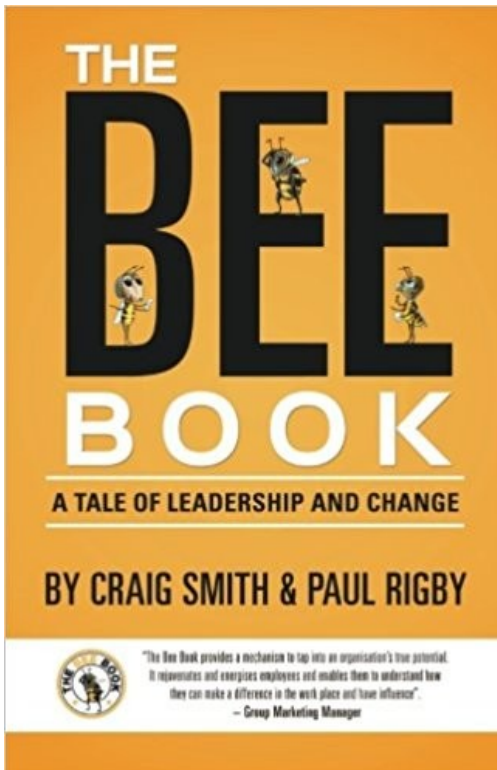


# EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY



October 2017



## THE BEE BOOK

### A Tale of Leadership and Change

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

How do employees fully understand how to move from process-centered change to people centered change when faced with a challenge? *The Bee Book* engages all stake holders in an organization to learn how to change and innovate their practises within the workforce. *The Bee Book* is an allegory about a colony of bees who are faced with a challenge when their primary source of land with flowers becomes ploughed barren. The story follows a particular bee named Buzz who is a front line worker at the Luna Hive where the system of collecting nectar is run traditionally. When he falls off course, he encounters another colony, the Sola Hive, where he discovers a far different and agile management style. But can the Lune Hive adjust from their "old-school ways" to face the catastrophic change in order to survive? The book explores the structural complexity and hierarchy of bees and how they withstand changes in their

**By: Craig Smith & Paul Riabv**



**In this summary, you will explore the following...**

**Authors Aims p.2**

**Summary of Key Characteristics of Both Hives p.2**

**Key Themes p.3 & 4**

**Critical Evaluation p.5**

**Discussion Questions p.5**

**Recommendations p.5**

**Reference p.5**

## Author's Aims

"We wrote The Bee Book to help people in all types of organisations: whether on a large multi-national, a not-for-profit, a school, a government department or a start up." \_

To inspire organizations to make the necessary changes to achieve their goals.\_

To provide tools and techniques to help organizations react and adjust to changes appropriately.\_

To facilitate discussions about *The Bee Book* and critically analyze the two colonies (Sola Hive vs. Luna Hive) to compare it to their own practises.\_



Mr Wingit



Queen Luna



Queen Sola



Stripes



Zippy



Buzz

## BEE A LEADER!

The book explored two different colonies which differed in functionality, leadership roles, attitude and culture.



Luna Hive	Sola Hive
Traditional Upper management separated from front line workers Paradigm paralysis Upper management do not seek feedback from workers Culture based on compliance and completing given tasks Highly structured and organized	Forward thinkers Upper management actively communicates with front line workers Embraces changes and works to find solutions Constant feedback gained from workers Culture based on innovation and team attitude Flexible and opened to changes and ideas

***"Luna hive has got its nose buried so deep in the operation manual that we don't see the world changing around us! At Sola hive, they combine logic and emotion."***  
**- Buzz**

**Critical thought...** How can an organization move from Luna Hive culture to Sola Hive culture?

# KEY

## Change Readiness

Organizations must learn to adapt to changing environments.

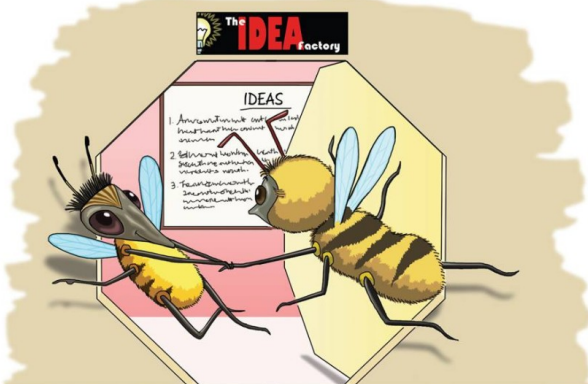
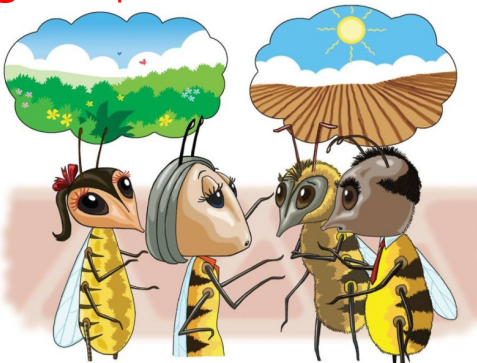
Organizations should not fall under paradigm paralysis!

Buzz was able to recognize that the Luna Hive was in danger when the field was ploughed barren. Although only a front-line worker and not having any experience as a leader, he took on the role of searching for a new source despite being persuaded not to.

