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THE FALL OF THE ALPHAS

**The New Beta Way to Connect, Collaborate,
Influence – And Lead**

By Dana Ardi

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**THE ALPHA-STYLE BUSINESS MODEL IS NO LONGER VIABLE WARNS
CORPORATE ANTHROPOLOGIST DANA ARDI IN NEW BOOK**

**In THE FALL OF THE ALPHAS, Ardi Shows Why
Communication, Collaboration, and Curation
Are Essential for Corporate and Career Success**

“Today’s American corporate world is a tale of two cultures. One, more traditional and common, is centralized and hierarchical. I call it *Alpha*. The other, smaller and rarer, is decentralized, horizontal, and inclusive. I call this one *Beta*,” explains corporate anthropologist Dana Ardi. Drawing on her vast experience as a venture capitalist, organizational design expert, and management consultant, Ardi argues that the future belongs to the Betas. In her new book, **THE FALL OF THE ALPHAS: The New Beta Way to Connect, Collaborate, Influence – And Lead** (St. Martin’s Press/October 2013), she shows why the Beta model is the key to both business and career success.

With the advent of the Information Age and increasingly rapid waves of technological change, the Alpha model – which Ardi likens to an army, led by a commander-in-chief in which information flows in only one direction – is on its way out. The Beta model is taking its place. According to Ardi, the Beta environment functions like an orchestra – where the conductor plays a coordinating role, but each member’s input is distinct and critical, and a variety of musicians can have solos. “Beta companies are communities,

More

not armies,” she writes. “They are made up of shifting, project or process-based teams instead of rigid functional silos.”

Drawing on such examples as Amazon, Zappos, Timberland, and Green Mountain Coffee, Ardi explores what it takes to build a Beta company – one that is positioned for success – in **THE FALL OF THE ALPHAS**. She emphasizes that Beta leaders and organizations:

- Help people succeed at what they’re good at, rather than forcing them to become people they’re not
- Empower people to expand their skill sets based on their individual needs, rather than on a prescribed syllabus
- Encourage people to confront and solve problems together, working collaboratively on the organization’s shared mission

At the core of Beta are the three “C”s, says Ardi. These are:

Communication: Executives in Alpha organizations tend to hoard communication. Veteran employees often keep knowledge to themselves to protect their positions, while departments withhold information due to inter-departmental competition. In Beta companies, communication is viewed as a resource that should be harvested constantly. Fluid communication is facilitated and encouraged. Ardi stresses that this is critical if companies want employees to view their leaders as authentic, and in order for companies to provide real value to their customers.

Collaboration: The Alpha paradigm is all about the individual, but “going it alone” simply doesn’t work anymore. “Bosses and employees need to work together to solve problems and accomplish shared goals,” writes Ardi. “The more collaborative opportunities a business offers, the more employees will feel a sense of ownership . . . resulting in vastly higher levels of productivity, efficiency, and loyalty.” Building collaboration also demands a new approach to recruitment – one that focuses on finding employees who exhibit confidence and a willingness to think outside the box.

Curation: Increased communication and collaboration demands a new style of leadership, one Ardi calls “curating.” “Beta leaders need to be curators, not commanders,” she explains. “They need to be able to collect, sort, analyze data, and edit all communication and collaborative streams of information that could potentially influence their business.” This means assembling employees – all of whom are individual experts capable of idea generation – and encouraging them to think new thoughts in different ways and challenging them to do new things.

Ultimately, asserts Ardi, the Beta paradigm not only offers the best opportunity for organizational success, it also provides individuals with the chance to achieve the emotional and psychological satisfaction often lacking inside Alpha organizations. **THE FALL OF THE ALPHAS** explains how the Beta approach enables people to climb to the top of a different sort of pyramid than the one that leads only to the CEO’s chair. Instead, employees at all levels are given the chance to be their best selves.

“The long-term success of both new and existing companies requires abandoning the old Alpha leadership and structural model and adopting the Beta paradigm,” argues Ardi. “The Beta approach will help you recruit, manage, and retain the kind of talent you and your organization need to profit today and tomorrow.” With insight and practical guidance, **THE FALL OF THE ALPHAS** show companies how to transform from Alpha to Beta, becoming more effective, flexible, and profitable in the process.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dana Ardi, Ph.D. is a thought leader and expert in the fields of talent management, organizational design, recruiting, assessment, and leadership. She is the founder of Corporate Anthropology Advisors.

Dr. Ardi has served as a Partner/Managing Director at CCMP Capital and JPMorgan Partners, and was a Partner at Flatiron Partners. Earlier in her career, she was an operating executive at R. R. Donnelly & Sons and at McGraw-Hill. She also has a background managing and leading executive search firms.

Dr. Ardi has a bachelor’s degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo and a masters degree and doctorate in education from Boston College. She divides her time between New York City and California. Visit www.corporateanthropologyadvisors.com.