an above-average score. In addition, they were significantly more likely than our non-Tech subjects to rate this pattern as especially challenging ($p < .0001$). These results suggest this pattern is important, and is uniquely challenging within Tech companies.

3) **Consistent Ambiguity:** Employees in this industry have to navigate unclear, overlapping, and shared accountabilities that can create confusion, misalignment, and competition. In addition, these priorities, projects, and assignments are constantly shifting.

Results: Our Tech subjects confirmed this pattern with an above-average score. In addition, they were significantly more likely than our non-Tech subjects to rate this pattern as especially challenging ($p < .003$). These results suggest this pattern is important, and is uniquely challenging within Tech companies.

4) **Déjà Vu All Over Again:** Employees in this industry are one big network. As a result, they are likely to work with their current colleagues again, perhaps in a different company or in a different role. People who are their peers today become managers, peers, or direct reports in another company tomorrow. While the roles change, employees work with the same people again and again.

Results: Our Tech subjects confirmed this pattern with an above-average score. However, this pattern was not unique to Tech companies. Our non-Tech subjects rated it just as challenging in their companies. These results suggest that this pattern is important, but does not differentiate Tech from non-Tech companies.

5) **Dancing With The Stars:** Employees in this industry include a few who are so valuable and unique as to be considered A-players or unicorns. These employees are difficult to replace, and so the company puts a disproportionate effort into attracting and retaining them. As a result, if a superstar acts up, his or her poor behavior is often overlooked and can negatively impact the morale of a team.

Results: Our Tech subjects confirmed this pattern with an above-average score. In addition, they were significantly more likely than our non-Tech subjects to rate this pattern as especially challenging (p < .0001). These results suggest that this pattern is important, and is uniquely challenging within Tech companies.

6) **Interpersonally Challenged:** Employees in this industry are technically skilled, but not "people persons." As a result, their behavior can come across as rude, arrogant, oblivious, etc. There are enough of these challenging people to negatively impact the work environment.

Results: Our Tech subjects confirmed this pattern with an above-average score. However, this challenge was not unique to Tech companies. Our non-Tech subjects rated it just as challenging in their companies. In spite of the common caricature of the "tech nerd" who is savvy about science but inattentive toward humans, our study did not confirm that the tech sector suffers disproportionately from interpersonal negligence. These results suggest that this pattern is important, but does not differentiate Tech from non-Tech companies.

7) **Bigotry Blind Spots:** Employees in this industry aren't always sensitive to diversity and inclusion issues. As a result, some minorities and women feel excluded, slighted, or devalued.

Results: Our Tech subjects rejected this pattern with a below-average score. In fact, they were significantly less likely than our non-Tech subjects to rate this pattern as especially challenging (p < .022). These results jump off the page! The Tech subjects in our study saw cultural blindness as unimportant and not especially challenging.

In contrast, the Tech leaders we interviewed described cultural blindness as an important and unique challenge to Tech companies. And the data on women and minority employment in Tech companies confirm our interviewees' concerns. It is tempting to suggest that our survey subjects were blind to their own cultural blindness. However, our data do not support this assertion.

Impact on Performance

The fact that six of these seven challenges are common within Tech companies, and that five of them differentiated our Tech from our non-Tech subjects, would be of interest to any anthropologist. But why should a Tech manager care? The next step of our research was to understand whether skill in navigating these challenges predicts performance—something leaders care about.

We accomplished this by creating a Performance scale, and then used a regression analysis. We found that four of our thirty survey questions—

encompassing four different challenge areas—did an extraordinary job of predicting Performance (R = .51, p < .0001). These survey questions, in order of importance, are:

1. **It's Gotta Be Cool.** "To what extent are your managers able to make their projects and their teams the cool ones that people want to join?"

2. **Relentless Pressure.** "To what extent are your current colleagues able to manage work pressure so they can succeed at their jobs long-term without letting others down in the short-term?"

3. **Consistent Ambiguity.** "To what extent are your priorities, projects and assignments constantly competing and shifting?"

4. **Déjà Vu All Over Again.** "To what extent does the desire to maintain positive relationships (knowing that you're likely to work with each other again in another company or in another role) prevent your department from being as successful as it would otherwise be?"

