

STEPHEN SCOTT
JOHNSON

EMERGENT

IGNITE PURPOSE

TRANSFORM CULTURE

MAKE CHANGE STICK

WILEY

In *Emergent*, Stephen Scott Johnson sets a flag in the sand, a mark, if you like, for how we achieve great things, not so much by being great but rather creating the conditions for greatness to emerge. The new role for the human factor is perhaps the oldest of all: to mobilise people in pursuit of a better future. This book is a great start in that direction.

Matt Church, Chairman and Founder,
Thought Leaders

Australia's leading thinker on creating and sustaining movements, Stephen Scott Johnson, has turned his attention to how companies can transform cultures, and the result is profound. *Emergent* is a game changer for organisations looking to transform their results through real culture change.

Peter Cook, CEO, Thought Leaders and author of
The New Rules of Management

In Stephen Scott Johnson's hands, the words change, culture and purpose become far more than corporate buzzwords, they are revealed as the keys to not only navigating the future, but of creating it also.

Dan Gregory, Co-Founder and CEO,
The Impossible Institute

In a world where organisational purpose risks becoming a catchcry, Stephen's CATALYST system offered our business the insight, clarity and direction we needed to truly co-create value and meaning with our people. The opportunity to create a movement rather than deliver another top down communications campaign affords an important step change for leaders and communicators alike. For us, the change in approach was not without its challenges,

however, the CATALYST system offered profound support and guidance. A movement feels different from inception. It requires leaders and communicators to let go and trust that their people can create shared meaning. When delivered properly, the result is enticing—an organisation where its people can self-sustain a shared truth, a true purpose and grow together.

Rebekah Miles, Head of Communications,
Sanofi Australia and New Zealand

Emergent is a collision of contemporary thinking and ancient wisdom brought together in a practical narrative with confronting tools to support your journey to evolve your leadership and organisation.

Will Noble, Managing Director,
Human Systems Companies

In a world where organisations are paralysed by complexity and cultures of fear, *Emergent* offers a roadmap for collaboration, co-creation and most importantly purpose-driven communities.

Simon Talbot, former CEO,
National Farmers Federation

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For Dante and Lucia.
Be curious and burn brightly.

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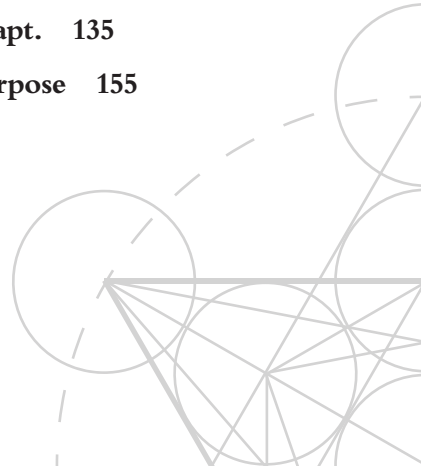
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About the author

Stephen Scott Johnson is a culture change expert who helps organisations catalyse engagement and innovation. An industry veteran with two decades of experience in global business, he is a highly sought after international mentor and keynote speaker in enterprise co-creation, crowdsourcing and movements.

Stephen has worked with hundreds of people and organisations to transform their impact. He is featured in *BRW*, *Fast Company*, *Huffington Post*, *National Marketing Mag*, *MICENET* and *PRWeb*. Stephen's clients include Unilever, Sanofi-Aventis, Victoria Environment Protection Authority, Momentum Energy and ecostore, just to name a few. His contribution to industry is critically acclaimed with accolades including Cannes Lion, AIMIA and Webby.

Outside of industry, Stephen has engaged in large-scale social change for organisations such as the United Nations and the World Wildlife Fund, helping them to achieve results for some of their most critical causes. He is passionate about conscious leadership and helping organisations adapt to the increasing current away from hierarchies to autonomous and interdependent networks.

Gratitudes

Writing this book felt like a rite of passage. What began in 2005 with a deep realisation of a broken world system and dismay at the lack of humanity in big business resulted in a life-changing quest for truth and meaning. I could never have imagined the journey that would unfold, the people, the stories and incredible encounters that led to my own conscious awakening. This book is the result of that journey—an achievement I am immensely proud of that would not exist were it not for the love and dedication of family, friends and an extraordinary team who made it possible.

Firstly, thank you to my *north star*—the many authors and thought leaders whose inspiration and insights light the path and help cultivate my own thinking and ideas. Special mention goes to (in no particular order) Lynne Cazaly, C. Otto Scharmer, Simon Sinek, Dr Jason Fox, Tim Leberecht, Frederic Laloux, Dan Gregory, Kieran Flanagan, Mykel Dixon, Alison Hill and Gabrielle Dolan.

