

But Does He Get On Base?

Culture and High Performance as Outcomes of Right Decisions

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If you've seen the movie *Moneyball*, one particular scene likely sticks with you: Billy Beane sits tensely in the Oakland Athletics' meeting room, surrounded by experienced scouts during a crucial season planning session. The scouts are raving about charismatic players popular among fans. But Billy sharply interrupts them, stating: "You guys are just talking... But does he get on base?"

Shortly after, Billy meets a young analyst named Peter Brand, who tells him: "Your goal shouldn't be to buy players, your goal should be to buy wins. And in order to buy wins, you need to buy runs."

Many organizations find themselves in a similar scenario. Culture is often seen as a soft factor, commonly measured by metrics like employee satisfaction. However, these metrics typically indicate symptoms rather than root causes. High performance stems from identifying specific, measurable cultural drivers.

Charisma alone doesn't win games. Does employee satisfaction alone get your organization on base? Hardly. Specific, evidence-based cultural factors—such as leadership behavior, strategic clarity, and psychological safety—constitute the foundation for strategic organizational development.

Yet Billy also understood that stability alone is not sufficient. In another crucial moment, he states clearly: "Adapt or die." Organizations must implement cultural principles flexibly and dynamically, always adapting to the current context.

Yes, data provides clarity and enables targeted improvements. However, it's not about the numbers themselves but rather the process of measurement, leading to more informed decisions. Culture is lived—expressed not through metrics, but through stories that inspire and engage people.

Billy Beane, reflecting thoughtfully in the stands, ultimately recognizes what truly matters: emotion, passion, and the power of inspiring stories.

Moneyball teaches us that high performance results from evidence-based decisions—decisions energized by authentic, compelling stories.