

# BUILDING SMARTER ORGANIZATIONS PRESS KIT

ELEVATE PUBLISHING RELEASE

"Don't reach for the shotgun just yet—your zombie organization can be saved and *Building Smarter Organizations* is part of the 'smartened-up' cure."

TED GRAHAM, HEAD OF OPEN INNOVATION, GM

## BUILDING SMARTER ORGANIZATIONS



How to Lead Your Zombie  
Organization Back to Life

GORDON VALA-WEBB

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HOW TO LEAD YOUR ZOMBIE  
ORGANIZATION BACK TO LIFE

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"Gordon Vala-Webb reminds us that what has worked for organizations in the past can no longer guarantee success in our connected-digital future. In fact, he makes the case that failure to change in our complex, networked, unpredictable global environment will result in significant organizational inefficiencies and detached employees, and in the worst case, the complete failure of the enterprise. *Building Smarter Organizations* offers alternative and pragmatic approaches to delivering the future of the organization."

**Dr. Jonathan Reichental**

**Chief Information Officer, City of Palo Alto, California**

*Building Smarter Organizations* is the antidote for your zombie organization. To survive in our complex and ambiguous world, organizations need to be able to learn quickly, predict accurately and adapt effectively.

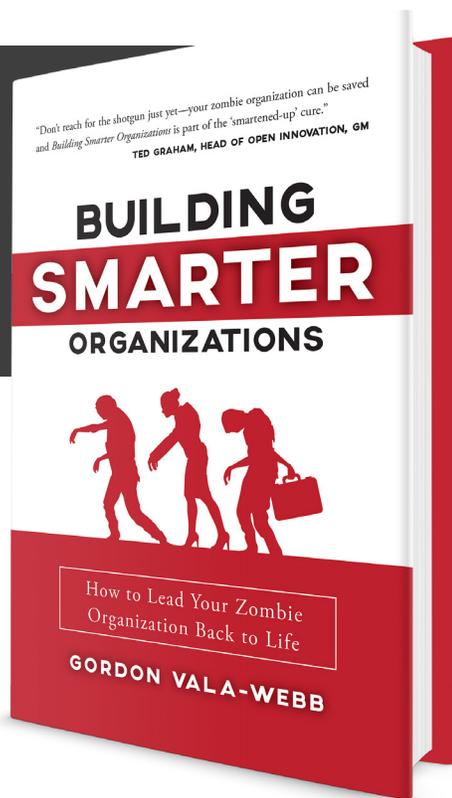
But too many modern businesses rigidly maintain "standard operating procedures," have a command-and-control culture, and a siloed structure with people overwhelmed by email. The result is slow-moving, uncoordinated, zombie organizations, barely able to shuffle forward, full of disengaged employees.

*Building Smarter Organizations* utilizes the latest research to give you an actionable guide to rebooting your company. Smarter organizations have:

- An "open" mindset that fosters innovation and employee engagement
- Fast-flow communications with visual work management
- Accelerated, collaborative decision making

Don't keep stumbling and lurching around. You won't survive for long (and it's not much fun). Lead the change! Equip your organization to thrive.

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# AUTHOR Q&A



## About Gordon Vala-Webb

Gordon Vala-Webb is an innovation professional and an award-winning knowledge management practitioner and thought leader. He has 17 years of experience helping large/complex public- and private-sector organizations to transform. He is an author, speaker and consultant with his own firm. Previous roles he has held include National Director of Knowledge Management for PwC Canada, National Director of Innovation and Information at McMillan LLP, and Cabinet Office Policy Advisor (Ontario). He and his teams have won a number of awards including Jive World's "New Ways in Business" and the Showcase Ontario Award for Organizational Transformation. Gordon is on the Board of Directors of the International Association of Innovation Professionals and holds a Master's degree in the Management of Technology. Gordon lives in Toronto, Canada.



**Q)** From your work history, it looks like you can't stay in one industry or sector. How did that affect your book?

**A)** I have moved around a lot - through the private, non-profit and public sectors. I've seen lots of different organizations from the inside, and they all had similar, fundamental problems. In the last seventeen years, I've been directly working on transforming organizations. I had an opportunity to try out different approaches in different settings. This book is a result of all of that research and experience.

**Q)** In your book, you propose nominees for the Hall of Fame for Management Fads Gone Wrong. What do you think of management consultants?

**A)** Management consulting has both generated and accelerated the use of poor approaches to managing and leading organizations. To be fair, management consultants were caught up - as we all were - in a way of thinking that has one hundred plus years of momentum behind it. But, they also didn't take a critical look at what they were doing, nor do much to validate what they were pushing. They were more focused on finding or creating the next fad - like matrix management or "teaming" - which actually ended up damaging so many organizations.

**Q)** Your book ends with a set of steps an individual could take within their zombie organization to bring it back to life and become "smart." And yet you describe how entrenched and embedded the zombie thinking and systems are. Do you really think that change is possible?

**A)** Yes, partly because the enormous outside pressures on zombie organizations and partly because maintaining the current, rigid, zombie organizational operating system takes such enormous effort. Organizations are complex, adaptive systems and just a small change, carefully nurtured, can beget other changes.

The alternative is unthinkable: to continue to waste precious time and effort and to let 70% or more of employees be disengaged. I can't accept that. We can have energized people working in smart organizations which create better and faster solutions to the world's problems and to deliver better products and services.