To all the *Emergents* in business and society, men and women whose passion and contribution to improve the human condition fills me with awe. For those in my orbit who taught me what it means to live *fully present* and to honour the space between *no longer* and *not yet* - thank you, Jonathan Fields, Jarrod Briffa, Sarah Davis, Danny Almagor, Rebecca Scott, Graham Hill, Cameron Burgess, Malcolm and Melanie Rands, Gabor Bukovinszky, Tim Mahlberg, Damien Melotte, Michael Margolis and David Hood.

To my wonderful clients, whose commitment to innovation and excellence makes the work I do all the more meaningful. Your courage to *suspend disbelief* and embrace mess, complexity and variation gave me the platform to develop my ideas and intuition

into the proven system and tools contained in this book. I am ever grateful. Thank you for rocking the status quo.

To the exemplary team at Wiley. Matthew Holt, for seeing the spark in me all those years ago at SXSW and offering me a book deal. The lovely Lucy Raymond, my commissioning editor. Thank you for capturing the vision for *Emergent* and for your longsuffering during what unexpectedly became a time of significant change and growth in my life. To my production team, Ingrid, Chris and Theo—you guys are incredible!

Kelly and Charlotte, my editors. At different stages you jumped into the fray to work on this book and helped make it so much more. It's never an easy thing handing over a baby, however your professionalism and editorial prowess took the stress out of the writing process and elevated *Emergent* to a whole other level. Thank you, you're the best!

To my family. Nanette for a lifetime of indescribable love. Dante and Lucia for inspiring me to be the best dad ever. To my parents Ian and Susie for always believing in me (especially the times when that got scary). My grandmother Jean for nurturing my optimism and reminding me that when people admire a diamond, rarely do they acknowledge the inconceivable heat and pressure that made it so brilliant. Brett, my 'little' brother—for always keeping me on my toes.

To my mentors, Peter Cook and Matt Church thank you for the most profound gift of all—the playground, inspiration and sage wisdom that gave me the courage to live my truth. You're both extraordinary examples of what it means to lead with purpose and there aren't enough words in the lexicon to express my love and gratitude.

To my practice manager, Gaya—you are a *tonic for the soul* and your empathy, intuition and entrepreneurial flair make being with and around you both a pleasure and a joy. Thank you, you're truly one in a million.

I am blessed to call some of the most divine humans on the planet my friends. Thank you Georgia ‘Gigi’ Murch, Ashley Howden, James and Annie Layton, Sue Eaves, Will Noble, Michael Holtham, Lisa O’Neill, Mark Truelson, James Vella Clark, Melanie Gleeson, Glenda Childs, Christina Guidotti, Steve Granger, Lachlan Scott, Uta Sy, Nikk and Yolande Hughes and Yoav Goldwein.

Andrés Villamizar—I am the luckiest.

Foreword

In a world now characterised by an inextricable symbiosis with technology, never before has transparent and raw humanity been so vital to leadership, business and society.

Organisations the world over are being challenged to retain their relevance, value and talent within a maelstrom of technology and societal change. For leaders of such organisations, the ability to give an ever-fixed mark, a beacon if you will, to their team and to their stakeholders is essential to guide them through the storm. But as a leader, how do you have the confidence that your light is guiding them away from the rocks rather than toward them?

I'm yet to meet a successful leader who, either systemically or periodically, doesn't suffer from a level of Imposter Syndrome (unless they suffer from complete delusions of grandeur). The need for external thoughts and wisdom can't simply come from within their executive team or even from their board. Building out their broader eco-system and leveraging from many sources and data points is the only way to successfully assuage their isolation and allow for the *non-sequiter* idea that couldn't be imagined or theorised from within the construct of the organisation. The ability to imbue innovation, bottle kismet and codify purpose in a company is the mark of success in the contemporary business landscape.

So, how is this addressed? Transparency. Radical transparency.

Radical transparency is at the core of 21st century leadership. And without the humility to accept, embrace and enact the vulnerability that is a pre-requisite for such transparency, leadership remains an austere façade that is a barrier to inclusivity. Inclusivity is now the hallmark of wise decision-making as it allows for the diversity of thought that provides decision-making with greater rigour. It

generates a more robust process and minimises the risk of fateful, flawed navigation.

Many leaders are also conscious of change fatigue and use this as an excuse to not take their companies into uncharted, or lesser known, waters. This is certainly worthy of due attention but its precursor state—ambiguity fatigue—is also a toxin. In the right dosage, it's crucial in order to allow the experimentation and adoption of new ideas. Too much and everyone begins to lose direction and faith. But by bringing your stakeholders and customers into the conversation, which is only possible through a leader's admission that they, and their teams, don't hold all the answers, co-ownership of the solution becomes possible. This attitude of *co-creation* is the active ingredient in the antidote for each endemic malaise the threatened company faces—leadership isolation, groupthink and stakeholders' ambiguity fatigue.

Co-creation is the route to a sustainable culture of innovation. *Emergent*, at its simplest, is a template for the adoption and installation of co-creation.

