



## FACULTY & RESEARCH

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#### MICHAEL BEER

Mike Beer is Cahners-Rabb Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus at the Harvard Business School, co-founder and Director of TruePoint Partners, a management consultancy that works with senior executives to develop effective high performance and commitment organizations, and the Center for Higher Ambition Leadership, a not for profit organization dedicated to increasing the number of companies and leaders committed to creating economic and social value. Mike has researched and written widely about organization effectiveness, organizational change, high commitment, high performance organizations, leadership, as well as human resource management. Mike has had extensive teaching and consulting experience in those fields.

Professor Beer has taught in HBS' MBA program and executives in the Advanced Management Program, the International Senior Management Program and Managing Organizational Effectiveness and Change, which he founded and chaired. Mike taught and led first year MBA courses in organizational behavior and human resource management; the latter developed under Mike's leadership is the first required HRM course in business schools with a strategic general management perspective.

In addition to numerous book chapters and articles in academic and business journals, Mike is author or co-author of eleven books. Among them is the ground breaking *Managing Human Assets* and the award winning *The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal*. His most recent books are *High Commitment*, *High Performance* in 2009, and *Higher Ambition: How Great Leaders Create Economic and Social Value* published in 2011.

Mike has consulted to senior management in several industries--manufacturing, services (hospitality, professional and financial), consumer packaging, high tech., pharmaceutical and medical technology. Among others he has worked with Becton Dickinson, Hewlett Packard, Ernst & Young, Agilent Technologies, Merck and Whitbread PLC. Mike has served on several professional, not-for-profit and corporate boards.

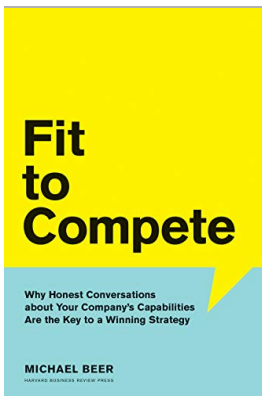
The recipient of professional honors and awards, Mike is a Fellow of the Academy of Management and the recipient of its Distinguished Scholar-Practitioner Award, a Fellow of the Academy of Human Resource Management, a Fellow of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology and recipient of its Distinguished Professional Contributions Award, and recipient of the Harry and Miriam Levinson Award for outstanding contributions to organizational consulting psychology from the American Psychological Foundation. He is the 2007 recipient of the Society for Human Resource Management's prestigious Michael R. Losey Research Award and the 2013 recipient of the Herbert Heneman Jr. Career Achievement Award from the Human Resource Division of the Academy of Management. Mike and Russ Eisenstat received the 1998 Organizational Development Institute Award for the most outstanding contribution to the field for the development of the Strategic Fitness Process at Becton Dickinson and its application there and in numerous other corporations around the world..

Prior to joining the Faculty at Harvard, Mike served as Director of Organizational Research & Development at Corning Inc., a department he founded and led for eleven years. The work of the department led to several innovations in organizing and managing the company's businesses and people. He holds a B.A. from Queens College, a BA from Harvard University (honorary), an M.S. from North Carolina State University, and a Ph.D. in organizational psychology and business from Ohio State University.

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## Featured Work

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### Fit to Compete

Why Honest Conversations about Your Company's Capabilities Are the Key to a Winning Strategy

Is Silence Killing Your Strategy? In his thirty years of working in corporations, Harvard Business School professor Michael Beer has witnessed firsthand how organizational silence derails strategic objectives. When employees can't speak truth to power, senior leaders don't hear what they need to hear about their company's fitness to compete, and employees lose trust in those leaders and become less committed to change. In *Fit to Compete*, Beer presents an antidote to silence--principles and a time-tested innovative process for holding honest conversations with everyone in your organization. Used by over eight hundred organizations across the globe, the strategic fitness process has helped leaders in a diverse range of industries--including medical technology, information technology, banking, restaurant chains, and pharmaceuticals--hear the raw but necessary truth about the sources of misalignment between their strategies and their organizations. In addition to step-by-step instructions, Beer offers detailed and illustrative case studies of companies that have conducted honest conversations to great effect. He also shows how to apply the process more broadly to a variety of strategic challenges and at multiple levels throughout the organization. Practical, enlightening, and comprehensive, *Fit to Compete* is the book you should turn to if you want create winning strategies that your entire company will rally behind.



## 6 Barriers to Becoming a High-performance Company

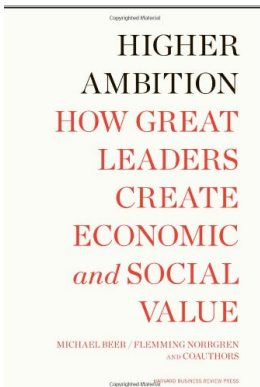
### What stops firms from boosting their performance?

