

**BOLD**

*Essential Leadership for Transformative  
Change*

CHRIS LAVICTOIRE MAHAI

*Out of the Ordinary Media  
Bloomington, MN*

Copyright © 2018 by Chris LaVictoire Mahai. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018940570

Cover design by Carla Januska, SmartHive, <http://smarthive.com>

Out of the Ordinary Media

## CONTENTS

---

|                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| About this Book                                    | v   |
| BOLD Uncovered                                     | 1   |
| BOLD Defined                                       | 11  |
| Believe                                            | 29  |
| Open                                               | 47  |
| Learn                                              | 65  |
| Do                                                 | 81  |
| BOLD: A C-suite conversation                       | 99  |
| BOLD Leadership Unlocked                           | 119 |
| One Closing Thought                                | 127 |
| BOLD Online                                        | 131 |
| Acknowledgements                                   | 133 |
| About the Author: Chris LaVictoire Mahai           | 135 |
| Other Published Works By Chris<br>LaVictoire Mahai | 137 |



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

---

We live in a world where the pace of change and innovation is accelerating, even if we think it can't possibly go any faster. Where winners and losers find themselves spotlighted every day. Where the performance gaps continue to widen. Where the definition of competitor keeps morphing. We live in a time when those organizations capable of pivoting quickly to seize an opportunity stand in stark contrast to those lumbering along.

*"Boldness happens on the ground... our mission has to flow through the fingertips and brains of everyone on the ground. At every interaction point. You have to see it in action, not in slogans on coffee cups!"*

– President, Private University

We also live in a time of rising consumerism and rising customer experience expectations. We observe how big data, artificial intelligence, and digital innovations challenge, disrupt, and destroy traditional business models every day.

In other words, we live in a time of transformational change. Whatever your business or industry, wherever in the world you call home, you are affected. You feel the pressure to transform because it touches everyone: business-to-consumer, business-to-business, and business-to-business-to-consumer.

**This book is about BOLD leaders in existing organizations – leaders who can see well beyond their current business, who see the potential available to them, and who both appreciate and relish the transformational challenge to win.**

These leaders will not sit by and let their organizations be the next to fall. We have defined them as the “BOLD leaders essential for transformative change.” They will invent the future starting from the position they are in today. They are leaders who view market dynamics opportunistically, who are excited by the challenges, who can imagine the possibilities and translate them to their colleagues, and who will assemble teams to drive the needed changes to successful conclusion. And then they will do it again.

Focusing on BOLD leaves out many other kinds of important leaders. For example, this is not a book about:

- Singular iconic figures that show up now and again: Steve Jobs, Henry Ford, and Walt Disney as past examples. Jeff Bezos, Warren Buffet, Elon Musk, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg, and Howard Schultz as current examples. These dynamic individuals are fun to read and learn about, but they are also never really the likely answer to MOST organizations needing to drive significant, meaningful change.

- Start-up entrepreneurs: Pure innovators are the ones stirring the pot and building new concepts, business models, and entities to take down or replace existing ones. Often by the time their new concept becomes successful, these entrepreneurs (or their investors) have brought in other managers and leaders to scale and develop the organization, and they move on to the next exciting idea. These figures are energizing. They are extremely important to the dynamics of a healthy marketplace, and they get heavily profiled in many books – but not here. In fact, some of the people who work with and for these start-up entrepreneurs are likely the BOLD leaders we are discussing. These are the people capable of taking the founder’s original idea, then growing and morphing it well beyond anything first imagined, enrolling many of their colleagues along the way.
- Managing-the-current-state leaders: These great and indispensable leaders make sure the world works. They include operating leaders, marketing professionals, sales drivers, technology masters, and team leaders of all kinds. They bring their creativity, disciplines, and organizational skills to current challenges. They ensure that the power comes on, factories produce as they should, shipments move, marketing campaigns hit benchmarks, stores open, and customers are served. Here again, many great books by outstanding scholars of leadership already cover the characteristics of this broad array of leaders.

**BOLD leaders, the kind that are discussed in this book, are rare.** Rare, we have come to believe, because they must first be born with a set of characteristics (nature) that creates the potential for them to be BOLD. And then they also need the right opportunities to develop and refine their capacities (nurture) to drive transformative change. Thankfully you don't need – and likely couldn't handle – an organization full of these BOLD leaders. But you do need a strategic few, and you need them in those areas most critical for future success.