Our research indicated that Tech managers who mastered the challenges represented by these four questions significantly boosted the performance of their team (p < .0001).

The next section describes strategies for mastering these four challenges. These solutions are drawn from our interviews with Tech leaders and informed by our thirty years of experience working with Tech companies.

Solutions: Discuss the Undiscussable

As we shared this list of cultural idiosyncrasies with Tech leaders, few were surprised. But what surprised *us* was that few of them had ever been trained or coached on how to deal with them. These challenges are an elephant in the room that everyone sees, but no one directly confronts. And as a result, the range of manager competence in navigating this complex and turbulent context varies widely.

Our interviews suggested two reasons these challenges go unaddressed:

First, acknowledging these challenges is like a fish admitting it's in water. It seems obvious and pointless. But this lapse fails to make conscious a related reality: that the water is a torrent that is hurling the fish toward jagged rocks. There is something in this predicament that Tech leaders should find worth addressing.

Second, there's a heroic cultural norm in Tech companies that suggests real players are too smart or too motivated to be daunted by these realities. Sort of an, "If you can't take it, move to the rust belt" feeling. As a result, these challenges become undiscussable.

The best Tech leaders approach these human challenges the same way they would approach a technical challenge. They discuss the challenges, set improvement goals, and apply scientific principles—in this case, human influence principles—to solve them.

Below are rules Tech leaders can use to address the four key challenges identified in our research.

1. It's Gotta Be Cool

Being seen as "cool" is a valued asset for a team or project. How do Tech leaders make their teams and projects the cool ones that people want to join? They have intentional practices for building Personal Motivation.[2] Knowing the strategic importance of engagement and retention, Tech leaders make overt efforts to understand and connect with the values of each critical player. Below are five strategies Tech leaders we interviewed used to make their teams and projects cool.

Connect to a Strategic Advantage. Companies have both Strategic Advantages and Competitive Necessities. A Strategic Advantage is an organization's identifying character, its secret sauce, its competitive edge. Take eBay, for example. The company's Strategic Advantage is trust. It's what the organization is famous for.

A Competitive Necessity is a value that must be met for legal or competitive reasons, but that isn't being used to create a competitive edge. eBay's includes platform reliability, ease of use, multi-device access, and the like. The company can't be clunky or slow or it'll risk losing market share to another platform. But it doesn't compete along these dimensions.

Teams and projects that focus on Competitive Necessities, rather than Strategic Advantages, are far less likely to be popular. The reason is that Competitive Necessities are often hygiene factors: When they are successful they are invisible. But, when they fail, people get fired or go to jail. As an employee, Competitive Necessities have few upsides and many downsides.

Teams, projects, and tasks that are closely connected to an organization's Strategic Advantage are naturally cool. At eBay, it's cool to work on security because it's a part of delivering trust. Ask yourself how your team contributes to your organization's Strategic Advantage. Make this connection tighter and clearer and your team will be seen as a cool one.

Connect to a Critical Uncertainty. Teams that can answer the critical uncertainties their companies face become the cool ones. Teams or projects that get linked to a burning platform or urgent opportunity are cool.

For example, in early 2012, Facebook realized it would have to reinvent itself as a mobile app. This reinvention became both a burning platform and an urgent opportunity. The teams that could contribute to this reinvention quickly became the cool teams.

Connect to a Tech Edge. Tech companies put enormous value in being first. Cool leaders show how their teams and projects push the edge of the technological envelope.

For example, Data Centers aren't usually one of the cool places to work. In fact, the people who work there are sometimes referred to pejoratively as "plumbers" because it's their job to keep the data flowing. In fact, Data Centers are the epitome of a Competitive Necessity. No one notices them as long as they are working, but it's a crisis if they ever go down.

One of the leaders we interviewed decided to give the Data Center a reputation makeover—to make the centers the coolest place to work. He did this by connecting to a Tech edge. He demonstrated that their Data Centers were performing on a scale and scope that was unheard of—that broke through the technological envelope. He made Data Centers into a proving ground where people could make a name for themselves. And it worked.