"There are 6 common barriers that tend to arise in companies that are having performance difficulties," says the author of '[High Commitment, High Performance: How to Build a resilient Organization for Sustained Advantage](#)'.

"These silent killers are always lurking unseen but when there is a change in strategy, that is when they come to the fore -- forcing companies to overcome them if they are to boost performance."

An ineffective senior team, an unclear strategy, conflicting priorities, low trust among teams and a hands-off leadership style are some of the barriers that dent corporate performance.

Michael Beer presented his latest research results at the [ESADE Research Day](#). Watch the video interview to learn the keys to improve your team's effectiveness and boost your business performance.



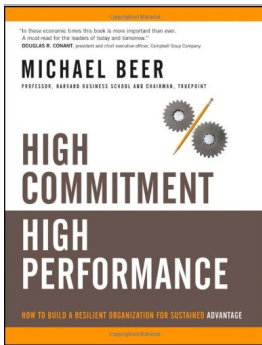
## Higher Ambition

How Great Leaders Create Economic and Social Value.

Meeting the new standard for leadership. Higher Ambition is required reading for every leader who refuses to compromise between people and performance.

Choosing one or the other may have worked in the past, but it won't work now.

As global competition stiffens and businesses face increased public scrutiny and renewed government regulation, leaders must win on all fronts-with their people, their customers, their communities, and their shareholders. In short, they must deliver superior economic and social value. Brimming with powerful stories and thoughtful advice from CEOs themselves, Higher Ambition equips leaders with the practical insights they need to meet this new and higher standard.



## High Commitment High Performance: How to Build A Resilient Organization for Sustained Advantage

by Michael Beer, August 2009

How to create the high-performance, high-commitment organization.

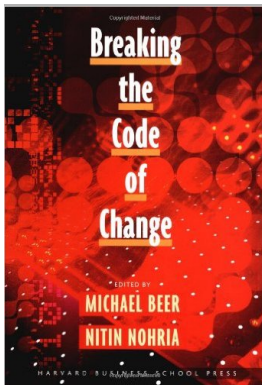
Integrating knowledge from strategic management, performance management, and organization design, strategic human resource expert and Harvard Business School Professor Michael Beer outlines what the high-commitment, high-performance organization looks like and provides practitioners with the transformation process to help them get there. Starting with leaders who have the right values, Beer shows how to weave together a complete system that includes top-to-bottom communication, organization design, HR policies, and leadership transformation process, and outlines what practitioners must do in HR, structure, systems, goals, culture, and strategy to create high-performance organizations.



## Make Your Company a High Commitment, High Performance Organization

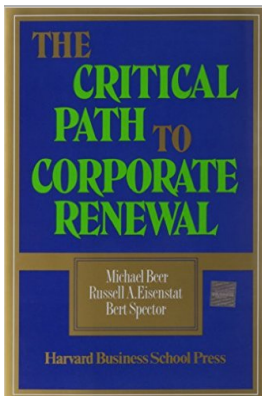
Mike Beer discusses a number of big ideas in these Big Think videos, including:

- Sharp Ways to Cut Costs
- Silent Killers of High Performance
- Effective Leadership for Business Sustainability
- Make Your Company High Commitment High Performance



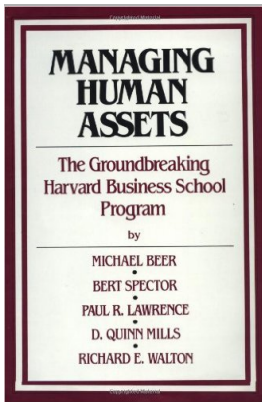
## Breaking the Code of Change

In a hyper-competitive business environment in which investors expect profits and a return on their investment, senior executives are faced with a dilemma, how to meet investor expectations without destroying intangible assets such as employee commitment and team-work. In short, how to avoid destroying the culture that underlies the company's long-run success. In this book Beer and Nohria introduce a framework for how senior leaders can integrate these dual requirements. E strategies for managing profit expectations must be integrated with O strategies for developing an effective organization to which people are committed. They provide ways of thinking about the objectives of corporate transformation, the processes for transformation, the use of consultants among other considerations they discuss. A series of chapter leading scholars and practitioners elaborate on this framework.



## The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal

*The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal* is a practical and effective agenda for revitalizing the corporation. Through an in depth analysis of six companies that have undergone fundamental changes, the authors describe what works and what doesn't in corporate renewal. It describes the many common errors companies make in getting started. The human sources of competitive advantage - coordination, commitment, and competence - cannot be enhanced through programs. Successful corporate renewal occurs only when plants, divisions, and departments involve employees. That must be done through a carefully designed series of steps - the critical path - led by unit general managers. Companies that have followed this strategy have flatter and less hierarchical organizations, employees who take initiative to reduce costs and improve quality, and enhanced teamwork at all levels.



