

# Harvard Business Review

LEADERSHIP 78

The New  
CEO Activists

Aaron K. Chatterji  
and Michael W. Toffel

MARKETING 62

Targeted Ads That  
Don't Overstep

Leslie K. John, Tami Kim,  
and Kate Barasz

TECHNOLOGY 108

A Real-World  
Guide to  
Artificial  
Intelligence

Thomas H. Davenport  
and Rajeev Ronanki



DOUBLE  
ISSUE

# THE CULTURE FACTOR

Employee attitudes  
can make or break your  
business. Here's how  
to get everyone moving  
in the right direction.

PAGE 43



# Harvard Business Review

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018

## SPOTLIGHT LEADING CULTURE

# 43

44 **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

### THE LEADER'S GUIDE TO CORPORATE CULTURE

How to manage the eight critical elements of organizational life  
*Boris Groysberg, Jeremiah Lee, Jesse Price, and J. Yo-Jud Cheng*

53 **DIAGNOSTIC**

### WHAT'S YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CULTURAL PROFILE?

A worksheet and questions to get you started *Boris Groysberg et al.*

54 **PLANNING**

### HOW TO SHAPE YOUR CULTURE

Steps for setting an aspirational target  
*Boris Groysberg et al.*

55 **THE WORKFORCE**

### CONVERGENCE MATTERS

When employees' views of the culture align, engagement and customer orientation benefit. *Boris Groysberg et al.*

56 **KEY FACTORS**

### CONTEXT, CONDITIONS, AND CULTURE

Consider geographic region, industry, strategy, leadership, and organizational design. *Boris Groysberg et al.*

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**EXPOSING SYRIA'S HORRORS**

RE "THE AGONY OF SYRIA" [March 12]: News is not just about political leaders shaking hands or giving rousing speeches. Nor is it about celebrities and their exploits. News is a human story with its own emotions and logic. TIME exemplified this by sharing the horrific details of the daily life of Syrians in the line of fire. It would have been even better if you had featured people who have borne the brunt of forces opposed to President Bashar Assad. But this does not take away from the tremendous hard work, research and raw courage that must have gone into putting together this story.

Gulbahar S. Sidhu  
JALANDHAR, INDIA

AFTER SEEING THE HORRIFIC and heart-wrenching pictures of the mayhem that is being meted out by Assad's regime on his own people, it is incomprehensible that no Western power is willing to get involved in trying to put a stop to this carnage. It is time to send a message to Assad, that his air force will not be unchallenged allowing him to commit these atrocities with impunity, and to his Russian and Iranian allies that retribution will be handed out for their crimes.

Allan de Sousa,  
CALDAS DA RAINHA,  
PORTUGAL

**THE LESSONS OF CALVIN**

RE "MARILYNNE ROBINSON Promotes Reason in Unreasonable Times" [March 12]: Sarah Begley's article caught exactly the Marilynne Robinson that her readers have come to know. Except in one respect: it did not mention that Robinson is a confessed Calvinist. Her citation of John Calvin in support of her openhanded liberalism shows how the image of Christianity's paradoxical God can be reflected in human history, cultures and politics. I don't agree with Robinson on everything, but she is driving me to take my copy of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* from the shelf where it has been lovingly kept for 28 years, but never read.

Richard Wilkins,  
WATFORD, ENGLAND

**A MESSAGE DIMINISHED**

RE "A HOUSE DIVIDED" [March 12]: I was a little disappointed by Elizabeth Dias' article on Billy Graham. Instead of focusing on the family's differences, Dias should have concentrated on the impact Graham has made in the lives of people across the world and how he conveyed the message of love of God. It is a universal truth that when a leader dies, family members show some kind of division to own the legacy. It need not be the theme for the



first article after one's death.  
R. Bhakther Solomon,  
CHENNAI, INDIA

**AN ABSOLUTE MISTAKE**

RE "CHINA STEPS CLOSER to Despotism as Xi Becomes Leader for Life" [March 12]: Rulers of authoritarian states have absolute power because they cannot be removed. They are free to abuse their power for as long as they live. To err is human, and a leader who tolerates no checks is even more likely to err, because power can make one impervious to other views. The Cultural Revolution led by Mao Zedong from 1966 to 1976 was the best example of abuse of absolute power. Chinese President Xi Jinping should have known better.

