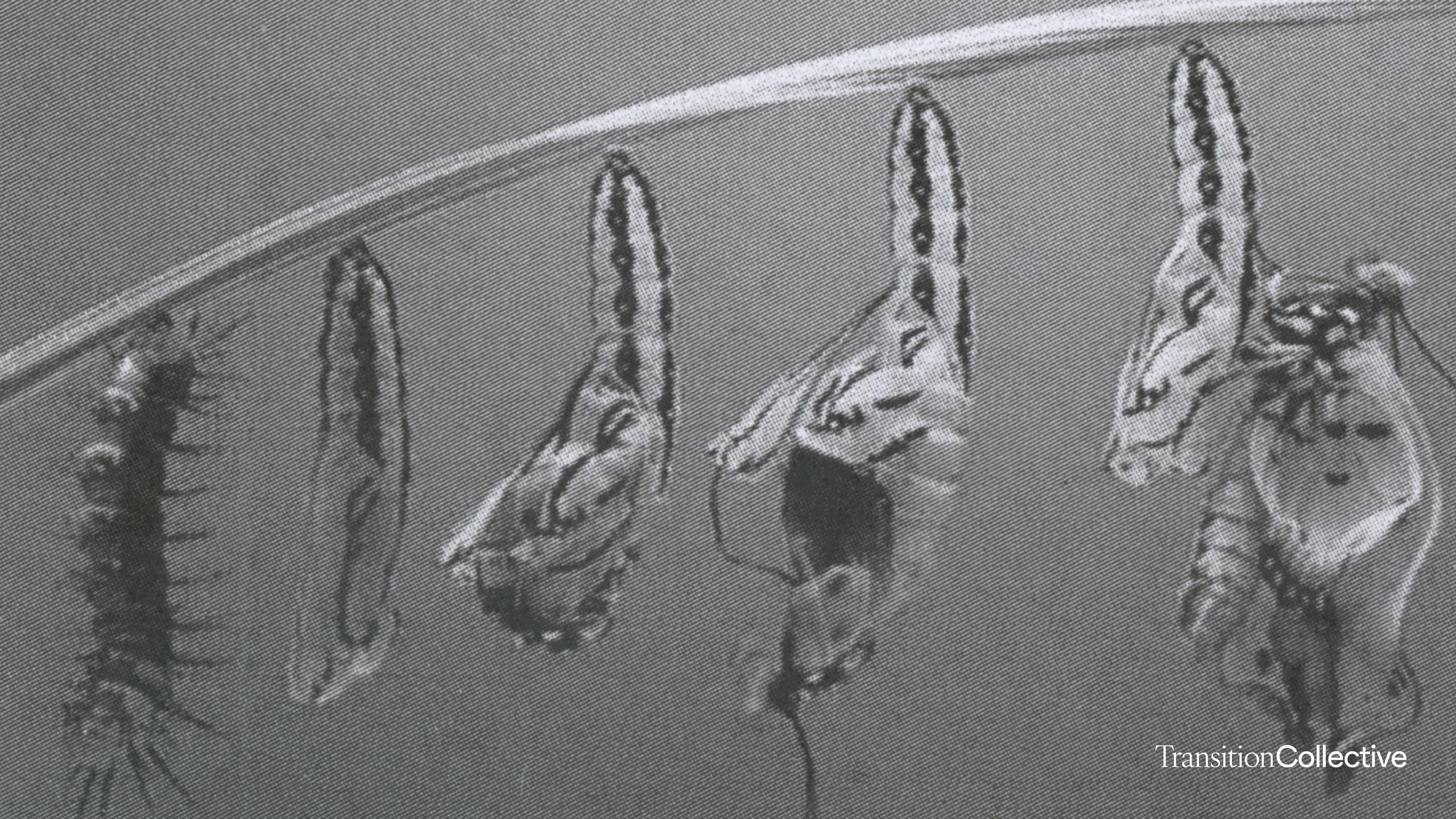
Transition Collective

Reimagining the Board

as enabler of innovation and value creation

Christian Bason, Ph.D.

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[Transition]

A period or phase in which a change or shift is happening

[Collective]

Something done by people acting together as a group

Let's start with an uncomfortable question.

If boards were not required by law, would organizations choose to have them?

What is the most important question a Board can ask the management team?

"How can we be of service?"

Too many boards see themselves differently

Controllers?

Strategists?

Employers?

Implementers?

Boards consist of people with the least insight into the organization yet they have the most power over it.

Could they still be of value?

Reimagining the board

"The very essence of our humanity consists of the fact that we are self-conscious political actors, and therefore capable of embracing a wide range of social arrangements."