Connect to Careers. Show how your team or project will further a person's career. Tech employees put a very high value on projects that are seen as resume-worthy. This means that a team or project becomes cool when it produces wins that look good on a person's record.

Connect to Social Values. Make the link between your team or project and the positive impact it has on customers, society, and the world. This strategy is underused within Tech organizations, but has great power. For example, during the Arab Spring, employees within Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube suddenly became agents of social change—and also cool. Savvy managers in apparently humdrum departments built a sense of meaning and elevated the "cool"-factor by connecting to this intrinsic motivation.

At its extreme, the desire to attract the best and brightest can result in a kind of professional narcissism—where superstar talent must be continuously stimulated with hyperbolic motivations. "It's Gotta Be Cool" can become pathological. The result is that the vital work of institution building is either neglected or left to dullards with no organizational power.

The antidote to this pathology is a culture that values both engineering virtuosity and institution building. Tech leaders we interviewed hold *everyone* accountable for not just building the product but building

---

[2] These concepts are addressed systematically in *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change.* See Chapter 4: Help Them Love What They Hate.

the team. Norms for doing the tedious work of building trust, investing in management disciplines, building inter-team connections, etc. are communicated consistently through conversation and confrontation when necessary.

2. Relentless Pressure

The rush to market can become a 26.2-mile sprint—creating interpersonal friction, turnover, and burnout, and ultimately resulting in waste, missed deadlines, and violated expectations. Furthermore, attempting to even the pace puts you at risk for appearing uncommitted and becoming marginalized. How do Tech leaders address the realities of relentless pressure?

They ensure that their people are efficient and able to thrive in an environment of relentless pressure. Below are four strategies that recurred in our interviews.[3]

Increase Flow. No, we don't mean leaders increase workflow. The pressure within Tech guarantees plenty of that already. Instead, Tech leaders expressed the need to increase *psychological flow*, the energized feeling you get when you're fully involved and absorbed by an activity. It's what work feels like when you're on a roll and time flies by. It's when work is fun. And it's the opposite of the typical Tech environment where leaders aren't competent at addressing Tech's unique challenges.

Tech's hurly burly cadence means interruptions become the norm. And interruptions are the enemy of flow. Every time a person is pulled away to a meeting, is stopped by a phone call or email, or is told to switch from one job to another, flow stops. The result is that a person works hard all day, but has little to show for it. Or more specifically, has little to *feel* for it. Interrupted and terminated projects are the death of motivation. By the end of the day, people feel physically and emotionally exhausted.

And yet, in equally fast-paced Tech companies where managers create the conditions for flow, employees work equally hard for an equal number of hours and end up *exhausted but exhilarated*.

Tech leaders we interviewed work to make flow happen. They provide people with: **a)** a task that provokes the right blend of confidence and challenge; **b)** significant autonomy; **c)** clear and immediate feedback, so people can manage their own performance; and **d)** the ability to focus—few interruptions, so people can immerse themselves in the task.

Reduce Peak Pressure. Even though we label this challenge "relentless pressure" it isn't really relentless. There are peaks and valleys, and it's the peaks that cause burnout. People live their lives dreading the peaks, even if the peaks are only ten percent of their week.

Although peaks are often not preventable, they are often predictable. Tech leaders prepare for the peaks by creating SWAT teams and lifelines. A SWAT team is a team within a team that is prepared to help during a peak. A lifeline is an individual on the team who will come help during a peak. These strategies allow a Tech leader to reduce the pressure people feel without reducing the team's workload.

Demand a Regular Rhythm. People often procrastinate their way to a crisis. They put off unpleasant or unstructured work until the deadline looms. Then, with the pressure at its worst, they gut it out. This pattern can burn out an entire team.

A substitute for procrastination is a regular rhythm of progress. Employees are expected to track and report daily progress. People see where they stand every day. Tech leaders make adjustments—ramping up resources or modifying plans—long before the crisis looms.

Build in Rest and Renewal. Employees in Tech companies expect to give their all—and are much more eager to push their limits when they know that rest and renewal will follow. The best tech leaders make sure each employee has a plan that includes rest and renewal. Renewal takes many forms. For some, it's time with family; for others, it's an activity like cycling, running, or gardening.