Song Xiaowen,  
TAOYUAN CITY, TAIWAN

READING THE BRIEF REGARDING the Chinese leader,

my first thought was, "I hope Donald Trump doesn't read TIME." You know what happened when he saw the big parade in France.

Bob Newell,  
SUTTON, MASS.

**MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING**

RE "WHY IS THE GOP TOUTING New Gun Restrictions After Parkland? Follow the Money" [March 12]: In doctrinaire leftist fashion, this piece deliberately conflates the NRA with gun manufacturers. The NRA did not shoot up the Parkland high school. Its members did not. Its members' interest is not in whether more or fewer guns are sold, or whether gunmakers are more or less profitable. The NRA's focus is on gun safety and the constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

Steve Baur,  
WESTMINSTER, COLO.

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98

FEATURES

MARKETING

**Ads That Don't Overstep**

How to make sure you don't take personalization too far  
*Leslie K. John, Tami Kim, and Kate Barasz*

62

MANAGING PEOPLE

**Can MOOCs Solve Your Training Problem?**

Insights from a study of 28,000 learners in 127 countries  
*Monika Hamori*

70

LEADERSHIP

**The New CEO Activists**

A playbook for polarized political times  
*Aaron K. Chatterji and Michael W. Toffel*

78

MANAGING PEOPLE

**How to Hire**

Chances are you're doing it all wrong.  
*Patty McCord*

90

INNOVATION

**Finding Your Company's Second Act**

How to survive the success of a big-bang disruption  
*Larry Downes and Paul Nunes*

98

TECHNOLOGY

**Artificial Intelligence for the Real World**

Don't start with moon shots.  
*Thomas H. Davenport and Rajeev Ronanki*

108

MANAGING ORGANIZATIONS

**More Than a Paycheck**

How to create good blue-collar jobs in the knowledge economy  
*Dennis Campbell, John Case, and Bill Fotsch*

118

STRATEGY

**Inclusive Growth: Profitable Strategies for Tackling Poverty and Inequality**

A road map for creating shared value  
*Robert S. Kaplan, George Serafeim, and Eduardo Tugendhat*

126

NEGOTIATIONS

**The Case for Plain-Language Contracts**

Want to do deals faster and increase customer satisfaction? Start by stripping out the legalese.  
*Shawn Burton*

134

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018

# IDEA WATCH

New Thinking and Research in Progress

20 **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**“Sorry” Is Not Enough**

Customer satisfaction depends on creative problem solving, not empathy.

*PLUS A roundup of the latest management research and ideas*

32 **DEFEND YOUR RESEARCH**

**Negative Feedback Rarely Leads to Improvement**

It mostly makes people avoid the peers who criticized them, new research shows.

## HOW I DID IT

**The Chairman of Ryohin Keikaku on Charting Muji’s Global Expansion**

Why the Japanese retailer chose to grow slowly  
*Masaaki Kanai*

**35**



# EXPERIENCE

Managing Your Professional Growth

142 **MANAGING YOURSELF**

**The Best Leaders Are Great Teachers**

They personalize instruction to help their employees soar.  
*Sydney Finkelstein*

147 **CASE STUDY**

**Are Our Customer Liaisons Helping or Hurting?**

Leaders at an Indian hospital wonder whether new staff members are driving doctors away.  
*Sunanda Nayak and Jyotsna Bhatnagar*

152 **SYNTHESIS**

**The Triumph of Spin Over Substance**

Staying smart in a world of fake news and dubious data  
*Jeff Kehoe*

## LIFE’S WORK JOHN ADAMS

**160**



# DEPARTMENTS

- 10 From the Editor
- 12 Contributors
- 16 Interaction
- 154 Executive Summaries