

Polly LaBarre

Authority on Leading Organizational Change; Co-founder, Management Lab; Founding Team, Fast Company; and Co-author, Mavericks at Work

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Change Management / Organizational Change
- Corporate Culture & Governance
- Disruption
- Employee Engagement
- Human Resources / Workforce Issues
- Teamwork / Teambuilding

About Polly LaBarre

All change goes against the rules. Polly LaBarre arms leaders with a Maverick Manual to hack the status quo and ramp up originality, invention and game-changing disruption. The true work of leadership, she says, is inspiring, unleashing, and amplifying human creativity, passion, and resourcefulness - creating a cultural DNA where the response to change happens almost as fast as change itself. Co-author of *Mavericks at Work: Why the Most Original Minds in Business Win* and founding team member of *Fast Company* magazine, Polly is co-founder of Management Lab, the think-and-do tank where she consults with top global brands. Polly is also a top speaker who leaves audiences with actionable lessons from organizations and leaders who are transforming their cultures and industries by breaking the rules and harnessing the human element. She inspires people to engage and reimagine the challenges they face, become fearless experimenters, and rethink the work of leadership.

Along with her partners at the Management Lab (MLab), Polly has developed a pioneering method and platform for changing how large organizations change. They run large-scale, real-world experiments in "hacking management" to build the deep organizational capabilities crucial for thriving in a creative, disruptive world: adaptability, innovation, and inspiration.

In addition to running global "management hackathons," MLab has also built the Management Innovation eXchange (MIX), the world's largest community of management innovators, created a clearinghouse of management hacks and innovation stories, and launched a series of events.

Polly has traveled the world to work with the courageous contrarians, management mavericks, and pioneering progressives who are inventing the future of organizations and business. While these are organizations of every stripe that hail from every realm of endeavor, they do share a common credo: that the most winning organizations are animated by an utterly distinctive and deeply-felt point of view – a set of ideas with the power to fundamentally reshape the sense of what's possible; that work is personal, values rule, freedom is a bigger game than power, and nobody wins unless everybody wins.

Early in her career, as part of the founding team of *Fast Company* magazine, Polly played a central role in the remarkable success of a magazine that recast the conventional wisdom on power, competition, work, leadership, innovation, and change. The magazine introduced the world to a new universe of organizations and leaders whose management models were as distinctive as their business models were disruptive.

Polly is the co-author of the award-winning book *Mavericks at Work: Why the Most Original Minds in Business Win*, which was a *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *BusinessWeek* bestseller. Published in over 20 territories, *Mavericks* was a "Business Book of the Year" for the *Financial Times*, the *Miami Herald*, and *The Economist*, which called the book "a pivotal work in the tradition of *In Search of Excellence* and *Good to Great*." CNN, CNBC, and GMA all created series around the book.

Polly's writing has appeared in a variety of publications, including *Fast Company*, *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review* online, *Fortune.com*, the *McKinsey Quarterly*, and she has served as business and innovation correspondent for CNN.

Select Keynotes

- **Leading in the New Work Order**

A monster wave of change has set off a vast reckoning with our taken-for-granted beliefs about every aspect of how and where work gets done.



Every leader today must grapple with the inescapable imperative to create and embrace a comprehensive agenda for meaningful change on the design of work and the interconnected urgent challenges of our time—deep inequities, structural dehumanization, environmental calamity. Polly LaBarre takes leaders on a journey across this new landscape—inspiring them with fresh thinking on the work of leadership and equipping them with powerful new approaches for this new work order, including:

- How to transcend the seemingly intractable tradeoffs between performance imperatives and responsibility for people and planet
- How to cultivate an “audacity of imagination” and galvanize people around a shared sense of purpose
- How to “leader-proof” your organization
- How to design platforms for involving, equipping, and connecting people
- How to build organizational respond-ability by enlarging individual responsibility
- How to grow your own resilience in the face of daunting uncertainty

• **Roll With Change: Recipes for Reinvention & Resilience**

Who hasn’t been rocked by change in the last few years? While we’ve all been forced to rethink, adjust, and adjust again, the gravitational pull of the status quo remains a stealthy enemy of innovation. What does it take to wake up an organization’s inner insurgent to change ahead of change? These times demand every organization dramatically amp up its agility, inventiveness, and adaptability. Drawing on her research and work inside some of the world’s most innovative and progressive organizations, Polly LaBarre lays out actionable strategies for building a perpetual innovation engine:

- What mindsets, practices and behaviors allow you to see the world differently and subvert the status quo
- Where to look for the future—and how to generate a whole new map of possibility– How to embed innovation as a social process
- What it takes to create a robust architecture of collaboration for a distributed, ever-evolving cohort of innovation peers and partners
- How to build a resilient organizational microbiome by embedding the mindset and methods of experimentation into everything you do