This “nature versus nurture” distinction is important for organizations that may look around and feel they lack the BOLD leadership they need. In the pages that follow, we define the profile. We then share the required – born with – characteristics that shape them. Finally, we highlight the behaviors you witness and themes that emerge when you have the opportunity to interview, study, and work with them.

**So, while this book is *about* BOLD leaders, it is *written for all* leaders.** Why? Likely, if you picked up or downloaded this book, you already know you're facing some big choices that require changes to the way you operate. If you fit the BOLD definition, you need to work with all kinds of effective leaders to accomplish big things. If you don't have the BOLD profile but need to drive important changes, understanding BOLD leaders – how to find, develop, support, and work with them – will benefit you and everyone around you. These concepts will prove useful to anyone leading an organization, particularly in times of great change.



If you see yourself as a BOLD leader when reading this book, we have some ideas to help you confirm your capabilities and focus your personal development to enhance your BOLD gifts. Keep reading here and visit [AveusBOLD.com](http://AveusBOLD.com) for additional ideas and tools.

For those of you who (let's assume!) exhibit wonderful, competent, and highly effective leadership, who build strong teams, who keep the operation running smoothly and on time, and who deliver results, yet don't possess the chemistry of the BOLD leaders we describe, we offer ideas and tools in the book and at [AveusBOLD.com](http://AveusBOLD.com) to:

- Find, work with, support and empower BOLD individuals within your organization so you can enjoy the benefit of their abilities, and
- Practice and develop some of these transformational leadership abilities within yourself.

This book reflects a deep understanding of who these folks are, and are not. Once we had identified them, we worked to understand them. We have confirmed our conclusions over the past couple of years, and this work continues.

People make things happen. That's not news. But what kinds of people, for which kinds of change?

BOLD leadership is messy. It is hard, and it isn't always pretty. The actions taken by BOLD leaders don't always work at first and may need adjusting. This process is hugely rewarding for those compelled to BOLD leadership. Yet at the same time, it can be lonely work. It requires a certain kind of individual.

BOLD character and orientation, we believe, cannot be taught. You either have it or you don't. People recognize the uniqueness of these leaders and crave the opportunity to be involved with their work, to be led by them when given an opportunity. As one person we interviewed said, "BOLD leaders, of the Aveus rubric, are a rare and wonderful thing. If you meet one, hang on to them!"

Throughout the book, the descriptions, themes, analyses of the characteristics, and quotes from our interviews, we aim to reveal the essence of these BOLD leaders. For those of you who are BOLD leaders, *BOLD* should read familiar and provide insights into what you feel and experience. For others, *BOLD* may help explain what you observe as you interact with these leaders.

**It is important to note that this book comes out of the work we do at Aveus.** We are not psychologists or organizational development specialists who study leadership and management as a profession. We have high regard for and have learned much from the psychologists and OD specialists with whom we have worked. Because we love change done well, we have also read, studied, and researched this topic independently and as a team.

Specifically, our interest in BOLD leaders comes directly out of our own hands-on experiences with large scale change efforts. We have done this work in corporate and entrepreneurial roles as well as consultants working side by side with clients. *We come to this subject as business minds*, first thinking about what needs to happen, and then how to make it happen.

Aveus is a boutique consultancy that, in shorthand, works with BOLD leaders to successfully solve big, messy challenges. Our mantra is “Make change rewarding.” For nearly two decades, we have worked around the world and across industries, company sizes, types, public, private, and not-for-profit organizations. Our team has been filled with people who have deep experiences from their careers on the client side of the desk. As I often say, we know what it is like to live with a decision.

*BOLD* is a brief book intended to start conversations, ideally between leaders and especially inside organizations facing significant change challenges and desires. **And the book is only the beginning** of the resources we have created to nurture this conversation and aid in the identification and development of more BOLD leaders, fully capable of driving transformative change.

**At the companion website AveusBOLD.com**, you will find all kinds of additional information, including:

- A self-assessment that you can take, confidentially, and at no cost
- The methodology behind our research and creation of the BOLD assessment
- Ideas for business leaders who want to identify and develop BOLD leaders
- BOLD leader interviews from the past few years and new ones added regularly
- A private community where BOLD leaders (who assess as BOLD) can meet, share ideas, ask questions, and support and collaborate with one another

Enjoy!