Having sat on boards for around 20 years, I've naturally become familiar with using a risk register as the core artefact of corporate governance and the maintenance of stakeholder value. But this defensive posture frequently neglects the address of growth or rebirth. The risk of doing nothing never appears on a risk register and yet it is likely to be the greatest threat of all. Perhaps we should all instead create a new artefact that has a more positive stance—maybe a reward register? We certainly need to find new ways of retaining institutional memory while obviating the recidivist nature of large companies where they consistently backslide to previous modalities and shy away from the challenge of disrupting themselves.

Understanding where your company is at 'now' is pivotal to beginning the journey in this regard—Stephen's Culture Quadrant speaks to this and enables leaders and their teams to assess

their current capability in order to plot a path to self-regeneration. In the process, shifting their perspective from one that is only risk-focused and beginning to focus on acknowledging the need for change and its potential rewards.

And, for the sake of absolute clarity, the rewards are not merely commercial. Societal value or social capital is also ‘front of mind’ for the prescient organisation. The Catalyst Engagement System detailed in this book provides you with the lens to see to the heart of this and capture your true values. Tactics and sales are transient; purpose and meaning are evergreen. Unless you are also striving to leave a legacy of societal impact then you’re just a bank account with debits and credits. And a company with an outlook that clinical simply will not resonate with its customers over the long haul. Especially in an emerging landscape where the most valuable companies in the world are ones with the minimal tangible assets in relation to their market capitalisation. Their value is an embodiment of goodwill in the brand and their connection to stakeholders and customers.

I’ve worked with Stephen, and counted myself fortunate to be his friend, for nearly a decade across a number of companies. His personal values and his diverse experience provide him with a vast knowledge of business and large-scale social change. This book isn’t hot-housed theory. It’s extracted from his personal fossil record in business and provides us with a unique perspective on organisational transformation, the development of corporate empathy and the need to inculcate systemic innovation.

Emergent is for leaders seeking enlightenment and a pathway to sustainable organisational success through the awakening, and confluence, of co-created purpose, vision and value. So, read on; embrace its principles; and enact them at your earliest opportunity.

**Ashley Howden CEO, KJR
(and ambassador for authentic leadership)**

Introduction

THE LEGEND OF THE PHOENIX IS a tale about a mythical, sacred firebird that is said to have a 500- to 1000-year life cycle. According to legend, at the end of its life the phoenix builds a funeral pyre, which it then ignites. Both pyre and bird burn fiercely and are reduced to ashes—from which a young phoenix emerges, reborn anew to live again. The phoenix is destined to live as long as its old self and its ability to be reborn from its own ashes implies that it is immortal.

Our modern, technological world is in a constant state of change, reinvention and transformation. People, organisations and brands are continually challenged to adjust, modify and reinvent in order to remain relevant in the face of unceasing innovation that affects us personally and professionally on a daily basis. And this transformation can be derived from either thoughtful and meaningful consideration, or kneejerk reaction.

We all want to be reborn from our ashes and live a purposeful, engaged life, but how are we to transform and sustain conscious innovation and emergence? Out of the shadows a new story of abundance and nurture is rising—a catalyst for lovingly serving and shaping conscious action and innovation for the sake of all mankind. It is ancient in origin, sacred and powerful. Like the rebirth and transformation of the phoenix, it is a fire that cannot be quenched.

*We all want to be reborn from our ashes
and live a purposeful, engaged life, but
how are we to transform and sustain
conscious innovation and emergence?*

Deep, resonant, this new story ignites the spirit, purifying and burning away everything that isn't truth, seeking kindred connection in an intuitive awakening and rediscovery of self.

This is the path of the Emergent.

Emergent people and organisations are those that enhance corporate performance while simultaneously improving the lives of millions of people around the world. They are conscious leaders, artisans, and innovators, galvanised by a higher purpose that acts as a compass for transformation and growth.

Companies seeking new competitive advantages are recognising the Emergent path as an effective strategy in the quest to forge long-term sustainability, and yet they are rarely equipped with—or even fully aware of how to develop—the necessary skills and acumen to transform intent into action.

My invitation to all organisations is to become Emergent, through conscious innovation and by identifying ways to authentically shift the focus of business culture from the traditional command-and-control, independent metaphor (that which gains power at the expense of community), to an interdependent model that is based in collective benefit and co-ownership.

If you're just getting started on the journey and exploring ways to create stronger and more authentic alignment with your people—employees, customers, stakeholders—an excellent place to start is with the tenets of conscious capitalism.

The tenets include higher purpose, stakeholder orientation, conscious leadership and conscious culture. These form the foundation of Emergent enterprises such as Small Giants, Kinfolk and ecostore, which all possess a holistic worldview and generate every form of value that matters—emotional, social and financial.

If you're further along the journey and actively engaged in purpose-led business, your challenge is likely one of a more practical nature that requires an essential toolset and techniques