• **The Human Edge: Designing Work to Create a Cultural Advantage**

Today’s whirlwind of challenges—pandemic, social turbulence, economic uncertainty, looming climate catastrophe—has revealed just how inhospitable our organizations are to the human beings who work inside them. It’s not enough to ask which is the right hybrid work policy. It’s past time to ask: what kinds of organizations would we design if we genuinely believed in the inherent value, fundamental goodness, and unlimited potential of every person? Short answer: they’d be very different. In this talk, Polly LaBarre unpacks design rules for unleashing your organization’s full human and creative capacity and lays out a path for humanizing work, including:

- How to unleash, mobilize and amplify the often unruly, but essential human qualities—imagination, energy, resourcefulness, curiosity, intuition, empathy, artistry, eccentricity, passion, and more—without losing control
- How to cultivate a culture of agency, activism, and ownership where every person makes it their job to change things for the better
- How to equip and involve every person in the organization as a creator, strategist, and entrepreneur
- How to build a community of peers that amplifies belonging, contribution, and voice
- How to maximize engagement by investing in wellbeing and widening the circle of care

• **Designed to Flourish: Develop People, Defeat Disruption**

DESIGNED TO FLOURISH: DEVELOP PEOPLE, DEFEAT DISRUPTION

Change is an inside-out job. It’s not about reacting to external events or chasing trends, so much as it’s about developing your respond-ability—your elasticity, maturity, plasticity, openness, emotional dexterity, regulatory power, and more. Organizations that deliberately develop that capacity in every individual shore up their own resilience. In other words, “adult development” doesn’t just promote individual growth, it’s a cornerstone of organizational flourishing. Polly LaBarre takes the audience on a quick tour of the organizations and leaders investing in human flourishing in powerful new ways—and offers up a short course in “adult development,” including:

- How to begin, again (and again)
- How to change your mind—cultivating consciousness, mediating mindsets, biases, blinders
- How to develop intuition—learning to tune into your inner knowing
- How to train like an artist, a monk, and an athlete
- How to design and run self-experiments to accelerate your growth loops
- Principles for adult capacity building

Select Book Titles

- **2008:** Mavericks at Work: Why the Most Original Minds in Business Win

Select Articles

- [Unleashing Human Gifts to Improve Your Events – The VIP Lounge](#)

"How do we make the realm of human endeavor ever more productive, ever more creative, ever more fulfilling?" That mission threads throughout Polly LaBarre's career, our guest on this edition of The VIP Lounge podcast.

- [Three Strategies for Creating a Culture of Everyday, Everywhere Experimentation](#)

When it comes to developing your capacity to adapt and invent in a world ruled by expanding complexity and exponential change, experimentation is the ultimate power tool.

- [Polly LaBarre – Landing Page](#)

All change goes against the rules. Polly LaBarre arms leaders with a Maverick Manual to hack the status quo and ramp up originality, invention and game-changing disruption.

Select Testimonials

"She is truly gifted in making connections and keeping all engaged."

— *Business Specialist, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program*

"I had high expectations, but you completely exceeded them! You were absolutely brilliant on all fronts: content, delivery, timing, storytelling, and more. Everyone I talked to cited your talk as the highlight of our conference."

— *CEO, Perkins+Will*

"Thanks so much for coming to Santa Barbara for our NBC retreat. You were both energetic and inspiring – and, trust me, I would have been thrilled to have one or the other! You gave us a lot to think about and you set the perfect tone for a lot of the issues that are facing us right at this moment."

— *Chairman, NBC Entertainment*

"I would like to tell you that the Planetree audience loved your presentation! Great job! I heard comments that you were the best keynote we have ever had by far! Thank you again for the presentation and also meeting with our staff afterwards. It was sensational!"

— *Chief Creative Officer, Planetree*

"Thanks so much, Polly was a HUGE hit. We couldn't have asked for a better suited speaker. So much so that a lot of our attendees are asking for the video footage of the day so they can re-watch it."

— *Director of Marketing, Vision Critical*

"We could not have had a better presentation to close out our Wednesday session. Your insight on innovation in the workplace as well as how we can better incorporate innovation into our core company DNA was a hit!"

— *President and Chief Executive Officer, Aerospace Industries Association*

"Polly was the perfect addition to our conference. Her keynote was the ideal complement to those that both preceded and followed her. She was very approachable, engaging and a true pleasure to work with – both for the accompanying speakers and the technical and production teams. The rave reviews continue to roll in."

— *Regional Vice President Marketing, INFOR*

"Polly hit it out of the park. She was warm and well received. Attendees loved how she kept the concepts simple and digestible. We loved having her."

— *Senior Director, HireVue*

"Polly was FABULOUS!!! Articulate, provoking, exciting, strategic, practical, humble...a good representation for women!!! Everything I was hoping for. I would recommend her!"

— *Vice President, Farm Credit Services of America*

"Thanks again for speaking at our Women's Leadership Forum. Your remarks made quite an impact with our younger leaders, in particular. I spoke with several of them later and they were so energized by your talk, they are off implementing change!"

— *Vice President, Narrowband Communications and Program Manager, Lockheed Martin*