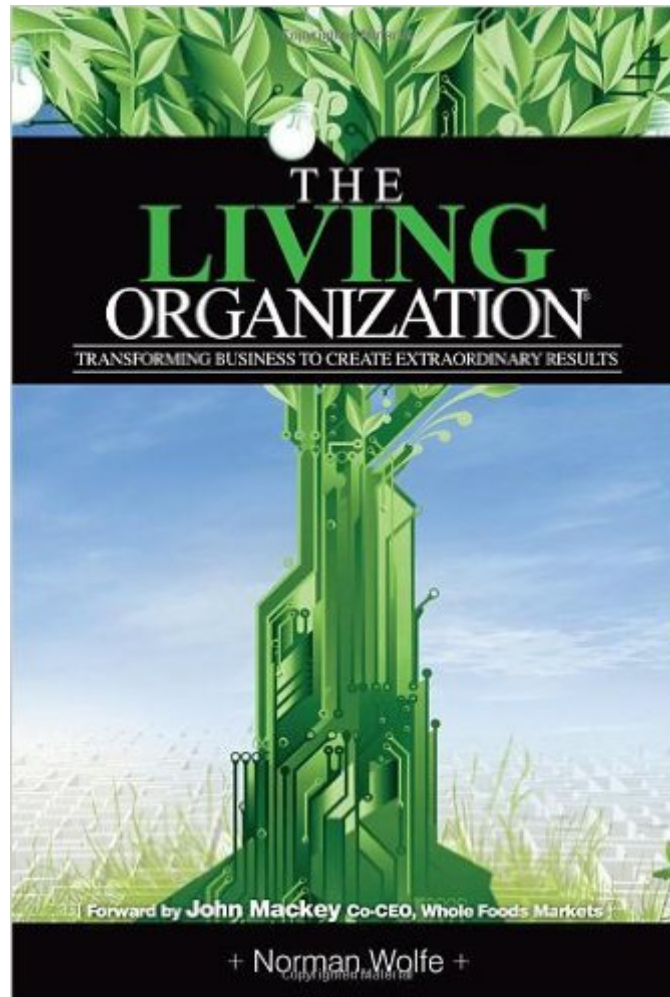


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# The Living Organization: Transforming Business To Create Extraordinary Results



## Synopsis

The pressure on CEOs and other organization leaders to create results, while balancing an increasing diversity of opposing demands, is reaching oppressive levels. The time-tested economic system is no longer adequate to meet the challenges of a world of evolving complexity. The Living Organization delivers a new model that transforms the best of what worked before and expands it to deliver new life and growth for organizations. First and foremost, The Living Organization deepens our understanding of how any living organization creates the results it desires. Norman Wolfe draws on decades of experience both leading and consulting with organizations, large and small, to unravel the mystery of creating results. Based on scientific, philosophical and spiritual truths, The Living Organization® model explores how three distinct yet highly interdependent fields of energy influence and determine what results will and will not be created. Beyond just a new theory, Norman Wolfe provides practical tools for aligning and focusing the organization on strategy execution. Building on decades of learning about organization effectiveness and execution management, The Living Organization expands our frameworks for allocating resources and making decisions that will reap the desired results. The guiding principals and theories can direct the largest of corporations or the entrepreneurial startup in getting the results they want. Deeply personal, brimming with compelling stories from real-life challenges, and packed with powerful insights, tools, and practices, this book is a potent resource for aspiring, emerging, and seasoned business leaders alike. Or anyone interested in creating the results they desire.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There is much discussion in the business world as to what has happened in the economy and how it affects our business models. Most business owners with whom I speak agree that things have permanently changed. What that means to the business is that we need a new model, a new way of thinking about our businesses so that we don't fall into the trap of trying to do the same things over and over, faster and faster and expect different results. Norman Wolfe has provided such a model and while the concept of "living organization" isn't particularly new (Wharton School used the metaphor years ago) Wolfe has taken the concept much farther and added to it a more complete explanation of the interaction between the Living Organization, the energies created and the manifestation of results. In the spirit of full disclosure, it is important to note that Norman and I spoke frequently during his work on this book, and so I am familiar with his concepts. Wolfe's work starts out "simply" enough as he explains his analogy for viewing corporations and organizations as a "living" organism, such as the human body. He quickly makes it clear that he intends to carry the model further by adding in his in organizational development and strategy execution to the model. His engineering background shines through as he takes an obvious systems view to building the new model. Perhaps the piece with the biggest impact in our thinking will be to wrap our minds around the concept of "context" which Norman adds to the model. This is a critical piece as a pivotal point in this model is to understand how energy flows or is "pinched off" by our processes. The analogy brings many challenging issues in organization development and change management into clear focus.

Norman Wolfe's book, *The Living Organization: Transforming Business to Create Extraordinary Results*, offers insights, wisdom, and more importantly, a working framework from which leaders and followers can begin to collectively re-conceptualize how (and even why) businesses should function for excellence in a global, organic world. Wolfe argues, in the tradition of Meg Wheatley, that the continued use of machine metaphors, practices, and frameworks for talking about and managing businesses, will lead to a collapse of trust in, and commitment to, business organizations and capitalism itself. Wolfe's "living organization" framework is reminiscent too of the attempt by Philip Selznick, in his book, *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation* (1957), to suggest the huge and important difference between an organization as an "instrument or tool", or as an [living] "institution", with a unique personality, and potential for distinctive competencies through time. In *The Living Organization*, Wolfe shows how leadership can help build "living institutions" that have a Soulful Purpose, and who meet that

purpose by collectively tapping into the energy, passion, and love that people bring to the organization. Though some would discount the power of the "living" metaphor, the work of Patrick Lencioni also suggests that only through organizational health and well being "rooted in trust, commitment to a higher purpose and accountability, can a business truly thrive over time. Wolfe's book is easy to read, includes stories and insights from Norman's interesting professional career and his experiences as a leadership consultant, and presents a very useful framework from which to think about true and sustainable improvements in the world of business.

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