The challenge is that structure drives out lack of structure—and rest and renewal are rarely structured into a person's day, week, or month. The solution is to put rest and renewal onto the calendar— build it into work plans.

3. Consistent Ambiguity

Keeping people on course and on track despite overlapping assignments, unclear ownership, and changing priorities is a constant challenge in a Tech company. How do Tech leaders handle these ambiguities? They maintain open dialogue.[4] Below are three strategies the Tech leaders we interviewed use to maintain consistency in a world of ambiguity.

Manage Up. Often, overlapping assignments, unclear ownership, and changing priorities are intentional. Senior leaders are essentially covering their bets by creating redundancies. There is nothing wrong with this approach, but it requires leaders to communicate with each other more frequently and more meaningfully.

To manage up, Tech leaders use disciplined conversations at senior levels to drive out divergence in both plans and performance. They catch inconsistencies before they turn into incompatibilities, and adjust project plans before they turn into post mortems.

Eradicate Scope Creep and Hobbies. Tech leaders need to be especially vigilant for any add-ons that could take their team off

---

[3] These concepts are addressed systematically in *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, Chapter 5 – Help Them Do What They Can't
[4] These concepts are addressed systematically in *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*.

course. Often, scope creep causes a worthy project to get diverted. This happens because the add-ons aren't properly vetted and agreed on. The same is true for "hobbies"—projects that are precious to an individual, but incompatible with the broader strategic plan.

Scope creep happens in a culture of silence. To safeguard against this in the inevitable messiness of a fast-paced Tech world, Tech leaders create a norm where people speak up about unrealistic deadlines and informal compromises to priorities.

Build Systems for Adjusting Priorities. Most Tech companies have project-management systems in place, but few use them to reduce ambiguity. Instead, project management is used more narrowly to keep project performance on track. The result is that overlapping, incompatible, and contradictory projects proceed on track until they collide in a train wreck.

What is needed is not a new project management system, but a new cultural norm that supports those who discover and confront contradictions as soon as they occur. Ambiguities persist from a failure to discuss—not a failure to document. Tech leaders use prompt and constructive dialogue to reduce ambiguity and create convergence.

4. Déjà Vu All Over Again

Tech employees understand that they are part of one big network and what they say or do will follow them from one place to the next. This reality can present unique challenges for Tech leaders and team members. There is a tendency to avoid risky accountability issues in an effort to maintain positive relationships. This avoidance is even worse in situations that involve valuable A-players with strong opinions and egos to match.

How do Tech leaders deal with Déjà Vu All Over Again? They create a culture of accountability where people aren't afraid that speaking up will undermine future relationships. [5] This is especially crucial in a Tech world where success depends on settling arguments by appeals to truth rather than power. Below are three strategies Tech leaders we interviewed use to promote accountability.

Create Safety. Some people think that "accountability" means taking names and kicking butt. That kind of accountability might create short-term bumps in performance, but it puts relationships at risk. It's no wonder peers are reluctant to hold others accountable, when that's what they think it means.

Tech leaders establish a culture of safety, so people don't feel at risk. They approach accountability the way a curious and concerned scientist might. They assume the best of people, and seek to understand the root causes of the missed expectation. They define accountability as an exploration of causes and solutions, rather than blame and shame. Without this competence, people tend to assume

the worst of each other. When disappointments lead to thoughtful exploration of real causes, rather than blame and shame, trust increases and performance improves.

Build Skills. Tech stars have often focused so tightly on their craft that they haven't had a lot of opportunity to build accountability skills. Training and practice enable people to learn how to hold others to account without undermining relationships. Tech leaders build skills so people can honestly and respectfully discuss challenging issues.

Step Out of the Middle. Tech leaders we interviewed took pains to avoid using their position power. The saying at Facebook is: "code wins arguments". They mean that deference to authority should never win out over deference to expertise. Our Tech leaders endorsed this idea and pushed it down to their people.

Leaders encouraged and coached people to solve problems with each other, rather than bringing problems to them as the boss. Creating a norm that people hold each other accountable in direct, honest, and respectful ways makes accountability a relationship building activity.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the differences people observe between the cultures of Tech and non-Tech companies are profound enough to require a unique set of leadership competencies.