## Managing Human Assets

The time has come for American managers to rethink the traditional relationship between management and workers. The personnel practices of the past are an obstacle today, blocking the higher productivity and quality levels your firm will need to succeed in the competitive environment of the 1980s and beyond.

While U.S. corporations have become increasingly sophisticated at managing their financial and capital resources, one critical resource has been seriously underutilized in the American firm. This book introduces a new way of thinking about, and managing, your firm's greatest untapped potential: the *human* resources that can make or break any firm's best-laid plans.

*Managing Human Assets* is *not* a book about "personnel management"; traditional personnel practice has involved a disjointed set of functions and techniques that have not optimized motivation, commitment, competence, and receptivity to change, the social capital of the firm.

Instead, here is a pioneering guide for all general managers, operations managers, and personnel executives that treats the management of human resources as a key part of the firm's long-term competitive strategy. It demonstrates how this new way of thinking is being implemented at several major corporations, with relatively low financial investment and high productivity pay-off. With *Managing Human Assets*, you can realize the vast potential for productivity that lies in one of the American firm's last underutilized resources -- the motivated American worker.

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## How to have an Honest Conversation About Your Strategy

by Michael Beer and Russell Eisenstat

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Beer, Michael. "[Careers that Enabled Making a Difference and Contributing to Knowledge](#)." Paper presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, August 12–16, 2011. [View Details](#)

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# Research Summary

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## RESEARCH SUMMARY

### Developing Organizational Capabilities to Compete

by [Michael Beer](#)

Michael Beer's current research is concerned with how leadership teams can shape an effective high performing company capable of implementing its strategy and learning. Working in cooperation with Becton Dickinson, a global medical technology company, he and Russell Eisenstat developed a process that a top management team at the corporate or business unit level could use to diagnose and reinvent their organization. That process, called Organizational Fitness Profiling (OFP), has been applied in approximately eighteen corporations and over 150 units with these companies. Using action research methods, Beer and Eisenstat have been able to identify six core barriers to strategy implementation and change. Because these barriers are known to everyone but are undiscussible they have called them 'silent killers.' Their action research has also begun to identify a number of factors that materially influence the capacity of a company to reinvent itself. And, they have been able to use the many applications of OFP to improve its power in reshaping an organization's 'fitness' to compete.

Beer and Eisenstat's findings have been reported in a number of cases, working papers, book chapters, and articles. The most recent article 'The Silent Killers to Strategy Implementation and Learning' appeared in the summer 2000 issue of [The Sloan Management Review](#). Taken together, the findings and cases developed from Beer's and Eisenstat's research form the core of Strategic Human Resource Management, a program for senior human resource and line executives offered by the Harvard Business School.

## Awards & Honors

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Received the 2007 Michael C. Losey Research Award from the Society for Human Resource Management.

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Winner of the 2013 Herbert Heneman Jr. Career Achievement Award from the Human Resources Division of the Academy of Management.

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Selected as one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders in Trustworthy Business Behavior by Trust Across America in 2011.

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Received the 2012 Emerald Literati Outstanding Author Award for "Developing an Effective Organization: Intervention Method, Empirical Findings and Theory" (*Research in Organizational Change and Development*, Volume 19, 2011).

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Winner of the 2006 Harry and Miriam Levinson Award for Exceptional Contributions to Consulting Organizational Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation.

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Winner of the 2006 Distinguished Scientist-Practitioner Award from the Academy of Management.

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Winner of the 2006 Distinguished Professional Contributions Award from the Society of Industrial & Organizational Psychology.

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Winner of the 1998 Organization Development Institute Award for the invention, development, and application of Organizational Fitness Profiling.

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Winner of the 1991 Johnson, Smith & Kinsley Award for Best Book in Executive Leadership for *The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal* with Russel A. Eisenstat, and Bert Spector (Harvard Business School Press, 1990).

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Named as one of the Top 10 Organization Development Consultants in the U.S. by *Training and Development Journal* in 1985.

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Recipient of a William Green Fellowship from Ohio State University in 1963.

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Named an Academy of Management Fellow in 1997.

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Named a Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology Fellow in 1992.

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Named a National Academy of Human Resources Fellow in 1999.

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Selected as Finalist for the 1990 George R. Terry Book Award from the Academy of Management for *The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal* with Russel A. Eisenstat and Bert Spector (Harvard Business School Press, 1990).

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#### **Affiliations**

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