



# Rebels at Work: A Handbook for Leading Change from Within

By Lois Kelly, Carmen Medina

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Struggling to make changes at work or convince management to take action? Ready to challenge conventional thinking or introduce a new idea, but worried about being viewed as a troublemaker or getting in way over your head?

*Rebels At Work* provides concrete ideas, techniques and advice on how to refine your thinking, improve your approach to work, and manage yourself so you can achieve more and stay sane and optimistic in the process.

Authors Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina -- successful and occasionally wildly unsuccessful rebels themselves, Lois at marketing agencies, Carmen at the CIA -- reveal ways to navigate corporate politics, frame and communicate ideas, deal with controversy, avoid common mistakes, and manage yourself so you know when and how to keep pushing and when to quit.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

*Rebels at Work* is the essential guide to rocking the boat. From the trenches, Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina outline how to gain credibility, pitch ideas, navigate politics, manage conflict, and maintain sanity. This lively, accessible book is full of practical wisdom for making sure you don't become a rebel without a job."

#### **Adam Grant, Wharton professor and New York Times bestselling author of *Give and Take***

In *Rebels at Work*, Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina bust the myth that passionate and rebellious types will only thrive in small organizations. This valuable handbook is chock-full of charts, guidelines, stories and advice to help people make positive change in big companies -- and to have fun doing it. It is an indispensable guide for both rebels and those who manage them.

#### **Diane Hesson, founder and chairman, Communispace; CEO, Startup Institute**

At GovLoop we have 150,000 innovators trying to improve government from the inside, doing the difficult work of changing bureaucracy. *Rebels at Work* is our new playbook for making big changes in government. Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina's clear tips and strategies are essential for navigating large organizations and getting things done.

#### **Steve Ressler, founder and president, GovLoop**

*Rebels at Work* is a brilliant guide for change activists who want to rock the boat and stay in it. As rebels at work we are too often marginalised and our great ideas go unheeded. Yet we are actually the salvation of organisations. I love the fact that the authors are a living embodiment of what can happen when rebels get activated in a positive way. This book gives power to rebels at work everywhere. There are a few bosses out there who should be very scared.

#### **Helen Bevan, chief transformation officer, NHS IQ, National Health Service, England**

*Rebels at Work* should sit on the bookshelf of all enterprise social champions together with the Heath brothers' *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* and *Made To Stick*.

#### **Virpi Oinonen, *Internal Social Networks the Smart Way***

From the Author

#### **What value do most rebels bring to the table?**

Rebels have the courage to name the elephants in the room, see new ways to solve problems, bring outside ideas into the organization, and be the first to try new approaches. Our research found that rebels call out problems others are afraid to (92%) and challenge assumptions and sacred cow practices (92%), both of which are essential to real innovation, but often shunned in organizations.

The other overlooked value rebels bring is devotion to duty. Rebels care more about their organizations than most people. That's why we ask the difficult questions that most people feel more comfortable avoiding, and risk being snubbed for suggesting unpopular ideas. We want our organizations to be the very best and we

believe that our colleagues and we have what it takes to achieve more than our competitors.

### **Why are many managers afraid/intimidated by rebels at work?**

Our ideas often threaten managers' craving for status and certainty.

An overwhelming number of managers believe that they are supposed to create the strategy and have the answers -- and employees are meant to execute on those ideas. Not question them. I'm the boss. Hence, I know more and you should respect me for it. It sounds silly in this day and age of empowerment and collaboration, but protecting status can lead all of us to act in illogical ways. The worse case is that people at work become complacent and disillusioned, not good for people or businesses that employ them.

We humans are also wired to crave certainty. So when we rebels present innovative ideas that have no best practice precedents we trigger fears about certainty. Managers worry, "How will we know this will work? What if we make a mistake?" You get the picture. The last threat is autonomy. Our managers like doing things their way. To suggest something different is to violate their sense of control and autonomy over what they know and like.

### **What is most surprising about rebels at work?**

How many closeted, positive rebels there are, and how much untapped talent is available to organizations. People are yearning to do more at work, but they're afraid of the backlash from speaking up. Few have had any training or mentoring on how to bring new ideas to the table and work the politics and controversy that inevitably come with any change. That's why we wrote this book. We wish someone had given us this advice when we were younger. Oh, how much more effective we could have been at work!

### **About the Author**

**Lois Kelly** has been a creative rebel throughout her career, working for big corporations and marketing agencies, helping some of the most respected companies in the world deal with crises, create new ways to launch products, communicate complex issues, influence public opinion, go public, adopt bleeding edge business practices, and occasionally try to move mountains. During this journey Lois has become a student of change, learning what it takes to get people to embrace change. She lives in Rhode Island, the smallest and quite possibly most creative state in the United States and tweets under @LoisKelly and @RebelsAtWork.

**Carmen Medina** spent 32 years as a heretic at the Central Intelligence Agency. Despite this, she held several senior positions, including serving on the executive team that led the CIA's analytic directorate. She thinks most organizations don't have a good way of determining when it's time to transform and/or "sell" their current business model, and that rebels can provide organizations with the important early warning system they so desperately need. Since retiring from CIA in 2010, Carmen has continued to write and speak about Rebels at Work, analysis and strategic warning, the emerging of new global norms in the 21st century and cognitive diversity. She is Puerto Rican by birth and Texan by nationality. She tweets under @milouness and @RebelsAtWork.

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#### **Tasha Page:**

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#### **Doreen Williams:**

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#### **Debra Davis:**

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