Our findings confirm that they are and they do. We identified a set of challenges that are common within Tech firms, and that set them apart from companies in other industries. Further, we found that Tech leaders' skill at mastering these challenges is a powerful deciding factors of their teams' overall performance. However, while most Tech leaders are familiar with these challenges, few Tech companies offer training or coaching on how to solve them.

While this paper suggests specific rules individual leaders can use to address these challenges within their teams, we believe organizations need to address these challenges at a cultural level. Based on our years of experience working within the Tech industry, we believe we can describe three norms that would address these challenges at the cultural level.

The first of these norms is dialogue. A culture where anyone can speak up and share his or her concerns when it's in the best interest of the mission—truth doesn't just speak to power, it *is* power.

Dialogue is the antidote to elephants in the room. If you can't talk about a problem, you can't solve it. In this paper, we've shown why people in Tech need to discuss the specific elephants we've identified in our research. But don't assume these few challenges are the only elephants Tech

---

[5] These concepts are addressed systematically in *Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior.*

leaders face. The norm across a Tech company needs to be that people can bring up concerns when they have them—even when the concerns involve sensitive, risky, and potentially volatile topics. This norm not only creates a robust, elephant-free organization, but one that quickly surfaces the best ideas allowing companies to better innovate and execute.

The second of these norms is accountability. Anyone can hold anyone accountable—for both product and cultural expectations—regardless of role or position.

Many of the elephants that need to be addressed relate to accountability—to gaps between expectations and performance. The ability to hold others accountable is the glue that keeps our human enterprises from spinning apart. We have described a few key discussions required to deal with the challenges identified in this research. But, imagine building a culture of accountability—one where people hold their managers, their peers, their customers, and their direct reports accountable for the commitments they make. High-accountability cultures are better positioned to address challenges.

The third is influence. *The* key differentiator between Tech companies that are built to last, and those that die after launch, is that leaders recognize their intrinsic duty to not just build a product but build a culture. Companies that are exclusively about product create toxic cultures by default. This happens, because building cultural norms is seen as less important, and less cool than building product. It becomes the work of staff players who don't live in the rarefied air of the product people. In sustainably healthy Tech companies, leaders exert consistent and intentional influence to shape the social system in a way that leads to sustained innovation as well as short-term execution.

The unique nature of the Tech world doesn't appear to be changing anytime soon. What can change and change quickly is a manager's ability to manage the idiosyncratic challenges that come with the territory. Together, these recommendations will equip managers to excel in a world that outpaces even the best and brightest.

Today's success is about product, but tomorrow's is about culture.

To learn how VitalSmarts can help you manage tech teams, call **1-800-449-5989** or visit **vitalsmarts.com/tech**.

About Joseph Grenny

Joseph Grenny is a four-time *New York Times* bestselling author, keynote speaker, and leading social scientist for business performance. He is also the cofounder of VitalSmarts. For thirty-five years, Joseph has delivered engaging keynotes at major conferences including the HSM World Business Forum at Radio City Music Hall—sharing the stage with Jack Welch, Colin Powell, Jim Collins, Daniel Pink, Patrick Lencioni, and Bréné Brown. Joseph's work has been translated into twenty-eight languages, is available in thirty-six countries, and has generated results for 300 of the Fortune 500.

About David Maxfield

David Maxfield is a three-time *New York Times* bestselling author, keynote speaker, and Vice President of Research at VitalSmarts. For the past thirty years, David has conducted social science research to help Fortune 500 leaders and organizations achieve new levels of performance. Specifically, he has focused on human behavior—the underlying written and unwritten rules that shape what employees do every day. Articles resulting from David's research have been published in many notable and peer-reviewed journals including the *MIT Sloan Management Review* where his article, "How to Have Influence" was named the Change Management Article of the Year.

About Chase McMillan

As the VitalSmarts Research and Development Manager, Chase brings credibility and data-driven insight into the classroom. He's led and participated in in-depth studies on topics ranging from patient safety to project management in industries as diverse as healthcare, finance, and technology. Chase has trained and consulted across numerous industries, allowing him to understand and connect with a variety of audiences and create moving learning experiences that meet their unique needs.