The Three Magical Transformation Ingredients That CIOs Can’t Afford to Miss

Mary Mesaglio
The Myth Of Cassandra

“In Greek mythology, Cassandra was one of the princesses of Troy, daughter of Priam and Hecuba. According to the myth, Cassandra was astonishingly beautiful and blessed with the gift of foreseeing the future. Her curse was that no one believed her, a fact that weighed heavily on the destruction of Troy during the Trojan War.”

Do you feel like the Cassandra of your organization?
Transformations Are Collections of Discrete Initiatives

- Customer Experience
- Agile
- Digital Product
- Common Data
- Public Cloud
Transformations Are Collections of Discrete Initiatives

Together, these initiatives form a messy middle.
Every Great Transformation Has Bookends and a Roof

1. Endgame
   - Make it clear & sticky

2. Principles
   - Make it coherent

3. Hacking
   - Make it real

Messy Middle
What Is Your Endgame?
Without a Clear and Compelling Endgame, Get Fatigue

No one knows why we’re transforming, what is and isn’t changing, what it’s for.
The Quick and Dirty Transformation Test

1. Can you tell me what your enterprise is transforming into and why?
2. In under two minutes?
3. Using no corporate speak?
4. In a way that someone at the frontline would understand — and be motivated by?
5. Would your peers say roughly the same thing you have?
We Are Transforming Into ...

“A digital-ready organization prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. We are innovators first, preserving agility and partnering with our ecosystem to delight our customers everywhere.”

Does this transformation message pass our test?
We Are Transforming Into ...

“... an education matchmaker that matches learners with personalized educational opportunities.”

Does this transformation message pass our test?
Are Your Principles World-Class?
Without World-Class Principles, You Get Chaos

There's no coherence, no signposts: some go left, others go right.
Principles Are Better Than Process at Guiding Action
Four Characteristics Make a Principle World-Class

1. **Connected to business outcomes**
   Not chosen randomly or because they sound right, but because they are strategic for your organization.

2. **Specific to your enterprise**
   Not generic. Principles for a mining company should be different than for a public agency or a fast fashion company.

3. **Unambiguous**
   Not subject to interpretation. If two people read the principle, they come to the same conclusion on what it means.

4. **Helps someone choose between alternatives**
   Not a nice-sounding aspirational statement. Helps someone make a decision between option A, option B and option C.
There Is No "I" in Team
World-Class Principles Are All Around You. Recognize Any of These?

“There can be no interference with the internal development of prewarp civilizations.”

“There can be no interference with the internal development of prewarp civilizations.”

“To thine own self be true.”

“No man gets left behind.”

“Fish are friends, not food.”
The Role of Principles in Leadership

Great principles take courage. They allow leaders to take a stand on the values of the enterprise.

In their absence:

- Every governance decision seems new.
- Individual interests will dominate decisions.
- Conflicts arise more frequently.
- Conflicts are more difficult to resolve.
Bad Examples — Do Not Use These

- Our function aims to be high value, low cost.
- We want to delight the customer.
- We will improve corporate shareholder value.
- We will be innovative, well architected, secure, reliable, efficient and fast.
Good Examples — Get Inspired by These

**Strategy:** Our function makes officers safer and more effective by providing them with critical information at critical moments, possibly in dangerous circumstances.

**Innovation:** We measure innovation success based on user adoption, not implementation.

**Architecture:** The architecture favors security over flexibility.

**Architecture:** We decentralize every asset and process that is not identified as a commodity.

**Staff:** We hire the very best and pay them above market rates.
Back of the Envelope Test for Your Principle

Does it generate debate?
Could the opposite be true?
Are You Hacking Your Culture to Make the Change Real?
Without Culture Hacks, Change Stays on the Horizon and Never Arrives

People don’t change for intellectual reasons, they change for emotional reasons.
Wrong: Big, Gnarly Problems Require Big, Gnarly Solutions
Hack Your Culture Instead

Culture hack — exploiting a single point where a culture is vulnerable to deep change.
Cultures Are Vulnerable to Change Where Associates Spend Most of Their Time

- Processes
- Projects
- Meetings
A Culture Hack Is

Low Effort*
Immediate
Visible
Emotional

* But not low courage.
Let’s Imagine You Wanted Your Culture to Be More Innovative

Here are some sample hacks:

- Start every weekly meeting with an idea that has to be tested that week.
- Run a one-hour rapid prototyping exercise with some non-innovators.
- Do a one-minute drawing exercise at the beginning of a creative session to prime people for innovation.
- Get your people to nominate their most creative peers, rather than having management select them.
- Stop using the word “innovation.” Disguise innovation projects as problems to solve, especially for engineers.
- Stop using the word “failure.” Start using the words “learn and experiment.”
- Celebrate one failed experiment every quarter. Don’t just celebrate the successes.
Let’s Imagine You Wanted Your Culture to Be More Agile

Here are some sample hacks:

- Name every project after the benefit you expect it to deliver.
- Don’t select the project team. Make it opt-in.
- Hold stand-ups with other departments, not just in agile development teams.
- Ask, “What would this look like if it were easy?”
- Choose the note taker for the meeting — at the end of the meeting.
- Ask your people when they do their best work and where, then try to replicate those conditions.
- Cancel the meeting the second time you hear, “Let’s table that decision for a later date.”
Culture Hacking Do’s and Don’ts

Do’s
- Do know what you’re hacking toward.
- Do start with a hack that is fun and not too scary.
- Do start today.
- Do start small.

Don’ts
- Don’t choose something complicated like, “let’s overhaul our governance approach.”
- Don’t choose something that requires outside approval.
- Don’t use hacking to push a personal agenda.
- Don’t do something illegal.
Recommendations

Add three magic ingredients to your transformation to combat the ‘messy middle’ and get everyone behaving and deciding with the same goal in mind:

✓ Create the **endgame**, a clear vision of the destination that everyone understands and is motivated by.

✓ Craft key **principles**, as these signposts are better than process at guiding action.

✓ Execute **culture hacks** make the change real, immediate and visibly modify small points in your culture that are vulnerable to change.
Recommended Gartner Research

- The Art of Culture Hacking
  Mary Mesaglio (G00348246)

- Gartner's Guide to Creating World-Class IT Principles
  Mary Mesaglio and Jose Ruggero (G00253902)

- A Growth Mindset Can Help CIOs Reboot Leadership and Culture for the Digital Era
  Graham Waller and Elise Olding (G00326086)

- Beginning Bimodal: Lighting the Mode 2 Candle in a Mode 1 World
  Darren Topham (G00346699)

- Create a Research Engagement Plan to Advance Your Innovation Culture and Processes
  Jackie Fenn (G00272371)

- What a World-Class IT Innovation Charter Should Contain and Why You Need One
  Mary Mesaglio (G00200468)