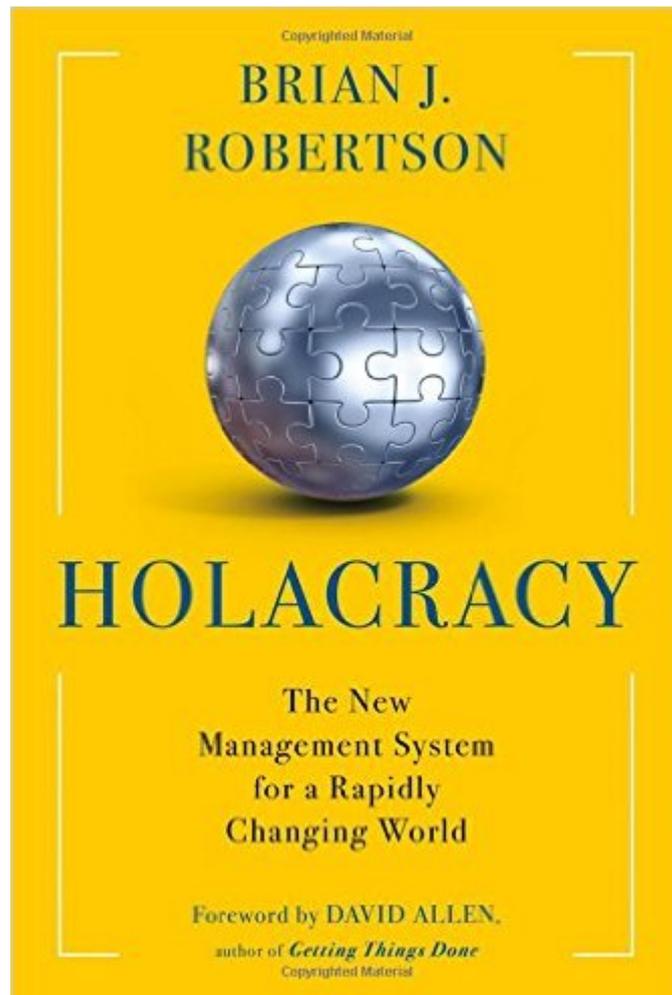# Holacracy: The New Management System For A Rapidly Changing World

Synopsis

Holacracy is a revolutionary management system that redefines management and turns everyone into a leader.Holacracy distributes authority and decision-making throughout an organization, and defines people not by hierarchy and titles, but by roles. Holacracy creates organizations that are fast, agile, and that succeed by pursuing their purpose, not following a dated and artificial plan.This isn't anarchy it's quite the opposite. When you start to follow Holacracy, you learn to create new structures and ways of making decisions that empower the people who know the most about the work you do: your frontline colleagues.Some of the many champions of Holacracy include Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos.com (author of the #1 "New York Times" bestseller "Delivering Happiness"), Evan Williams (co-founder of Blogger, Twitter, and Medium), and David Allen."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I came into this via Reinventing Organizations. Though I had heard of Holacracy a bit before, I had never looked into it in much detail. I am predisposed to like this kind of book. I am a manager-of-managers in a high-tech company and I often feel like "there must be a better way".I came away fundamentally unsatisfied. This feels like a Cliff Notes version of Holacracy rather than something that would convince me to try it out in my company. The author (eventually) makes a good case for the governance meetings, though I feel like the explanation was spread out across multiple chapters. For instance it isn't until Chapter 10 (a chapter ostensibly about how to adopt Holacracy piece-meal if wholesale adoption is impossible) the author explains "change your

language, change your culture" and why the terms "tension" and "tension processing" were chosen. I feel like this discussion should have been up in Chapter 4 when the governance meetings were introduced.I think in general the book does a good job of explaining the "what" of Holacracy but is pretty hit-or-miss when it comes to explaining the "why". Another example is the repeated claim that you "can't adopt only parts of Holacracy". This includes a rigid formula for meetings that includes a closing round where you go around the room and "give each person space to share a closing reflection about the meeting". I'm not saying that's a bad idea but I don't understand why that is integral to Holacracy. If I leave out that one part do I really lose all the benefit of Holacracy? I guess I'm just skeptical of that.But the biggest failing of the book is that is it just too light on implementation details.

If you live in Las Vegasâ |Check!Have an interest in management and business issuesâ | Check!And know a number of people in the Downtown / Zappos / entrepreneur communityâ | Check!Then you canâ ™t help but have heard of Holacracy.Normally the tones of conversations about Holacracy, and in particular of Zapposâ ™s â ™embrace it or leaveâ ™ offer to their staff, mix wonder and an unbelieving shake of the head normally reserved for parents of teenagers. This new book by Brian J. Robertson aims to change all that.The funny thing is that it actually does a pretty good job.The first real hint that there is more here than just a new business book, is in that the author has been involved in Lean software development and it is almost a throwaway comment- which is unfortunate. Lean is becoming a highly respected way of changing how companies work (please see my review of Lean Hospitals for a better explanation) and there are some interesting commonalities that someone, better versed in both than myself, needs to explore.At its core, Holacracy is the deconstruction of work into roles, accountabilities, domains, and polices and giving employees the freedom, and the structure, to make modifications when â œetensionsâ • arise without the formal structure of supervisors and management. Interestingly, a lot of the housekeeping of Holacracy is in preserving the integrity of the process rather than the comfort of the employees. â œIt is difficult to hide from empowerment when the organizational process around you continually shines a light on your hiding place.

To what does the title refer? As Brian Robertson explains, Holacracy is essentially "a new social technology for governing and operating an organization, defined by a set of core rules distinctly different from those of a conventionally governed organization." He notes that Arthur Koestler coined the term "holacracy" in his 1967 book, The Ghost in the Machine. That is, Koestler defined a

"holon" as "a whole that is a part of a larger whole" and a "holacracy" as "the connection between holons." Diagrams of this geometric structure are included in the book.It is also important to note that Robertson is convinced, as am I, that Charles Darwin's insights concerning evolution have significant implications for organizations -- as Robertson notes -- that were "built on a basic blueprint that matured in the early 1900s and hasn't changed much since," one he characterizes as "predict and control.""How can we make an organization not just [begin italics] evolved [end italics] but [begin italics] evolutionary [end italics]? How can we reshape a company into to an evolutionary organism -- one that makes sense and adapt and learn and integrate? In [Eric D.] Beinhocker's words, 'The key to doing better is to bring evolution inside and get the wheels of differentiation, selection, and amplification spinning within a company's four walls.'" In this book, Robertson explains HOW to do that.These are among the dozens of passages of greatest interest and value to me, also listed to suggest the scope of his coverage:o An Operating System Upgrade (Pages 9-14)o How Do You Distribute Authority?

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