Graeber and Wengrow
The Dawn of Everything (2021)

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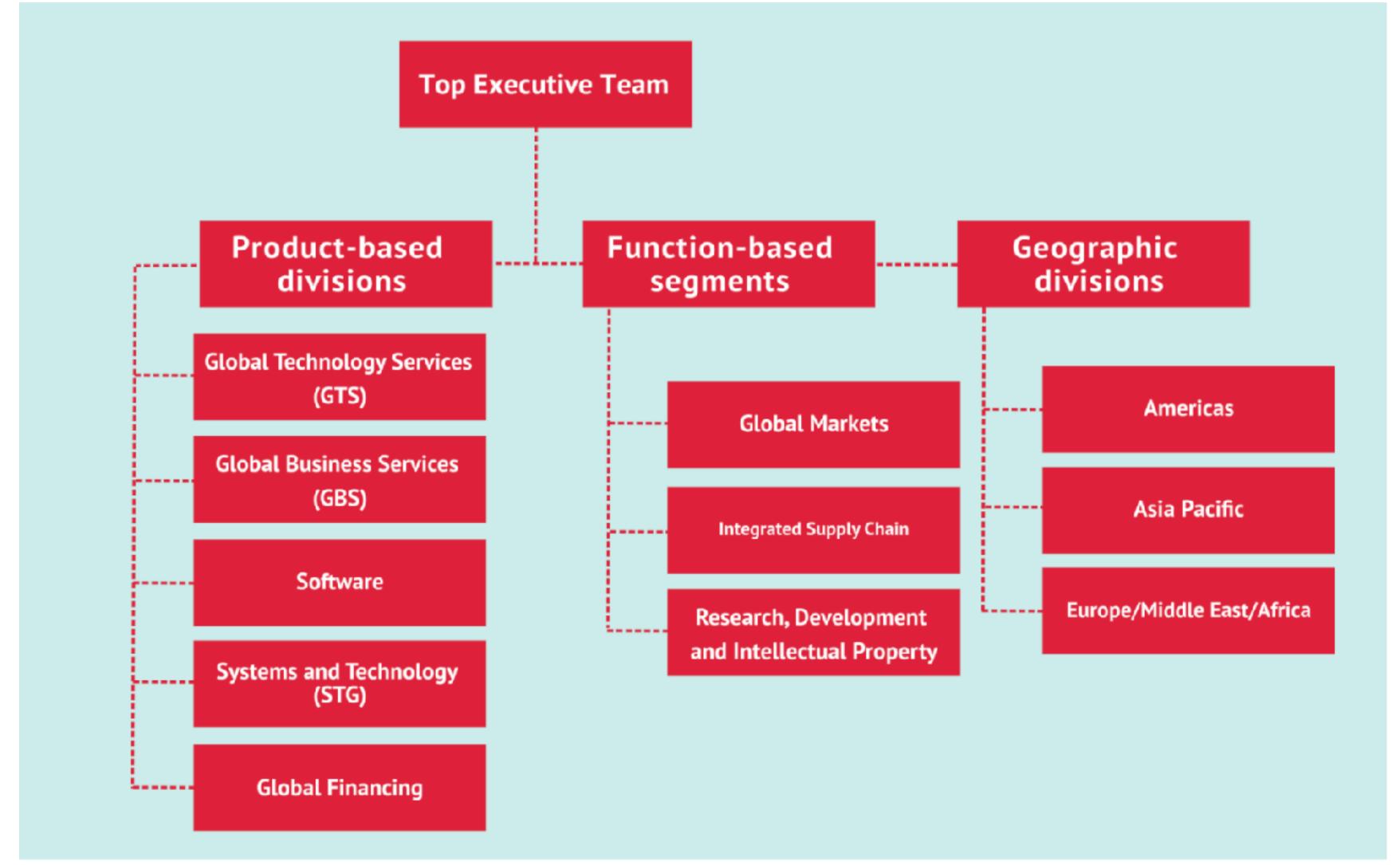
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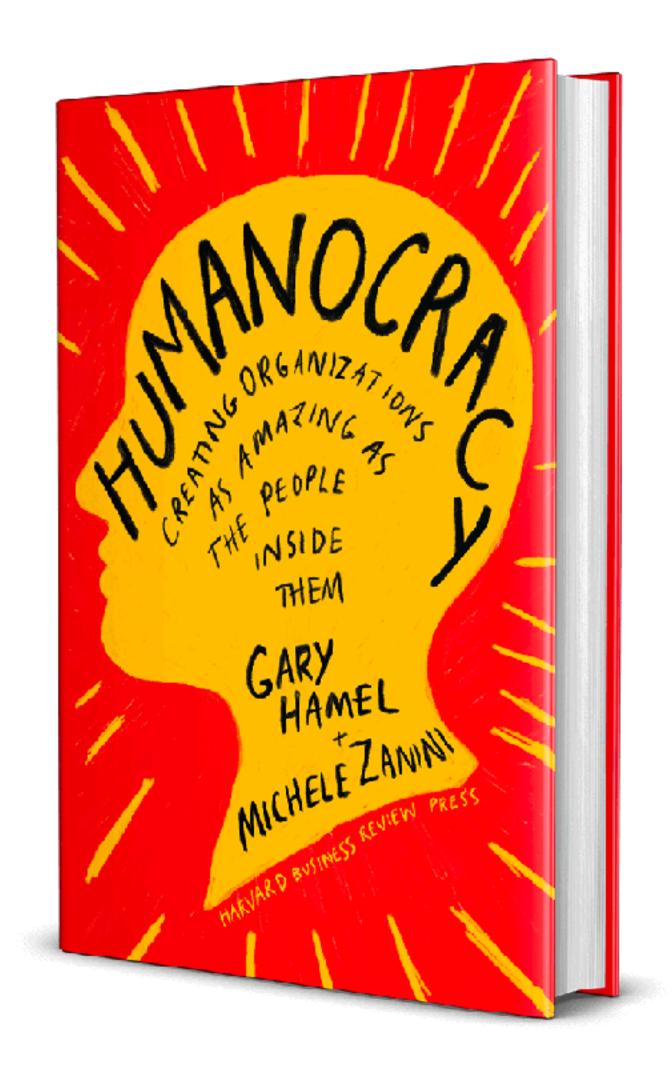
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IBM, 2025



