



Dr Alan O'Neill

AUTHOR

A transformation programme that leaves behaviour unchanged is not a transformation. Most organisations discover this only after the launch, when metrics fail to move and the same resistance resurfaces. The gap between what leadership decides and what customers actually experience is almost always a culture problem.

Dr Alan O'Neill is a consultant, speaker, and author who helps organisations understand why culture and customer experience are the same commercial lever, and build the structured change capability to use them together.

Dr Alan O'Neill's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Dr Alan O'Neill

- The 7-Steps to Profit is a named, proprietary framework built from a multi-year consulting engagement at Selfridges, where annual profit grew from £45m to £200m. Audiences leave with a structured path they can map to their own organisation, not a set of principles they have to interpret.
- His central argument, that culture and customer experience are a single commercial mechanism, not parallel HR and marketing initiatives, gives boards a specific reframing of a decision they are typically making in silos.
- As Managing Director of Kara Change Management, he draws content from active client engagements across retail, hospitality, FMCG, financial services, and the public sector. The material is current, not archival.
- Four published books provide a body of work that extends well beyond the session: *"Premium Is the New Black"* on customer experience as competitive differentiation; *"Culture Matters"* on the four values that underpin high performance; *"Show Me the Lid on the Box"* on reducing change resistance; and *"The Leader's Six-Pack"* on balancing leadership competencies with emotional intelligence
- A business columnist for the Sunday Independent and Gulf based publications, his frameworks are tested continuously against live commercial situations across multiple sectors and geographies.

Biography highlights

- Founder and Managing Director, Kara Change Management
- Creator of the 7-Steps to Profit framework; deployed across client organisations including Selfridges, Toyota, Intel, Primark, Moët Hennessy, Dubai Duty Free, Getty Images, and the United Nations

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Panel Participation
- Speaking

ALAN'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Business Strategy & Growth
- Change Management
- Culture Transformation
- Customer Experience & Marketing
- Values-Based Leadership

LANGUAGES: English

- Author of three books: *Premium Is the New Black*, *Culture Matters*, and *Show Me the Lid on the Box*
- Business columnist, Sunday Independent (Ireland) and Gulf Business
- Non-executive director across multiple sectors in Europe and the Middle East
- 30+ years of consulting practice spanning retail, hospitality, FMCG, financial services, manufacturing, and public sector organisations across EMEA

Biography

Selfridges' annual profit grew from £45m to £200m across several years of structured transformation, and the business went on to win multiple 'Best Department Store in the World' awards. The consulting framework behind that journey, Dr Alan O'Neill's 7-Steps to Profit, is what organisations now bring him in to share.

The 7-Steps to Profit is built on a specific argument: that culture, customer experience, and commercial performance are not parallel workstreams but a single, interdependent system. Culture is not the backdrop to strategy, it is the delivery mechanism. O'Neill formalised this thinking across three books: *Premium Is the New Black* addresses customer experience as competitive differentiation; *Culture Matters* defines the four values (Customer Centricity, Respect, Accountability, and Agility) that underpin a high-performance culture; *Show Me the Lid on the Box* provides a framework for leading change with reduced resistance.

As Managing Director of Kara Change Management, he has applied the framework with organisations across retail, hospitality, FMCG, financial services, and the public sector, from Toyota and Intel to Dubai Duty Free and the United Nations. The Selfridges story transfers well: the structural argument it illustrates is as relevant to a B2B services firm or a public institution as it is to a department store.

O'Neill continues to practise as an active consultant and non-executive director. He writes regular business commentary for the Sunday Independent and Gulf Business, keeping his frameworks in direct conversation with the commercial challenges organisations are currently navigating.

Key speaking topics

- Change management and organisational transformation
- Culture as commercial strategy
- Customer experience and service excellence
- The 7-Steps to Profit
- Premium brand positioning and margin protection
- Values-led leadership
- Retail reinvention and the future of physical retail

Ideal for

- CEOs and senior leadership teams managing a cultural transformation alongside a commercial or strategic pivot
- Chief Customer Officers and Chief Marketing Officers seeking to embed customer-centric behaviour across the full organisation
- CHROs and HR Directors designing culture programmes that connect directly to business performance
- Executive conferences in retail, hospitality, consumer goods, and

financial services

Audience outcomes

- A working understanding of the 7-Steps to Profit framework and how to map its logic to their own organisational context
- A reframing of culture and customer experience as a single commercial lever, not separate functional priorities
- Concrete examples drawn from the Selfridges engagement and other named client organisations that show how the framework operates under real conditions
- Greater clarity on where resistance to change typically originates and how structured approaches reduce it at scale
- A sharper diagnostic lens for identifying the gap between leadership intent and frontline behaviour

Dr Alan O'Neill's 2026 talks & topics

Don't Sell It Yet

Makes the case that business value at exit is determined by transferability, not profit alone – and shows owners and leadership teams how to build the structural conditions that produce a premium: culture, strategy, people, customer experience, and execution working as a system.

