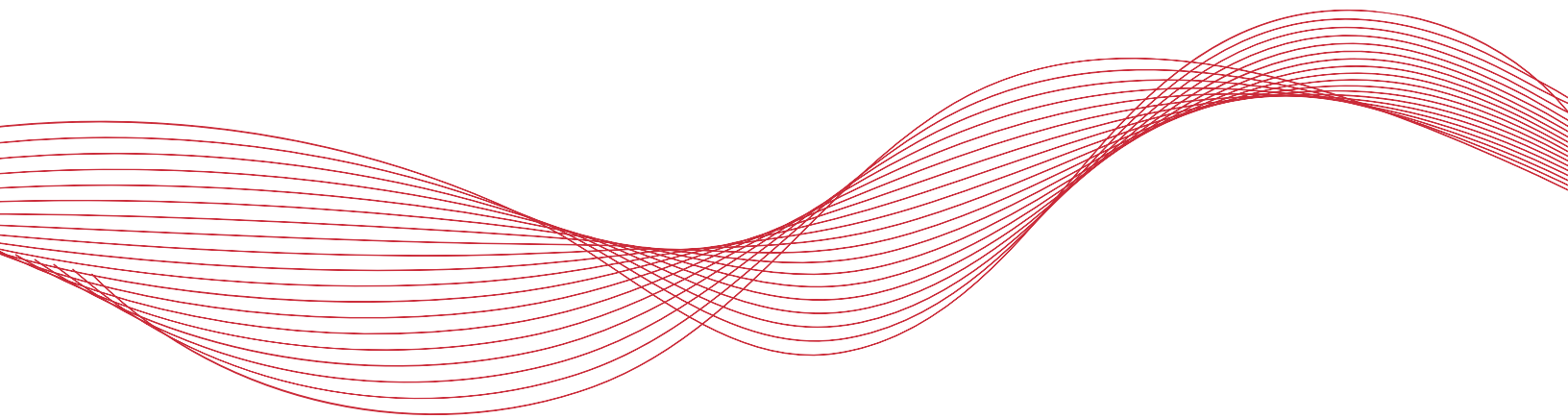


N. Costi

The No Policy, Policy

WITH GUI COSTIN

**Evolve Podcast: Reinventing Leadership –
Building Freedom Cultures**



The No Policy, Policy

In this thoughtful episode of *Evolve: Reinventing Leadership, Building Freedom Cultures*, Gui Costin, founder and CEO of Dakota, joins host Yvette Bethel to explore the philosophy behind his “no-policy policy” and how building a trust-based, adult-centric culture can transform the workplace. Known for reshaping sales and leadership in finance, Gui shares how his people-first mindset has helped him build two multi-million-dollar companies while rejecting traditional management structures.

Gui explains that the shift began in 2011 with the formalization of The Dakota Way, a highly structured but non-bureaucratic system rooted in trust, personal accountability, and clarity of purpose. Instead of controlling behavior through detailed rules, Dakota operates with clear expectations, player-coach team leads, and no middle management. Employees are trusted to manage their time and responsibilities like adults—with no vacation or T&E policies—while aligning around a core set of principles.

Contrary to assumptions, this freedom-driven approach doesn't lack structure. Dakota implements detailed onboarding, regular check-ins, and high standards of performance, all supported by intentional communication tools like Slack. Gui emphasizes that a flat, trust-based culture allows people to operate at their highest level and eliminates the internal friction often found in hierarchical organizations.

Trust, according to Gui, is both given and earned. Leaders build it by modeling consistency, integrity, and emotional intelligence—reading the room, listening actively, and expressing gratitude. At Dakota, career growth isn't tied to managing others, but to delivering results and driving meaningful projects forward.

The conversation also explores how AI is accelerating expectations for output and making it even more important to empower people who can adapt and execute quickly. Gui discusses how Dakota has leveraged tools like ChatGPT to augment thinking and speed up problem-solving—part of his broader view on evolving leadership and avoiding stagnation.

For leaders considering a similar cultural shift, Gui advises starting by clearly defining your company's core principles and expectations, then creating mechanisms for employees to report progress with transparency. He believes a high-trust environment, anchored in kindness and clarity, doesn't mean lowering standards—it means enabling people to thrive without unnecessary control.

Gui's appearance on *Evolve* offers a compelling vision of modern leadership—one where trust, structure, and speed coexist to build businesses that are not only high-performing but deeply human.