"Bureaucracy is incredibly persistent and deeply entrenched ... as an organizational model, it will take a systematic effort to dislodge it."



Why is our organizational imagination so limited?



Transition Collective

A world of opportunity

The workforce has never been better educated

People are ready to take responsibility – under the right conditions

Innovative ways of organizing and managing are gaining ground

Technological innovation and Al provide new opportunities to rethink organizations

Covid-19 showed us how adaptable we can be – if we have to.



What type of board, and by extension – organization – fully reflects the challenges of our time?

A context of complexity and turbulence

Need for agility, innovation and sustainability

Balancing the long-term versus fast decision-making

Attracting, retaining and nurturing talent

Organizations that unleash the full creative potential of people

Three roles for boards to enable innovation and value creation – by design

Role #1 Give peripheral vision



Executives, immersed in operations, often miss "weak signals" at the edge of an organization's periphery. Boards—being more detached and typically more diverse—are well positioned to counter this myopia via broader scanning and consideration of alternative futures.

Day and Shoemaker, Wharton Business School Peripheral Vision

#1 Peripheral vision

Helping the C-suite look around corners

The opportunity

Board members should leverage their experience and wider networks to sense and inform management what is happening in society, technology and markets

What it takes

- A diversity of competencies, cultures and outlooks across the board composition
- Dedication of time to elicit insights from board members
- Foresight and scenario work done systematically with the board

Role #2 Lift the ambition



When an executive team leaves a board meeting it should feel energised and believe that it has all the backing it needs to execute its vision and tasks at hand.

Senior board consultant Anonymous

#2 Lift the ambition

Take the team's energy, vision and ideas – and lift it further

The opportunity

Board members should provide their full backing and support to the management's visions and strategies

What it takes

- Humility that it is the top management that knows the context and the organization best
- Ability to reflect and engage in appreciative inquiry
- If the top management does not deliver the energy, vision and ideas you wish and can lift further then find another top management.

Role #3 Enable learning



"When a group is higher in psychological safety, it is more innovative, do higher-quality work and enjoy better performance... one of the most important reasons for these different outcomes is that people in psychologically safe teams can admit their mistakes."

Amy Edmondson, Harvard Business School The Right Kind of Wrong

#3 Enable learning Create a safe space for deep learning

The opportunity

Board meetings should be reflective spaces where people feel safe to work on hard problems together

What it takes

- Truly **trusting** that the top management and wider organization does its best
- Encouraging smart experimentation across the organization
- Psychological safety in the board room
- Deep listening skills, facilitated by the board leader
- Celebrating when top management shares its challenges and failures
- Systematic learning over time calls for high degree of board continuity

Transition Collective

"You never really change things by fighting the existing reality. You change things by building a better model."

Buckminster Fuller Architect and futurist