After visiting the Sola hive, Buzz learnt that they took sudden changes in their stride and did not let the changes affect the functionality of the colony. The hive accomplished this through: transparency between conversations happening with upper management and the front-line workers, promoting workers to convey their feedback and ideas, and ensuring that all workers were working diligently. All these attributes were lacking at the Luna Hive thereby making it difficult to adjust to the major change.



*“Adopt a new set of values based on **mutual cooperation** and **focus on the goal**” (p.85)*



## Innovation

When the Sola Hive discovered that the major field with flowers had been ploughed, they quickly switched to an alternative location where they were able to produce new varieties of nectar. Due to this, there was no significant loss in the business.

At the Luna Hive, they did not foreshadow losing their biggest source of nectar. To reduce loss, they downsized and froze larvae production to reduce the bee numbers. Upper management also hid the truth that the field had been ploughed in order to reduce tension and anxiety in the hive. The lack of transparency dissuaded innovative alternatives.

*“Take **pride** in your work, because every job done by every bee is important.” (p.86)*

## KEY THEMES



### Leadership

At the Luna Hive, higher management and consultants primarily took on leadership roles by assigning tasks, ensuring that goals were met and maintaining the functionality of the hive. Front-line workers lacked much of a say in the major decisions that were made.

At the Sola Hive, bees are encouraged to share their ideas and take on leadership roles by helping one another, finding unique sources of nectar, having accountability for their tasks and actively communicating with higher management.



***“Listen to the ideas of others and give them the same respect as if they were your own ideas.”*** (p.81)

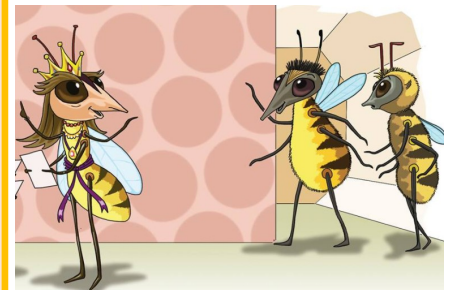
### Employee Engagement

After visiting the Sola Hive, Buzz learns that all bees have their own goals and key performance indicators.

These goals are developed from everyone’s input on how to better improve the business.

At the Sola Hive, bees are actively engaged in innovating and communicating with product developers. All the bees also have regular contact with the Queen and feel involved in the success of the company.

At the Luna Hive, everything is compartmentalized where managers meet with the staff only to hand out instructions. Any new idea which is suggested to the managers is taken offensively due to the traditional nature of the hive. When the bees first discovered that the field had been ploughed, the Queen hired an outside consultant who did not address the real problem due to lack of knowledge on the company. Therefore, there is little to no employee engagement at the Luna Hive.



***“We get rid of processes that don’t produce the value that our customers want. We like to see ourselves as the ‘learning hive’, and we continually make improvements to our operation.”*** (p.62)

## **Critical Evaluation**



Some people believe that relevant and impactful leadership books, are those that are dense with vocabulary and different cases describing scenarios which occur in the workforce. However, after reading, “*The Bee Book: A Tale of Leadership and Change*”, I have to disagree with this notion because the book teaches valuable lessons through a parable about a hive of bees. The book discusses the challenges which organizations face when unwanted changes occur. It also explores the various people who are involved in major decision making such as: procrastinators, fence-sitters and positive outliers.

Although the book was about the struggles the bees in the Luna Hive were facing, all stakeholders in an organization can relate to a character in the book whether they are a front-line worker, product developer, manager or the Queen of the hive. Moreover, the themes in the book help stimulate discussions which allow readers to analyze ways of developing critical leadership roles.

I enjoyed the book because it took an unconventional way of describing complex leadership practises in an engaging and relatable way. It challenged me to assess my own attributes and how I could develop to a good leader. I believe that metaphors and parables are powerful ways to engage readers and allow for comparisons to be made to real-world scenarios. In this way, it makes learning about leadership fun and informative! I would highly recommend this book to all people who are interested in a book that challenges their perceptions of a leader and engages them in a story that can be applied to their own practises.

### **Thought provoking discussion questions...**

1. Queen Sola upheld active communication with all bees in the hive. As a leader, how would you use your communication activities (text message, emails, phone calls etc.) to effectively communicate with your group?\_
2. Compare the leadership attributes of the bees at the Luna Hive versus the Sola Hive.\_
3. What can leaders do to build their sense of urgency when disaster strike? How can leaders build a sense of urgency for others involved in the group?\_
4. In order for positive changes to occur, others must be motivated and committed to lead change. How can a leader motivate members to be involved in changes?\_
5. Why was Buzz considered more of a leader than Queen Luna? How was he able to build his leadership role despite lacking support?\_

### **Recommendations**

If you interested in how bees can teach us valuable lessons about leadership, I would recommend...

Watching:

#### **The Bee Book**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1ByJDCuvpU>

Browsing:

<http://thebeebook.com>

For more information, resources and workshops.

Reading:

O'Malley, M. (2010). *The wisdom of bees: what the hive can teach business about leadership, efficiency and growth*. London: Penguin.

### **Reference**

Smith, C., & Rigby, P. (2016). *The bee book: A tale of leadership and change*. Lexington, KY: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.