Key takeaways:

- Why buyers assess transferability before they assess profit, and what that means for how an organisation must be built
- The structural elements – drawn from the 7-Steps to Profit – that determine whether a business can stand independently of its founders
- Contrasting case studies, including Selfridges, that show what a high-value, high-transferability organisation actually looks like in practice

The 7-Steps to Profit

Introduces the structured framework O'Neill developed through his work with Selfridges and other global brands, and shows how organisations at any stage of development can apply it to drive commercial performance.

Key takeaways:

- The logic behind the 7-Steps framework and how each step connects culture to customer experience to commercial outcome
 - Practical tools drawn from named client engagements, adaptable across B2B, B2C, and public sector contexts
 - A clear view of where most organisations stall – and what high-performing ones do differently
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Supercharge your Culture

Examines culture as a competitive asset that cannot be copied, and sets out what it takes to build one that sustains high performance across the organisation.

Key takeaways:

- A practical definition of the four values – Customer Centricity, Respect, Accountability, and Agility – and how to evaluate them in your own organisation
 - The direct link between values, behaviours, employee engagement, and commercial outcomes
 - A framework for strengthening culture as a genuine source of competitive advantage, not a communications exercise
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Supercharge your Customer Experience

Makes the case for customer experience as the primary commercial differentiator in an era of transparent comparisons, and shows how to embed a service culture from boardroom to frontline.

Key takeaways:

- Why product and price alone no longer differentiate – and what does
 - A practical model for building consistency in service delivery across B2C, B2B, and public service environments
 - Case study examples from the Selfridges engagement and other named organisations that illustrate what the shift looks like in practice
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Retail Apocalypse, Fake News

Challenges the prevailing narrative about the death of physical retail and presents a more precise analysis of what is actually driving success and failure in the sector today.

Key takeaways:

- A clearer diagnosis of the structural forces reshaping retail – beyond the headline narrative about online disruption
 - Why bad retailing is dying, but retailing itself is not – and what separates the survivors
 - Practical lessons drawn from successful retail case studies, including Selfridges
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Supercharge your Change Management

Addresses the practical reality that most change programmes fail not for strategic reasons but for human ones – and provides a framework for leading change that reduces resistance and increases adoption.

Key takeaways:

- The most common reasons well-designed change programmes stall or collapse
- Practical strategies for managing resistance, building engagement, and sustaining momentum through transition

- A communication and implementation approach that takes people with the change rather than around it

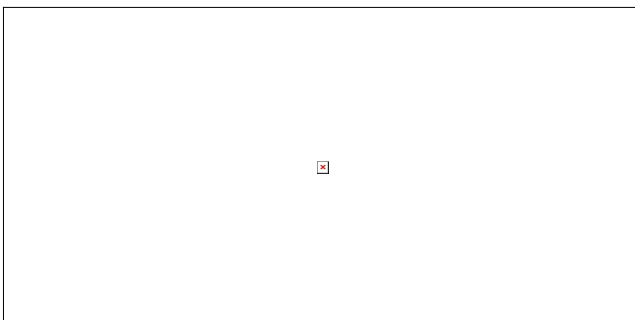
Selling Added-Value

Equips commercial teams to move away from price-led competition by building the confidence and capability to sell on value.

Key takeaways:

- Why margin erosion is often a culture and positioning problem before it is a market problem
- Practical tools for articulating and communicating added value in competitive sales environments
- Greater confidence in protecting and rebuilding margin without compromising on customer relationships

Dr Alan O'Neill's Videos





What Dr Alan O'Neill's clients say

Alan's business acumen, genuine passion for great customer service and his hands-on experience overseeing large-scale change within organisations such as Selfridges is unique. It makes him one of the most impressive speakers on change management and customer experience I have ever come across. Alan is a popular speaker at events around the globe with organisations who want to learn from his insights and his bold tactics to help build a world-class customer-centric culture and ultimately to increase sales.

Frances Keane

Managing Director, Personally Speaking

Alan O'Neill has completed some inspirational work for us at Dalata Hotel Group plc over the past number of years. His insight into customer experience and customer thought process is second to none. The timing of his content is excellent, as the world of digital collides with traditional hospitality and customer service more frequently.

Stephen McNally

Deputy CEO, Dalata Hotel Group plc

In his unique and compelling manner, Alan O'Neill brings alive one of today's most provocative subjects for contemporary business leaders.

With retail in its most dire state in living memory and the unrelenting charge of the disruptors seeming to have many of the high streets stalwarts on their knees, many have at long last started to realise that this fierce battle for the customer might well mean the death of many of the losers.

Alan convinces all businesses that they are as 'unique as their fingerprints', but treat their customers just like everyone else. Anyone can copy your strategy but no one can copy your culture - its high time you mobilised and energised these points of difference through the customer experience.

