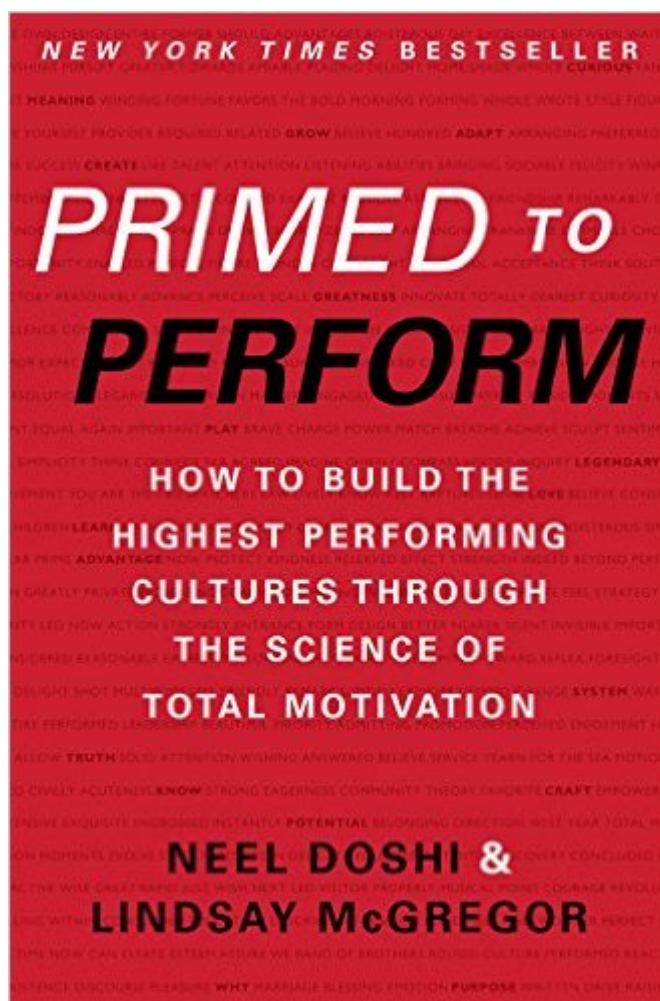


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# Primed To Perform: How To Build The Highest Performing Cultures Through The Science Of Total Motivation



## Synopsis

The revolutionary book that teaches you how to use the cutting edge of human psychology to build high performing workplace cultures. Too often, great cultures feel like magic. While most leaders believe culture is critical to success, few know how to build one, or sustain it over time. What if you knew the science behind the magic? a science so predictive and powerful that you could transform your organization? What if you could use cutting edge psychology to unlock people's innate desire to innovate, experiment, and adapt? In *Primed to Perform*, Neel Doshi and Lindsay McGregor show you how to do just that. The result: higher sales, more loyal customers, and more passionate employees. *Primed to Perform* explains the counter-intuitive science behind great cultures, building on over a century of academic thinking. It shares the simple, highly predictive new measurement tool the Total Motivation (ToMo) Factor that enables you to measure the strength of your culture, and track improvements over time. It explores the authors' original research into how Total Motivation leads to higher performance in iconic companies, from Apple to Starbucks to Southwest Airlines. Most importantly, it teaches you to build great cultures, using a systematic and sustainable approach. High performing cultures can't be left to chance. Organizations must create systems that shape and maintain them. Whether you're a five-person team or a startup, a school, a nonprofit or a mega-institution, *Primed to Perform* shows you how.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A good book that at the very least adds incrementally to the literature. Definitely worth reading. The

ToMo survey instrument seems fairly well developed and probably useful, as is the 6-dimensional ToMo motivational model. A downside for me is that the book is written in the business genre, with lots of case study type examples. Unfortunately, case study examples may be of dubious value, other than perhaps to motivate enthusiasm in readers. (Lots of business books that make extensive use of case study examples contain claims that have proven to be very wrong over time, so the studies don't prove much.) The book gets better as it progresses, broadly peaking towards the end in Part IV. A good deal of attention is paid to Fundamental Attribution Error (appropriately so, but I would have liked to have seen a bit more complex model such as is used in Attribution Style). Other important cognitive bias issues are inadequately covered (I would suggest Daniel Kahneman's, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, for an excellent background on that subject). Free riders are discussed a little, but more detail about that issue can be found in Jonathan Haidt's, *The Righteous Mind*. The tribe, band, hunting party, clique breakdown of groups was new to me, and very thought provoking. Also useful was the frequently overlooked observation that people in many jobs are so busy with tactical work, they have no time available for adaptive development. The Fire Watcher idea is good, but certainly not foolproof. I would also say some of what is covered in this book about adaptive work culture seems closely related to what is known from the Positive Psychology movement.

I read *Primed to Perform* because I've always viewed company culture as a critical and underutilized tool for unlocking success on many levels. Having worked at many different companies as a consultant, and having also done a stint at one of the companies profiled in the book, I was curious to see what the fuss was about. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, *Primed to Perform* really brought my understanding of culture to a whole new level - it creates a comprehensive vocabulary and structure around ideas that I think many people (myself included) have intuited on some level, but haven't fleshed out fully. Doshi and McGregor explain that we can't go looking for "good culture" in foosball tables or free catered lunches (though I'm not one to say no to those either!). Instead, the foundation of good culture exists in the way companies tap into employees' total motivation, or ToMo. ToMo itself is made up of six sources of motivation. The three direct ("good") motives are (1) play, (2) purpose, and (3) potential. The three indirect ("not-so-good") motives are (4) emotional pressure, (5) economic pressure, and (6) inertia. Each motive is explained in detail with relevant and entertaining examples. However, the most fascinating part for me was the data presented. For all you data nerds out there (represent!), company culture may have always seemed firmly planted in the realm of fluffiness. However, Doshi and McGregor present an extensive amount of analysis of ToMo scores for various companies and industries to illustrate that,

in fact, companies we think of as having "that secret sauce" when it comes to culture - Apple, Whole Foods, Southwest - consistently have demonstrably higher ToMo scores than their peers.

According to Neel Doshi and Lindsay McGregor, who wrote *Primed to Perform* to reveal the science behind the magic [of building a high-performance culture]. Over the last two decades, we built upon about a century of academic study with our own original research. We analyzed tens of thousands of workers, from programmers, consultants, teachers, and investment bankers to frontline workers in legendary cultures like Southwest Airlines, the Apple Store, and Starbucks. We found that the magic behind great cultures is actually an elegantly simple science...we found that what it takes to create the highest performing cultures is actually predictable...Most importantly, we've developed a set of approaches and tools that help leaders build their own legendary cultures where people are primed to perform." I agree with Doshi and McGregor that "the best way to motivate people is not through rewards or threats, but by inspiring people to find play, purpose, and potential in their work." That is, activate self-motivation in others by creating a workplace culture within which personal growth and professional development are most likely to thrive. The objective is to establish and then sustain total (self-) motivation (ToMo) throughout the given enterprise. How? Details of that process are best revealed within the narrative, in context, but the process consists of several interdependent steps, based on two separate but interdependent realities: (1) direct motives (e.g. play, purpose, and potential) typically increase performance and indirect motives (e.g. emotional pressure, economic pressure, and inertia) typically decrease it, and, (2) the more directly connected the motive is to the given activity itself, the better the performance becomes.

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