Rene Carayol, MBE

International Keynote Speaker, Author and Leadership Guru

Change Management and Customer Experience are two very relevant topics in today's world. Every single client of ours is going through change at some level – some more disruptive than others. Within that change, more and more organisations have come to realize that whatever change they make, they must put 'customer' at the heart of that.

'Customer Experience' is indeed the new battleground and differentiator in this digital world. As a highly experienced Change Agent and Speaker, Alan inspires and challenges audiences with his practical business models and stories. The Selfridges Story is just one that brings all of the concepts to life and resonates with businesses of all types, B2B and B2C.

Cosimo Turroturo

Managing Director, Speaker Associates

Alan is one of the most brilliant minds in department store retailing today. Before engaging him for Rustan's for a short-term project, I heard nothing but good things on the work he did for Selfridges. I was impressed by the breadth and depth of his knowledge on two critical areas: company culture and the customer experience.

I have learned from Alan, that even in this digital era the secret sauce of an organization is people – and stretching it further, relationships. The quality of the experience we deliver, and resilience in this turbulent age is 100% dependent on the quality of our RELATIONSHIPS.

Alan said it simplifies to two things that need to be holistically and deeply understood and harnessed not only functionally but also creatively: TALENT and TECHNOLOGY. Alan has this rare skill of helping businesses like ours continue to focus on our very basic purpose of firstly winning loyalty of our employees and then our customers. It's still about sincerely and authentically winning and retaining hearts and minds; even in this age of AI, big data, crypto currency, block chain, and other game changing disruptions.

Alan has useful insights on how to disrupt yourself but in a way that has clarity, that is still true to your dna, and at the end of the day is still about people. Alan presented at a number of events for us and our industry colleagues in Manila where we picked his brains and connected with his wisdom and passion. That was fascinating and enlightening. I can't wait to have him back.

Donnie Tantoco

President, Rustan Commercial Corporation (Philippines)

Change and disruption are the new norms in business today. More and more of our clients are coping with that by staying focused on their customer. Customers are changing too and their expectations continue to grow. That applies to digital and traditional channels.

In his talks, Alan brings us back to basics and challenges us all to refresh our thinking, putting customer experience at the heart of our decision-making.

We have worked with Alan countless times as a speaker and our clients continue to be inspired by his practical tips and stories.

Nick Gold

Managing Director, Speakers Corner

We put it up to Alan to deliver a keynote that would really help our members be more professional. He was excellent and we now want to roll it out to the rest of our members.

Director, VFI

What impressed me about Alan was how much he knew about the estate agency business and how tailored the presentation was to our needs.

Director, Sherry Fitzgerald

Alan delivered Supercharge your Sales to our full management team. He challenged us to re-look at ourselves in a very different light and we needed that.

Commercial Director, Gleneagle Hotel Group

Alan is very commercial and gave practical, sound advice that truly inspired and motivated our people.

CEO, Dubai Refreshments

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CEO, Financial Services, UK

We in the motor industry believe that we can learn a lot from the world of retail. Alan made that clear.

SVP, Mercedes

As a public service institution, Customer Service is a priority for us. Alan inspired us with his commercial stories and showed how they'd work for us too.

HR Director, ECHA

We greatly admire the Selfridges brand and wanted to hear the success story firsthand.

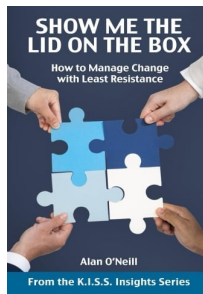
CEO Retail, Russia

With no fluff, Alan made efforts to get to know us. That's what made our partnership work.

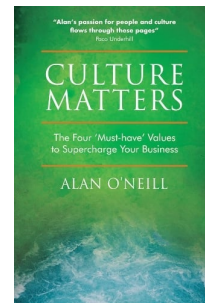
VP Europe, Software Localisation, EMEA

ALAN'S LATEST BOOKS

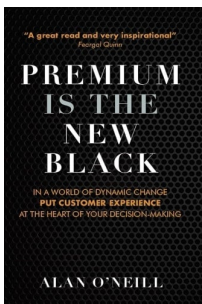
The Leader's Six-Pack: How to Balance Grit and Grace



Show Me the Lid on the Box: How to Manage Change with Least Resistance



Culture Matters: The Four 'Must-have' Values to Supercharge Your Business



Premium Is the New Black: In a World of Dynamic Change Put Customer Experience at the Heart of Your Decision-Making

ARTICLES AND PODCASTS



[From Resistance to Results: Alan O'Neill's Change Management Journey](#)

Dr Alan O'Neill's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

	EUR	GBP	USD
Home Country	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
Asia Pacific	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
Europe	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
Middle East & Africa	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
South America	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
United Kingdom	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
US East Coast	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
US West Coast	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
Virtual	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire