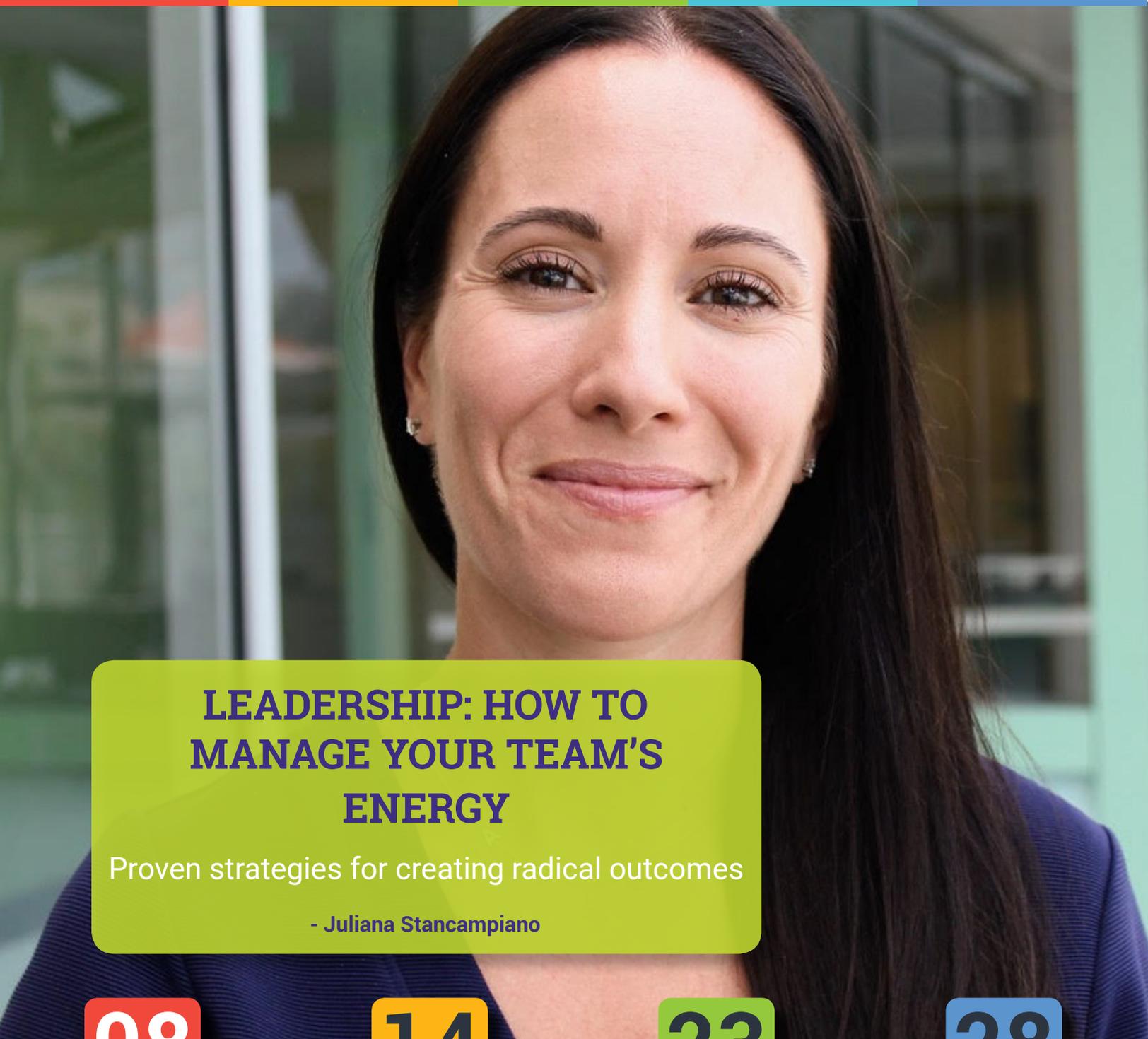


Leadership Excellence



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EDITOR'S NOTE

LEAD2019 is here!

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In today's environment, where organizations are complex, change is rapid, and customer needs are shifting, there is one element without which an extraordinary team will fall apart. That element is leadership. The feeling that your leader has your back, motivates you to a great extent. It is the role of the leader to create a sense of "psychological safety" for everyone on the team. One of the most important ways that a leader can create an environment in which everyone feels safe, is to manage the team's "energy." To know more about how effective leaders manage energy across a team, read Juliana Stancampiano's article, **Leadership: How To Manage Your Team's Energy.**

Can you be a leader and have followers without having a formal title or team? Becoming a leader when you have no team or individuals to manage is possible and if a formal leadership position is something you aspire to, then it's a necessity to develop leadership skills and inspire a following. What are the skills you should focus on developing? To know that and more, read Caroline Dunk's article, **How To Be A Successful Leader.**

Clarity is a huge issue in business. If you want to be a great leader, having clarity throughout the system is essential. Evan Hackel, in his article, **Let's Focus On Clarity In 2019**, suggests that focusing on clarity will produce more beneficial results than any other resolution you make for 2019.

The call for more women in leadership roles has grown from a whisper to a roar... and for good reason. Greater profitability and shareholder returns are increasingly linked to diversity at the top. So are improved decision making and

agility in adapting to the volatile global marketplace. In helping major organizations develop their female talent for over 25 years, **Rosina L. Racioppi** has pinpointed three cornerstones that turn corporate good intentions into measurable results. Read her article, **3 Cornerstones For Developing Successful Female Leaders**, for more insights.

This is just a sneak peek into what we have in this edition of Leadership Excellence. We hope you enjoy reading all articles and look forward to hearing from you!

Last but not least, we believe that there is no better way to connect with people than by sharing your leadership story. If you have one, send it to us and don't forget to mail us your feedback.

Happy Reading!

Write to the Editor at
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Debbie McGrath
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Babitha Balakrishnan
Editor, Leadership Excellence

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Leadership: How To Manage Your Team's Energy

Proven strategies for creating radical outcomes

 By [Juliana Stancampiano](#)

What does it take to move a team from being ordinary to extraordinary, to perform at the highest levels? We have found that in today's environment, where organizations are complex, change is rapid, and customer needs are shifting, there is one element without which an extraordinary team will fall apart. That element is leadership.

Leaders Create a Sense of Psychological Safety

When we think about leadership, we don't necessarily think of it in hierarchical terms. Nor do we not advocate the idea that leadership is synonymous with power, authority, or fear-based manipulation such as bullying, controlling, or shaming.

Instead, we believe that it is the role of the leader to create a sense of "psychological safety" for everyone on the team. This

has been proven by several recent research projects, including those carried out by Google's People Analytics group. They found that while all high performing teams share attributes such as feeling that their work is important, personally meaningful, with clear goals, the most important attribute is "psychological safety," a term coined by Amy Edmondson in her dissertation on organizational behavior at Harvard. To us, the term psychological safety is simply: feeling that your leader has your back.

Leaders Manage Team Energy

One of the most important ways that a leader can create an environment in which everyone feels safe, is to manage the team's "energy." In many business situations, there are peaks and valleys of work. When people

know that they are going to have to push really hard at some times and less so at other times, they can be prepared to expend different amounts of physical and mental energy. And as individuals, different people carry different types and amounts of energy, which can affect the dynamics of the entire group.

An effective leader manages a team's energy across different settings: within a team, one on one, and across the process. Because there is no one formula for energy management, the leader needs to navigate each of those settings and provide different aspects of trust or psychological safety as needed.

Therefore, an effective leader sets up environments where people can show up, share their thoughts, disagree with something, or offer a different point of view and be



heard. The leader or manager is there to deescalate energy when it rises, or allow it to get intense if it's needed – and always brings it back to a place of productivity. This is important if you don't want your people to burn out, but instead, maintain a consistently high rate of quality outputs and high outcomes. Think of it as related to exercise. If you decide on an hour-long workout but give 100% of your energy at the beginning of the workout, you might have trouble finishing. But if you manage the major exertions of energy, and take time to rest in between intervals, then it's much more likely you'll maintain a good output level where you don't want

to quit. With teams at work, it's the same type of management.

Strategies for Managing Energy Across the Team

Effective leaders manage energy across a team by doing the following:

They model the behaviors and the interpersonal code of conduct that is expected of the team. They set clear codes of conduct – “this is how we act” and “this is how we don't act” – and then they do just that. Great leaders do not declare one thing as valued but then act against it. The consistency of their actions greatly influences how the team shows up, and how

much management the leader is required to do.

They provide clear, positive, specific guidance and context. Leaders must constantly reinforce the outcomes and goals for the group. They are responsible for articulating the WHY behind an initiative, and also connecting it to reality for the team. They set the context and expectations for how people will work together.

Effective leaders figure out stuff with people, versus for them. They bring the team together and do the work together, asking questions, making suggestions, listening to others, and in order

to come up with solutions that will best serve the outcome. By modeling this behavior, it will continue when the leader is not there.

The best leaders show respect and discretion for each team member. When talking to one team member, they never blame or talk poorly about another team member. Instead, they remain calm, listen, evaluate and reflect on what they have been told. They weigh it against the values or code of conduct, then make a decision in accordance with the code of conduct. And then they keep moving forward.

One-on-One Energy Management

Great leaders must also keep the energy intensity at a level that works across all individuals of the team. It's invisible work in many ways, and crucial to the maintaining productivity. They do this by:

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals on the team, and by connecting an individual's strengths with his or her core responsibilities. They don't put people in a position where their weaknesses will be detrimental to the outcome.

Providing care for the team members who need it. If a team member has a personal issue, the leader helps with that as well. For example, if someone is stressed about a situation, the leader helps find a solution and brings the intensity of the individual's energy back to something that

is more even. The problem is solved together, so that the team member returns to a productive mindset.

An effective leader manages a team's energy across different settings: within a team, one on one, and across the process. Because there is no one formula.

Energy Management Across The Process

Energy management is also reliant on having a process that people know. Process is incredibly important. Unfortunately, we've seen many an over-engineered process – meaning that people attempted to predict and prescribe so many details and actions that the process became more paralyzing than it was helpful. As one leader we interviewed said, "You have to have enough structure in the process to manage it, but enough flexibility to do what makes sense."

Leaders Must Be Self-Aware

All of these leadership behaviors require awareness of the Self. If you have an issue or a personal demon that causes you to lose your cool in front of a team, or lash out, you need to understand where that comes from, and deal with it. Leaders don't get to drop the ball on these types of things – they always have to show up, even on the bad days. Sometimes this can be incredibly difficult – but it's part of what it truly means to be a leader.

...



Juliana Stancampiano, the author of *RADICAL OUTCOMES*, is an entrepreneur and the CEO of Oxygen. For more than fifteen years, she has worked with Fortune 500 companies, both in them and for them. Her firm's clients include Microsoft, DXC, Delta Dental (of WA), Starbucks, F5 Networks, Avaya, and Western Digital, among others. Her in-depth experience, along with the research that Oxygen conducts and the articles she has published, has helped to shape the perspective that Oxygen embraces.



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Submit Your Articles

Let's Focus On Clarity In 2019

| Top strategies to follow



 By [Evan Hackel](#)

Clarity is a huge issue in business. If you want to be a great leader, having clarity throughout the system is essential. So as we enter the New Year, I would like to suggest that focusing on clarity will produce more beneficial results than any other resolution you make for 2019.

Strategy One: Make Your First Communications About Projects and Priorities More Clear

As leaders, we tend to make assumptions that people understand things that they don't. Because we are always working at such a fast pace, we don't stop to make sure our initial instructions about projects and priorities are

clear. It is almost as though we expect people to be able to read our minds.

One critical step is to be sure that people understand the jargon we are using. And to do that, it is not effective to simply say, "Do you understand this?" Most people do not want to appear uninformed or unintelligent and they tend to

say, "I've got it!" So as you give instructions, take a little extra time to ask open-ended questions and allow people to validate what they know.

Another important step is to welcome questions, both when you are first explaining things and later on down the road. In your attitude and approach, make it clear that you are not going to reprimand people if you need to explain further. Remember that being asked to explain is an opportunity, not an imposition.

Strategy Two: Make Sure Your Emails Are Crystal-Clear Before You Send Them

As leaders, we are all rushed, and many of us have the tendency

As leaders, we tend to make assumptions that people understand things that they don't. Because we are always working at such a fast pace, we don't stop to make sure our initial instructions about projects and priorities are clear.

to unload a lot of information into our emails, expecting the recipients to sort out what they are supposed to do. If you can slow down and invest only a few minutes creating clearer emails, you will save a lot of time and frustration later on.

One effective way is to shift to using more bullet points in your emails to make it easier for people to find your key concepts.

Another critical step is to differentiate between the people who need to take action based on your email and the people who should read it only for informational purposes. I can't tell you how many times I have sent an email to six people and later learned that everyone assumed, "Someone else is going to handle this." One effective tool is to put the people who should take action on the "To" line of your email, and the "need to know" people on the CC line.

It is also important to set out clear expectations in the body of your email by saying, "Bill, I expect this by such-and-such a date," to make it really clear.

Strategy Three: Use Deadlines as a Clarifying Tool

Deadlines, which most people dislike, are actually great tools to increase clarity and improve results.

I recommend asking people to create their own timelines and deadlines for getting things done, and then to share them with you. As a leader, you can review

that information and use it to both understand whether work is on track and to coordinate what different people on a team are doing.

Deadlines are also useful indicators of whether or not you have created clarity. If you delegate work and someone submits a deadline for his or her work that is not near enough, that serves as a good indication that you have not been clear enough about expectations.

Let's Make Things Clearer in 2019

The more you can create clarity, the more effective your business will become. Remember that the people you lead might be spending too much time on the wrong priorities. And clarity is the cure.



Evan Hackel is a 35-year franchising veteran as both a franchisor and franchisee. He is CEO of [Tortal Training](#), a leading training development company in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Principal and Founder of [Ingage Consulting](#) in Woburn, Massachusetts. Evan is the host of Training Unleashed and author of *Engaging Leadership*.



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The experience and dialogue provided learning opportunities for me, content to reflect on to enhance my leadership impact, and an array of opportunities to practice in session as well as in my professional and personal life.

Lamont Gilbert, Leadership & Executive Development Consultant - CSAA Insurance Group

From speakers to flow to timing to subject matter, I was engaged each moment. And the cherry on top was the opportunity to network with people from across the globe. This conference was definitely worth the investment!

Belinda S. Han, MA, Director - THE CENTER for the ADVANCEMENT of LEADERSHIP



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How To Be A Successful Leader

Being a leader is not about having authority over others, it is about inspiring them

By **Caroline Dunk**

By definition, a leader needs followers but there is nothing to say that these followers need to be people that are directly managed by you. Being a leader is not about having *authority* over others, it is about *inspiring* others through your actions, beliefs and values to deliver results, to achieve personal development goals, to continually improve how they work, to build better relationships with colleagues and customers, to want to give something of themselves to help others.

Leadership is a behaviour and behaviours can be demonstrated by anyone - no matter what role you do, no matter how many people report to you, even if no-one reports to you at all.

It just takes practise and awareness. Has anyone asked for your opinion or advice lately and then acted upon it? Are you the person in the office that people

come to when they are trying to solve a difficult problem? If the answer is yes, then you may already have a following of people whom you inspire and influence – you are a leader.

The responsibility you have as a leader without having formal direct reports is perhaps greater than that of a leader with them. There is a sense of obligation from a team or direct reports to their leader, finding themselves having to do things they may not agree with but just have to do as a fact of life in business. But when your followers *chose* to follow you, when you are a leader because your actions inspire action in others, then your power is much greater. If [you can develop leadership skills](#) that influence wider than your team alone, you can achieve much greater things. People will *want* to follow you, they will *choose* to do things

rather than do them because they *have* to.

Becoming a leader when you have no team or individuals to manage is possible and if a formal leadership position is something you aspire to, then it's a necessity to develop leadership skills and inspire a following.

What Are the Leadership Skills You Should Focus on Developing?

Building relationships – Take the time to listen and understand – what motivates people, what are their challenges, why do they do the job they do, what would make their role more enjoyable or easier? By understanding people's motivations and goals, you will be better able to influence them.

Seeking to understand, not solve – Great leaders rarely provide the answers, instead they ask the questions that enable the person seeking support to find the answers themselves.

Demonstrating emotional intelligence – We’ve all been there; something has happened, we have seen red and before we know it our overreaction to the event leaves others wondering what they have missed. Controlling emotions and choosing how to react to events is crucial to leading others – the people who follow us, follow us because they value our opinions and our way of doing things – more often than not this is because it matches with their own opinions, values and ways of doing things.

Losing your cool could do long term damage to how others see you as they are expecting consistency from you. That is not to say you should be happy and positive all the time, that’s simply not possible. What you can do is learn how to control your reactions to any difficult situation in a way that delivers a positive outcome and does not damage your leadership brand.

Living your leadership brand – to the point above, you may not think you have a leadership brand but if you have followers, I can assure you that if asked, they would have something to say about you. What they have to say about you is your **‘given’** Leadership Brand.

Understanding your “given” leadership brand and how aligned it is to what you want your **‘owned’** leadership brand to be can give you valuable insight into what you’re doing right and what you need to do differently.

Your ‘owned’ leadership brand is who you *want* to be, it is what you *want* to be known for – it is about you taking control of what people say about you when you are not in the room. If you don’t have an ‘owned’ personal leadership brand, it is worth dedicating some time to developing who you want to be as a leader and then act in accordance with it - to both further develop your following and to protect your brand.

If the idea of an ‘owned’ leadership brand is new to you, here are some things you might want to consider doing to build one:

Define your ‘owned’ leadership brand – Write down words you would want people to say about you and your brand. Consider what it is you want to be known for. Combine the two into a short paragraph that defines who you are as a leader

Seek feedback – Ask your followers what words they would use to describe you and then consider how close those words are to the ones you would want people to use about you.

Adapt behaviour – If your feedback closely matches your ‘owned’ brand, think about the behaviours you demonstrate to achieve that and how you can continue to demonstrate them or even improve on them. If there is a wide gap between the feedback and your ‘owned’ brand, think carefully about what you are doing that is resulting in your ‘given’

brand and take action to change in accordance with your ‘owned’ brand.

Taking the time to understand who you are as a leader and who you want to be is critical for any leader, but if you are looking to lead without the title or position, then it becomes a necessity because if you can’t answer the question “Why should I follow you?” then how can you expect anyone else to?

So you *can* be a leader and have followers without having a formal title or team; by developing leadership skills and a leadership brand.



Caroline Dunk is a Director with cda, a specialist consultancy firm which advises organisations on how to deliver improvements in business performance through people. She has led the development talent management and succession planning strategy and process for large corporates and has a particular interest in identifying early-career leadership potential. She also advises clients on delivering an outstanding customer experience, successful culture change, leadership development and implementing effective team structures.



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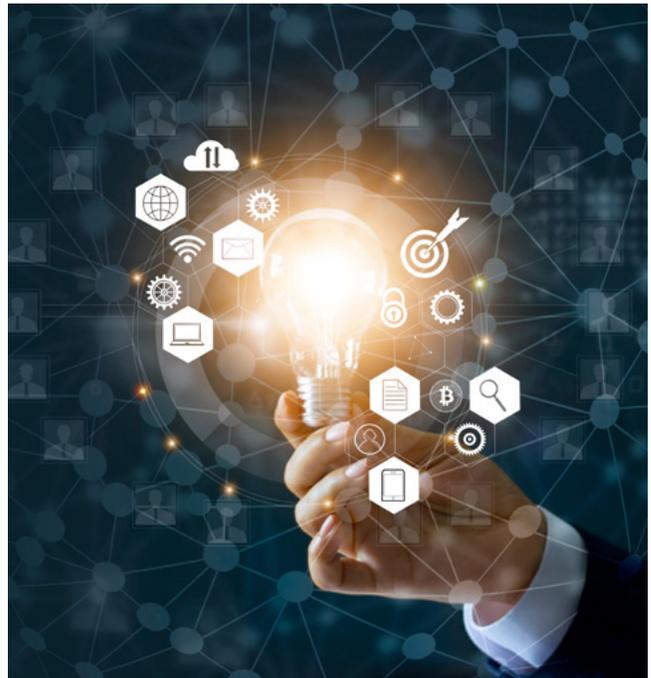
10 tips for converting possibilities into opportunities

By **Murad Salman Mirza**

Leadership at the helm of progressive organizations is becoming increasingly difficult with the lure of efficiency-driven technology, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), significantly impacting the corporate landscape. Innovation is being seen as the key to relevance and survival in the Digital age, rather than, as an afterthought for assuring business competitiveness. The rules for running successful enterprises are being rewritten as old theories and established practices consistently fail to justify the rise of ambitious startups in dismantling the titans of industry. Consequently, corporate concerns are frantically searching for the elixir to attain/sustain leadership excellence for the Digital age to ensure that promising possibilities are converted into gainful opportunities in a timely and effective manner. Following are 10 tips for moving purposefully and robustly in the respective direction.

Tip # 1 **Being a Visionary Isn't Enough; Be a Futurist**

During the early part of the 21st Century, Nokia was a dominant player in the cellular market. It led in innovation and introduced many iconic models, including, the legendary Nokia 3310. However, the senior management couldn't foresee the untapped potential of a platform-based hand-held device that could derail its status of being the world-leader in cellular technology. This was amply exploited by



Apple through the introduction of the iPhone. Nokia tried to mount a challenge by introducing more models that catered to the varying tastes of current and potential customers; however, it kept ignoring the broader ecosystem of Digital communication that invalidated its rebounding initiatives.

Eventually, Nokia was sold to Microsoft by the then CEO, Stephen Elop, who uttered the insightful remarks through tears 'we didn't do anything wrong,

but somehow, we lost', at the press conference for announcing the respective acquisition. The pace of Digital revolution is unsettling, unforgiving and unrelenting. Nokia achieved the vision of being the global leader, however, it couldn't capitalize on the future of Digital communication due to its excessive inward focus, instead, of embracing the vast openness of an evolving ecosystem that opened wider horizons for its competitors to tickle the imagination of customers in freeing themselves from the shackles of loyalty and reorient their lives around the new normal. Being a futurist is not an option for visionary leaders in the Digital age; rather, it is an indispensable skill that needs to be actively and prominently cultivated throughout the pipeline of succession planning initiatives.

Tip # 2 **Invest in 'Open' and 'Flexible' Talent Management Systems that Allow 'Breathing Space' for 'Free Thinkers' and 'Trendsetters'**

Conventional talent management systems are designed to be directional, disciplinary and dedicated. However, the Digital age mandates timely and astute innovation which requires the magnanimity of enterprising experimentation that beckons 'trendsetters' and 'free-thinkers' who are allowed to stretch the boundaries of 'acceptable norms' in converting possibilities into opportunities. These professionals generally have the capability of staying committed through nagging struggles, possess the steady focus during sleepless nights of self-reflection and frequently display uncompromising valor in neutralizing the fear of failure in order to achieve desired goals.

Some progressive organizations have developed separate functional entities to accommodate such initiatives that are not aligned with the customary running of the organization. This will become more prevalent as AI-enabled machines/devices/life-forms become part of the workforce by graduating to an 'electronic team member' role from a primarily 'mechanistic assistant' in current applications and incentivize their human counterparts to engage in more cerebral roles in order to justify/maintain their relevance.

Tip #3 **Be Welcoming of the Increasingly 'Sensitized' and 'Connected' World**

The world has been steadily shrinking in terms of rapid communication, knowledge-transfer and wide connectivity. Every internet-savvy person has a stake in the global context due to the extensive diffusion that has brought relevance to isolated/marginalized communities and opened organizations to the glaring spotlight of corporate accountability from multiple perspectives. One of the Big Three Airlines in the USA, i.e., United Airlines, learnt this the hard way when a musician's guitar was broken on one of its flights during baggage handling and he was consistently refused compensation despite repeated requests. Consequently, he channeled his talents into making an engaging video 'United Breaks Guitars', which garnered a huge following on YouTube and forced United Airlines to issue an apology with an offer of compensation while suffering a significant blow to its corporate reputation, stock price and customer goodwill.

Concerns for the environment and social imbalances have added extra dimensions for competitive organizations to proactively engage in remedial measures before irreparable harm to increasingly fragile reputations. The term 'activist' has shifted from its rudimentary contemplation as an act of defiance pertaining to societal upheaval to a more apt description of an 'engaged' stakeholder. Therefore, organizations with an eye on thriving in the future are well-advised to heed the adage 'someone is always watching' and proactively embrace the consequences of their actions in a more accommodating and responsible manner.

Tip #4 **Don't Undermine Innovation with Technology by Marginalizing the 'Human Factor'**

Technology is highly addictive due to the promise of problem-solving and comfort, especially, when aligned with customer needs and expectations. However, within the corporate realm, a key mistake committed in the exuberance of adopting and adapting to technology is the neglecting of innovation or simply

tying it with technology for meaning the same thing. This marginalizes the 'human factor' that defines the soul of an organization and forms the essential vanguard of its competitiveness.

Quite often, organizations go through binge-spending on promising technologies with the hope of improving operations, however, without proper due-diligence, this generally results in regrettable situations, e.g., expensive investments that are not needed, multiple technologies that do not integrate with each other, depreciation of workforce's inherent ingenuity, plausibility of cheaper solutions, etc.

Innovation is a cardinal 'humanistic' concept that refers to the astute application of human ingenuity, whereas, technology is a consequential 'mechanistic' tool that enables the efficient accomplishment of targeted tasks/assignments/responsibilities. Keeping the 'human factor' in prime position while charting the course of a prosperous future in the Digital age ensures internal harmonization in congruence with the optimal technological solutions.



Tip #5
Ingrain 'Diversity & Inclusion' as a Core Part of the Organizational Culture and Instill Confidence Boosting Measures (CBMs) to Drive Fear Out of the Workplace

Consistently progressive, suitably paced and reliably profitable growth in the Digital age is increasingly

dependent upon the richness of the Diversity & Inclusion factor in the corporate domain. Different perspectives that open and widen horizons into achieving formidable competitiveness in appealing and catering to customer needs and expectations from diverse backgrounds are crucially dependent upon the liberation of the workplace from regressive fear-driven practices. Critical attention to employee well-being is essential to ensuring that Diversity & Inclusion initiatives don't fade away under the deceptive lights of glamorous Employer Branding initiatives which are big on touting Diversity, but, failing miserably on Inclusion.

The foundations of inclusiveness at the workplace are primarily strengthened by the 'informal' social engagements and 'voluntary' bonding between diverse employees, rather than, as a consequence of the refinement of the 'formal' talent management strategies and measures. For example, see the 'natural' composition of the lunch tables in the office cafeterias and/or the coalescing of 'affinity' groupings in the corporate leisure rooms to realize the level of redeeming success or the enormity of inherent challenges.

A receptive organizational culture buoyed by 'core values' and complemented by astute talent management strategies can go a long way in benefiting from the 'simmering' talent, often unnoticed in organizations, for achieving/sustaining a competitive edge in countless ways while ensuring a reign of unabated positivity in the workplace that incentivizes a sense of belonging and engagement for those yearning to unleash their unexplored potential.

Tip #6
Make Sure that Succession Planning and Management Is Impartial and Transparent

Demands and criteria for leadership are changing for the Digital age, especially, with the presence of a multi-generational and diverse workforce which is increasingly faced with the prospect of becoming redundant/marginalized in the face of technology powered by AI. Established leadership theories and vibrant management practices of the past are being relentlessly tested in an era where profitability

is no longer a guarantee of sustainability and huge conglomerates are constantly looking over their shoulders with nervous anticipation of becoming irrelevant from ambitious startups.

Additionally, an increasingly significant requirement for tomorrow's leaders is the penchant for service that goes beyond the professional demands of the assigned function and opens horizons for permeation of altruistic thought and meaningful contributions to the wider goal of ensuring a harmonious existence within the global community for mitigating/eliminating the chance of a misstep that might jeopardize the organization's future in an increasingly 'sensitized' and 'connected' world. Consequently, talent pipelines and succession processes have to be squeaky clean and void of any controversies to dissuade disheartened/disillusioned potential successors from seeking their career advancement elsewhere. The future of progressive organizations in the Digital age, more than ever, hinges upon corporate leaders assuming the mantle of enlightened statesmanship, rather than, clinging to the prevalent status-quo of regressive politicking.

Tip #7 Cultivate High-Commitment Employees (HICOs), Rather than, High-Potential Employees (HIPOs)

The HIPO approach, extrinsically-driven assessment, is a more refined form of the dreaded 'Normal Distribution Curve (Bell Curve)', conveniently used to weed out the lowest performers within the talent pipelines, that has been frequently attributed to eroding the morale of diligent employees and incentivizing the 'cannibalization' of 'Peer Careers' to secure sanctuaries within the 'safer' zones of the respective talent mapping technique.

Additionally, the 'privileged care' associated with maintaining a healthy number of HIPOs is profoundly taxing on the organizational culture and is widely seen as a latent way to reward 'Conformist' behaviors which hinder the 'Dissentient' nature required to boost innovation for staying relevant in a Digital world. It is more prudent to cultivate [HICOs](#), intrinsically-driven employees, who are inherently engaged and very hard to poach by opportunistic competitors. This leads

to a more 'wholesome', 'inclusive' and 'risk-mitigated' application of a truly effective talent management system for strengthening the functional foundations of a progressive organization against the vagaries of Digital disruptions.

Tip #8 Inculcate Mentorship as a Mandatory Element of Senior Management's Performance Appraisal

The significance of having a good mentor cannot be overstated for blossoming talent as it lays the solid groundwork needed for keeping 'potential successors' focused and galvanized towards maximizing their value-addition for the organization while carving an admirable career for themselves. However, few organizations invest in formally engaging such relationships and are normally inclined to providing counseling services through the HR function. This results in the profound loss of a golden opportunity to create strong bonds between the various hierarchical levels which inevitably manifests in a number of undesirable ways, e.g., communication gaps, failure of psychological contracts, high attrition rates, poor employer brand, lower morale, unsatisfactory working conditions, stagnated career progression, underutilization of talent, etc.

Therefore, it is imperative that senior management should be mobilized for the mentor-mentee network and the level of success in such initiatives gauged as an essential element of their performance appraisal. This will strengthen the overall talent management system in multiple ways, e.g., robust talent pipelines; less need for rigorous training & development, boost to employee engagement, voluntary ambassadors for attracting additional talent, minimal defections to ravenous competitors, increased level of readiness to embrace leadership challenges, etc.

Tip #9 Convert 'Aspirational' Employee Engagement into 'Inspirational' Employee Engagement

Most progressive organizations tend to start 'requiring' employee engagement, rather than, expecting it as a natural offshoot of an enterprising culture based upon robust values. This has the

downside of becoming a job specification which brings 'shrewd actors' into play who are enticed by the incentive-driven external motivation of gaining associated rewards and recognition. Consequently, the 'glamorization' of employee engagement often eclipses the 'voluntary initiatives' of the 'truly engaged' employees who are driven by the primary intrinsic motivation of 'doing good' as an affirmation of their exemplary professionalism.

Therefore, an inspiration-based approach is generally a more enduring option than an aspiration-based approach for assuring '[Sustainable Employee Engagement](#)' due to a more refined and durable way of leveraging the synergies between luminous foresight, astute decisiveness, coalescing culture, invigorating work environment, unambiguous empowerment, seamless compliance, timely execution, impartial self-reflection and the undeterred resilience to ensure effective remedial measures.

Tip #10 Befriend 'Failures' for Learning and Embrace 'Successes' with Caution

Organizations that have the humility and astuteness to learn well from their missteps are the ones with the foresight for maximizing the probability of success. A few years back, the trusted business model of software licensing was stagnating at Microsoft as Apple and Amazon made significant strides in cloud computing and mobile devices to embrace the emerging trends of the Digital age. However, Microsoft was able to self-reflect upon the changes that were needed to become relevant again and took the necessary steps, including, bringing in a new CEO with an extensive background in cloud computing. Now, it is again at the vanguard of current and emerging technologies, including, strategic investments in AI-enabled products and services.

Profound insights can also be gained from the meteoric ascents and spiraling descents of industry titans who customarily pose as the narcissistic prophets of success, yet, become embroiled in nagging controversies and are eventually unceremoniously relegated to corporate wilderness, e.g., Enron, WorldCom, Swissair, Bear Stearns, etc. The

prudent practice of a timely, meticulous and honest introspective organizational review backed by robust corrective/preventive actions has firmly evolved into a survival imperative in a Digital world that does not pay heed to tradition, sheds conventional thinking, seeks seamless gratification, pledges loyalty to technological innovation and punishes complacency with extinction.

Food for Thought

The aforementioned tips have been provided to open an insightful window into the verdant expanse of innovative thinking and astute application that refreshingly caters to the two critical competencies needed for organizations/professionals to stay relevant in the ubiquitous Digital future, i.e.:

1. Being comfortable with being uncomfortable

(refers to effectively embracing foreseeable changes/unanticipated scenarios/disruptive chaos)

2. Being uncomfortable with being comfortable

(refers to effectively overcoming intoxicating complacency from dominant market positions/stakeholder contentment/goal attainment)

Take a moment to step back from the daily grind and check your comfort level. Are you ready?



Murad Salman Mirza is an innovative thinker and an astute practitioner of areas within and associated with the fields of Organizational Development, Talent Management & Business Transformation. He is also a globally published author and an active contributor to various professional forums.



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Coach More, Manage Less

Career development discussions improve productivity and retention

By [Bill Eckstrom and Sarah Wirth](#)

As your team's manager, it's essential that you coach more, and manage less. That's the key to creating a highly productive working environment. One of the most important ways you can do this is to have annual meetings with each team member to review his or her career goals. Not only does this show that you are concerned about them as individuals, but it improves productivity and retention.

Here are some ways to make these discussions enjoyable and as effective as possible.

Determine the Length of Discussion

Since career discussions are typically held annually, don't be surprised if they last up to two hours. An important aspect of holding these discussions is getting to know your team members better, so trying to squeeze them into a short time period sends the wrong message.

Map Out Your Discussion

To help your team members identify their longer-term career goals, you need to ask specific questions that spark their imagination. Questions that make them think about their interests, their unique skills, and what they love about their work can help them identify developmental opportunities they may want to pursue.

We recommend career discussion questions that focus on three areas – overall goals and needs; current role goals and needs; and potential future roles. Here are some of the specific questions you can use:

- What are your passions and motivations?

- List your greatest talents and skills that should be utilized in your role.
- What is the most effective way for you to set goals? How can I assist you in setting them?
- What personal life goals do you wish to share?
- What do you get paid to do?
- Define success in your current role
- What specifically would you like to accomplish this next year?
- What skills do you need to develop that would allow you to achieve that goal?
- As you see things today, what are your professional aspirations?
- What other professional skills would you like to enhance or learn?

We recommend that you send your questions to your team members a few days in advance of your conversation. Ask them to write down their thoughts and share them with you before your discussion. This will help ensure you are prepared to respond effectively to the ideas and goals they express.

During the Discussion

Your role during the discussion is to ask your pre-planned questions, listen intently, then help your team member determine his or her goals. Ultimately, you want to help them create a short, specific career-development plan. The plan should identify at least one, but no more than three, priorities they'd like to pursue over the next year.

There is no certain format that the plan has to take. It can be as simple as just a few bullet points to outline their priorities and their follow-up actions. Some team

members may wish to create more elaborate plans. The ultimate purpose of the written plan is to make sure that you and your team member have a reference point to make sure progress is being made.

Once you have identified goals, you will need to offer specific ideas to pursue. Here are some suggestions:

Take part in a company task force or special team assignments— If your organization has created an internal task force or special team to tackle a specific challenge, have your team members who are interested in the issue volunteer to be part of the project.

Lead a team initiative—If your team is facing a specific challenge, don't feel like you always have to create the solution. Instead, assign a team member or a group of team members to explore the issue and create recommendations.

Attend external training courses—There are numerous training courses locally and online that your team members can take on topics of interest or to develop a specific skill set they need to advance in their career.

Read books or attend webinars—At times, taking an entire course isn't necessary, so instead consider having your team member read a book or attend a webinar.

Take part in an industry conference—Having the opportunity to interact and learn from other professionals in your industry can give your team members exposure to information and ideas they don't hear every day.

Become the team expert on a particular topic—Have your team member develop an in-depth, expert-level knowledge or skill set that's unique. The act of developing the skill or knowledge will help them grow, and it will also help the team overall.

Follow-up after the Discussion

It is important to clarify how often you and your team members will assess progress against their plans. These post-discussions give teeth to the coaching activity, so it's more than just a nice conversation.

Your one-to-one follow-up meetings don't have to be overly formal. Just review the plan with each team member. Ask about the actions they've taken in the last ninety days. Ask if they're running into any

challenges or roadblocks. Ask if there is anything more you can be doing to help them reach their goals.

The reason for doing this follow-up is to help hold your team members accountable for their career development. It's easy for day-to-day work to take precedence over longer-term skill and knowledge development. When your team members are busy, they may forget about the career-development work they have committed to do. Without you as an accountability partner, they're more likely to put it on the back burner.



Bill Eckstrom, co-author of *The Coaching Effect*, is the founder of EcSell Institute, a research-based organization that works with leaders internationally to help them better understand, measure, and elevate coaching's impact on performance. Bill was invited to the TEDx stage in 2017, and his talk "Why Comfort Will Ruin Your Life" was the fastest-growing TEDx Talk in the history of the event when it was released.



Sarah Wirth, co-author of *The Coaching Effect*, is Vice President of client services at EcSell Institute. She has twenty years of experience in employee assessment, leadership development, sales executive coaching, and customer service. She has advised executives from across the globe, consulting with such organizations as Mercedes-Benz, Estee Lauder, Ritz-Carlton, The Cheesecake Factory, and many more.



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3 Cornerstones For Developing Successful Female Leaders

What you need to know to
help them grow

 By **Rosina L. Racioppi**

The call for more women in leadership roles has grown from a whisper to a roar... and for good reason. Greater profitability and shareholder returns are increasingly linked to diversity at the top. So are improved decision making and agility in adapting to the volatile global marketplace.

In helping major organizations develop their female talent for over 25 years, I have pinpointed three cornerstones that turn corporate good intentions into measurable results.

1. Make Inclusiveness a Corporate Focus

Defining the advancement of women as a corporate focus, rather than a corporate strategy, is not just semantics. It ensures the development of female talent doesn't get buried in a sea of other corporate objectives. It signals an organizational commitment to inclusiveness and enhances organization-wide awareness. Forging a corporate focus on inclusiveness requires a number of specific action steps:

- Developing metrics that tell the full story of attracting, retaining and developing female talent
- Ensuring women move into career-advancing P&L roles, starting early in their careers

- Holding managers accountable for the advancement of female talent
- Paying attention to where women are absent AND getting them into those roles and on decision-making teams

2. Go Beyond Having Managers "Onboard"

How many times have we heard "our managers are onboard with inclusiveness?" Unfortunately, "onboard" signals actions that are too little and too vague. In a survey of over 5,000 women and their managers detailed in *Managers & Mentors: Their Vital Role in Advancing Female Talent*, we found that even in diversity-conscious companies:

- Managers, especially male managers, tend to believe the development and support of women is more robust than the women themselves believe.
- Managers do not provide the same specific developmental feedback to women as they do to men
- Managers are not offering women the stretch assignments that make them visible to organizational movers and shakers
- Many managers do not acknowledge their own unconscious bias and so can't move to a more inclusive perspective



In order for more women to reach leadership roles, managers at every level must be held accountable for addressing and changing these obstacles to career advancement.

3. Help Women Be in the Game to Win... and Start Early

Women themselves are obviously the ones most vested in advancing their careers. Often, however, they are the least involved or involved in the wrong ways.

As with marketing a successful product, women must establish their own brand (the special value they bring to organizational success) and then get the message out to the right people. It's not about volume or intensity of communicating. It's about the clarity of message, about women finding their authentic voice and using that voice to make their effectiveness known to those who matter.

Linking their talents to corporate goals is an ongoing challenge for women, often because they are trying to figure it out alone. Unlike their male counterparts, women usually do not actively, and early on, develop the mentors and the networks essential to navigating the corporate environment. It is critical for managers and organizations to provide women with the tools

and techniques for developing these relationships. Equally critical is for the women to then seek out and foster mentors and networks throughout their careers, making changes as needed and including both men and women.

Not a Quick Fix

Advancing women to the C-suite and beyond is a long game, requiring both obvious and subtle plays. It demands vigilance, accountability and corporate-wide commitment. Only then will companies start to have the women they need at the top.



As President and Chief Executive Officer of WOMEN Unlimited, Inc., **Rosina L. Racioppi** spearheads her organization's initiatives to help Fortune 1000 companies cultivate the talent they need for ongoing growth and profitability. Under her leadership, WOMEN Unlimited, Inc. successfully partners with organizations across a wide range of industries to develop their high-potential women and to build a pipeline of diverse and talented leaders.



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Conflict Resolution: Train Your Leaders First

| For a healthy workplace culture

 By **Eric Stutzman**

When it comes to having a healthy workplace culture, how leadership responds to conflict matters a great deal. It's good for organizations to provide some level of conflict resolution skills training to employees, but training leaders in this area should be the first priority when impacting workplace culture is the goal.

Have you ever noticed that when conflict resolution is done well, it often goes unrecognized, but that everyone is aware when conflict is handled poorly? Imagine a scenario where two coworkers are struggling to get along. It's uncomfortable because they talk about it with you and other coworkers. You know that your manager is aware of the situation, but they have not done anything to help. Now ask yourself how your manager's inaction will affect your workplace's culture.

We recently conducted a 2,400 person [survey](#) asking a series of questions related to workplace culture. First, we asked whether people agreed or disagreed that they had a great place to work. Then we asked them to respond to a series of questions, including several about conflict resolution. Some of what we discovered surprised us.

As expected, we saw a strong relationship between having a great place to work and a statement like, "People in my workplace deal with conflict constructively." The surprise came when we asked for responses to, "Leaders in my organization work to resolve conflict quickly." This statement had an even stronger relationship with whether people said they had a great workplace. We also noticed that people who said they had a poor workplace were much more likely to strongly disagree that their leaders dealt with conflict quickly.

While we've always known that conflict resolution impacts workplace culture, our research shows us just how important it is for *leaders* to deal with conflict in a timely manner. Based on what we've learned, we recommend making sure your leaders know how to deal with conflict quickly and effectively, rather than starting with general conflict resolution skills training for everyone – especially if you have a limited professional development budget.

I've been mediating workplace related conflict for nearly 20 years now, and I do not believe that leaders need to be conflict resolution specialists in order to respond to conflict quickly. Instead they need a few simple tools, the resolve to give priority to the relationships in their workplaces, and to reshape the way they see their role in conflict resolution.

One Key to Reimagining the Leader's Role in Conflict Resolution

When an employee goes to a leader with a complaint about a co-worker, they usually expect their leader to fix it for them, and the leader often feels it is their role to be the “hero” and ride to their rescue. However, this approach rarely brings positive long-term results. If a leader buys into the story of the person that asked for help, they may unwittingly begin to see them as a disempowered victim, and the other person as a guilty villain who needs to be brought into line.

While these dramatic roles tell us how to behave, they also oversimplify reality. Normally, each person contributes something to the conflict, either through what they do or don't do.

Instead of taking on the role of the “hero”, the leader should help employees see where they can change the way the relationship is working. Instead of carrying messages between people or imposing consequences, leaders can ask questions like:

- What would you like to see change in your relationship with the other person?
- How do you think the other person sees the situation?
- How could you talk with the other person in a different way than you've tried so far?
- How could your workplace's values and your own values guide your response?
- What supports do you need?

Questions like these shift the actions of the leader from fixing issues, to coaching people on how to resolve conflict directly.

When people are supported and empowered by leaders to resolve their own conflicts directly and quickly, organizations thrive because employees can focus on their work instead of wasting energy on the drama that surrounds conflict. As you consider the next steps in strengthening your workplace culture, consider helping your leaders reimagine their role in conflict resolution, training them to coach others through conflict and prioritize responding to conflict quickly.

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Eric Stutzman is the Managing Director of ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership & Workplace Performance, a leading provider of professional development training. He is a Chartered Mediator and has provided leadership in the field of conflict resolution and mediation for over 20 years. He is co-author of the book, *“The Culture Question,”* and is the author of many ACHIEVE workshops including Management and Supervision, Coaching Strategies for Leaders, and Dealing with Difficult People. Eric believes that the best leaders and employees first turn their minds to listening with curiosity.



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Leadership 4.0: How Ready Are You To Be A Digital Leader?

Transforming NextGen leaders today

 By [Sattar Bawany](#)

In recent times, the world has moved well beyond basic and enhanced process automation and is entering an era of cognitive automation leveraging on artificial intelligence and robotics which the World Economic Forum termed as the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”. To ensure their readiness toward digital business transformation, most organizations would deploy the state-of-the-art technology but do they have a relevant structure in place? Are they equipped to attract, develop, and retain digital talent? Do you know what it takes to lead in a digital era? These are questions that many, if not all, organizations are grappling with as they seek to succeed in the digital era.

Leadership 4.0 is about leaders creating their own digital transformation strategy and ensure it is aligned with the business and growth plans of their organization. It is critical that there must be a commitment to and ownership of it by the various stakeholders including the Boards and senior leadership team. For those willing to embrace this new world, it presents huge opportunities to be leveraged, which offers the prospect of new markets and new customers. However, to accomplish this, it would be crucial for the next generation of

leaders to develop the relevant knowledge and skills, and that will help them evolve into a digitally transformed leader.

Leadership 4.0 is also a “digital leader” who can build teams, keep people connected and engaged, and drive a culture of innovation, risk tolerance, and continuous improvement. As digital disruption sweeps across every major industry, regrettably leadership capabilities are not keeping pace.

As part of the cognitive transformation, digital leaders who think differently by applying innovative thinking to their managerial leadership challenges is one step in creating an innovative, organizational response to changes resulting from Industry 4.0. What is required is to develop a culture of innovation, where others throughout the organization apply innovative and creative thinking to solve problems and develop new products and services.

Studies have shown the climate for creativity in organizations is directly attributable to leadership behavior. What this means is that leaders must act in ways that promote and support organizational innovation by demonstrating specific competencies,



skills, and behaviors known as *cognitive readiness* that would support an innovative and knowledge-driven learning organization.

This *new normal* is challenging leaders to find new ways to lead their organizations and achieve sustained success as reflected in the latest Report '2019 Trends in Executive Development: A Benchmark Report' published by Executive Development Associates (EDA), a pioneer in custom executive development in partnership with BTS, a world leader in business simulations.

The impact of digital disruption has to be managed alongside the more general volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) operating

conditions of recent years. An ability to calculate and manage/mitigate risk will, therefore, be another key requirement of leaders seeking to propel their organizations into the digital age. Navigating a course through these difficult conditions may also force leaders to look at their individual leadership style and decide whether it needs to be adjusted.

Embrace and Encourage Innovation

Corporations need to offer some flexibility in order to be able to adopt digital platforms and strategies. Great talent thrives on impact and innovation—the same things a company needs to survive in the future. If a company prioritizes its processes over smart and impactful contributions, it is setting itself up to lose creative up-and-comers, not to mention potentially

falling behind the competition. Innovators and change-makers set bold ambitions and work on the edge of possibility. Employees working in the trenches often find the most efficient solutions, and it is often best to follow their lead.

Be open to creative employee solutions and a good leader needs to be open to that kind of innovation rather than trying to put limits on innovation. For example at Google, one of its most famous management philosophies is something called “20% time”. Employees are encouraged to spend 20 percent of their time working on what they think will most benefit Google, in addition to their regular projects. This empowers them to be more creative and innovative. In some ways, the idea of 20 percent time is more important than the reality of it as it operates somewhat outside the lines of formal management oversight, and always will because the most talented and creative people can’t be forced to work.

Set the stage for innovation by breaking down barriers and empowering your workforce. Give employees the opportunity to venture out of their standard career paths and customize their jobs to align with their personal and evolving skill sets, interests, and career goals. Provide a more open work environment with increased information transparency and trust in expertise by changing the default content and process working mechanisms from private to public.

Leadership 4.0 is, in fact, more important in times of change than at any other, but its nature has perhaps changed somewhat to take into account the more collaborative nature of the digital workplace. The digital revolution not only opens up new opportunities for how organizations arrange work and structure themselves, but it also leads to new ways of working and leading high-performing teams.

Though some traditional leadership capabilities still remain critical to successfully lead in the digital era (e.g., creating and communicating a clear vision, motivating and empowering others, etc.), there are also new requirements for leaders at all levels of the organization. These demand a dynamic combination of a new mindset and behaviors, digital knowledge

and skills that are critical to leading teams in the digital era.

As digital impacts the entire organization, it requires effective leadership at all levels to drive the digital strategy going forward. As digital transformation expands across the organization and the “war for talent” continues, organizations need to consider a more structured approach to building a healthy leadership pipeline with the necessary capabilities to lead in the digital era. They can do this by placing potential leaders in positions that stretch them beyond their current competencies and skills, to coach them and support them on building new digital capabilities as rapidly as possible.

The impact of digital disruption has to be managed alongside the more general volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) operating conditions of recent years.

Maybe one day in the future, everyone in every the organization will be a leader but for now, the traditional practice of leadership remains as vital as it ever was.

• • •



Sattar Bawany is the CEO & Certified C-Suite Master Executive Coach of Centre for Executive Education (CEE) and Managing Director of EDA Asia Pacific.



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How To Drive A Culture Of Innovation

Compete in a changing world by driving a culture that delivers innovation

By **Suzan Briganti**

In the field of innovation, one of the most often-used terms is a “Culture of Innovation.” It sounds so appealing. Who wouldn’t want one? Yet in our opinion, this important topic remains way too vague. Exactly what is a Culture of Innovation, and how do you create one?

At the highest level, any culture is a set of common values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that bind a group of people together. The culture acts as short-hand for how to conduct oneself in order to belong and thrive in that group. Similarly, a workforce culture is short-hand for how to conduct oneself in order to belong and thrive in that company.

A Culture of Innovation is one that encourages and rewards innovation values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. A Culture of Innovation produces more innovation than a culture that prizes conformity and standardization.

A Culture of Innovation is one that encourages and rewards innovation values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

You can recognize a Culture of Innovation by its results. A Culture of Innovation is one that regularly generates novel solutions that create societal and financial value greater than the status quo. But where such results are lacking, we have to create the right culture from scratch. Like cooking an unfamiliar recipe, we need to first obtain the ingredients and then learn how to combine and leaven them.

With this background in mind, let us lay out the characteristics of a Culture of Innovation and some steps to achieving one.



1. Understand the Ingredients of an Innovation Culture

An innovation culture is one that encourages and rewards the behaviors that drive innovation. There are eight behaviors that our global research found distinguish innovators from the general population. These are the same eight behaviors that the innovation culture must advance:

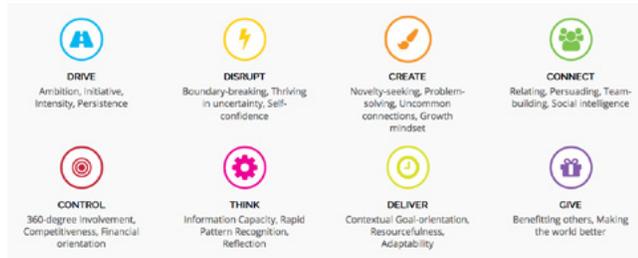


Figure 1: The Eight Innovation Skills
[Click here for a good resolution image](#)

The leaders of the organization must start by understanding these eight behaviors, which they can do by reading this simple [guide](#).

2. Leaders Reflect on the Current Culture and Identify Gaps

The next step is for the leadership team to honestly reflect about the current organizational culture. To what degree does the current culture support and reward the eight innovation behaviors? What are the gaps? Why and how did this culture develop? Is it a reflection of a founder's values, an industry-wide culture, or national traits? How does the current culture promote or inhibit innovative behavior?

One big caution here: Leadership tends to assess the culture that *they* experience. The rank and file may have a very different experience. Be sure to gather feedback on the culture from throughout the organization.

The current profile of the workforce is another clue to the behaviors that you tend to recruit for, support and reward. An example is shown below, where a company's workforce is under-developed on Connect, Think and Control. These gaps, for example, will inhibit employees from relating to diverse stakeholders (Connect), recognizing emerging patterns (Think),

and converting opportunities into financial benefits (Control):



Figure 2: View of A Company's Innovation Culture
[Click here for a good resolution image](#)

3. Set Goals for Change

Once you identify your cultural strengths and gaps through reflection (and if you use Swarm, the aggregated data views such as the above), you can set goals for change. In the above example, the highest score is Drive at 79. Scores in the 70s are sufficient for incremental innovation (Horizon 1). If your goal is to pursue Adjacent and Disruptive Innovation as well (Horizons 2 and 3), you will need talent with scores in the 80s and 90s.

You can see an example of one company's mix of innovation talent by Innovation Horizon in this dashboard view. They have few H2s (Adjacent Innovation, blue) and almost no H3s (Disruptive Innovation, pink):



Figure 3: View of A Company Workforce by Innovation Horizons

[Click here for a good resolution image](#)

4. Ensure Leadership Team Includes Horizon 2 and Horizon 3 Talent

Since culture is set from the top, it seems obvious that the leadership team needs to include a good representation of innovators as well. This signals like nothing else that innovators will be rewarded in your culture. Innovators bring a different perspective and skill set to decision-making than individuals who are content with the status quo. For innovation to really happen in the company, innovators must be present on the leadership team, and be part of making the day-to-day decisions that determine company strategy and resource allocation.

5. Include Innovation on Every Employee's KPIs

In most companies, individual employees are reviewed and rewarded based on their KPIs (key performance indicators). For innovation to be taken seriously, it follows that innovation must be on employee KPIs.

Innovation KPIs can Take the Form of:

- *Activities*, e.g. Participating in an innovation initiative such as a hackathon, innovation training, or interaction with start-ups.
- *Skill development*, e.g. Increasing your Innovation Profiler score by 10 percent through Training.
- *Outcomes*, e.g. Developing an innovation proposal that progresses through the stage-gating process from idea to MVP (Minimum Viable Product).

While outcomes matter the most in business, offering employees an array of KPIs related to innovation, including activities, skill development and outcomes, creates a meritocracy. Everyone can engage in innovation, and those with the most interest and drive will attempt to achieve actual outcomes.

6. Recognize and Deal with Resisters and Blockers

As you launch an innovation culture initiative, those who repeatedly block, resist or undermine innovation must be put on notice. You can't say, on the one hand, that you want a Culture of Innovation, and also tolerate these anti-bodies who kill all progress.

So what can you do with resisters and blockers? They can be moved to role where innovation is less critical, such as in a roles where existing procedures must be upheld for compliance. Clearly, after written warnings and a suitable time to cure the destructive behavior, resisters and blockers can be removed through your company's sanctioned processes. Be sure to work with Legal on this, dot all of the I's and cross all of the T's.

Decisive action (or the failure to take it), says more about how serious you are about innovation than 10,000 words. Employees watch what we do, not what we say!

7. Celebrate Successes. Culture Change Is Not a Won and Done

As you take the above steps, be sure to celebrate even small successes and progress. It's a good idea to create a company-wide communication channel for regular updates on innovation.

Be sure to share not just successes, but struggles and learnings on the innovation journey. Emphasize a love of learning, and a growth mindset.

One caveat from my years of experience advising companies on innovation: Be careful not to create "innovation super-heroes." We all hear endlessly about Steve Jobs and Elon Musk. In the same way, when we lionize a small handful of super-stars inside the company, it can inadvertently make innovation appear out of reach for everyday employees.

The better approach is to convey that innovation is everyone's job. From our research, we know that innovation talent is found in every department – not just in IT or R&D. Innovation should be an equal opportunity for employees in every department and at every level to bring their whole selves to work, help drive company growth, and to shine.

8. Monitor the Culture Continuously

What you don't measure you can't improve, right? So you need to monitor the innovation culture regularly. A good approach to avoid survey burnout is progressive sampling, where you ask a handful of culture



diagnostic questions to a representative sample of the workforce on a regular basis, say quarterly or twice-yearly.

Don't forget to compare the views of leadership to the views of the rank and file. If the innovation culture is real, it will be felt all the way down to the people who water the plants!

To summarize, a culture of innovation is based on modelling, supporting and rewarding eight innovation behaviors. Leadership should reflect deeply on the current culture, identify any gaps and set clear goals. The leadership team should include a good representation of innovators, and innovation should be part of every employee's KPIs. Decisive action should be taken to redirect resisters and blockers. You need to celebrate your successes. And the culture should be monitored regularly at all levels of the organization.

The payoff for a true Culture of Innovation is manifold. First, innovative companies attract high quality talent, which makes your job in HR easier. And secondly, innovation drives growth, and ensures that you retain a lead over your competitors in the market. And last but not least, for every dollar of revenue a company earns, the market valuation for innovative companies

is significantly higher. Which is why investment in a Culture of Innovation should be a priority for the C-suite, and for HR professionals.



Suzan Briganti is CEO and Founder of Swarm Vision. Swarm Vision is a software-as-a-service platform to identify, organize, develop and leverage innovation talent in the enterprise to drive growth. Suzan brings 25 years of experience in research, strategy and innovation. She has grown [Swarm Vision](#) from a garage start-up to a trusted solution provider to global Fortune 500 clients. Suzan leads Swarm Vision with a focus on building [great products](#) and teams. Suzan has an MBA summa cum laude from Boston University and a design degree from Italy. She serves on the International Standards Committee for Innovation Management, representing the United States. Suzan is a frequent writer and speaker on innovation in the workplace.



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Plan For Successful Change Management

Keep in mind these 8 core behaviors

 By **Jim Haudan**

The purpose of strategic planning is not to make plans. It is to change the way we think and act. If newly formed visions and strategic plans are intended to propel organizations to places they have never been, at a very personal level it requires people to do things as individual that they have never done. Therefore, successful change management is all about behaviors. The “act” outperforms “the think” every time. And while it requires changing behaviors at all levels of the business, leaders must lead the way.

So what does that mean exactly?

Leaders Must Walk the Walk

Several years ago a Fortune 300 company unveiled a new strategy during a three-day meeting of their top several hundred leaders. For three days the leaders discussed the merits of the plan, and the critical actions required for achieving the desired results. The group seemed engaged. Senior

leaders felt excited that their strategy was being well received.

At 11 am, just before the noon close of the three-day meeting, the senior leaders wanted to orchestrate a rousing send off that would capitalize on the excitement for the new strategy. Each person in the audience was given a device to anonymously vote on how confident they were about the new strategic plan. The senior team assumed they had won the commitment of top leaders during the meeting and that sponsorship and strong support would be widespread. What flashed on the screen after three days of intense conversation was a stunning 19 percent vote of confidence by the top leaders of this 53,000-person company.

After the shock wore off, the leaders were asked for the reasons behind their skepticism. It was discovered that the leaders didn't believe the senior team would support the new company direction and instead would

continue to exhibit “old strategy behaviors”. Once senior leaders got the message, and corrected their personal behaviors, the implementation of the strategy took off and drove a doubling of the stock price.

Another example of where actions speak louder than words was with a large Fortune 100 company embarking on a bold business transformation. They spent countless hours analyzing market data, market positions, growth opportunities, and margin possibilities. They carefully crafted a robust strategy to drive the “thinking differently” part of the overall plan. As they deployed the strategic plan to the top 225 leaders of the company in an effort to enlist their leadership, they heard a single resounding theme: “The new strategy is sound. We believe it in. But we have a fundamental disbelief that leaders will change their behaviors to bring the strategy to life.” The Top 225 leaders then identified the new behaviors needed to



support the transformation – coined “behavioral proof points” – and called out the behaviors that needed to change.

Managing the Behavior Change

The problem – and the opportunity – is that deeply embedded traditional behaviors tend to persist and they change far more slowly than marketplace factors and new strategic thinking. The speed of leader behavior change becomes the pace car for strategic change.

There are three key areas of focus that constantly turbo-change the organizational change race:

Embrace Public Vulnerability – Successful change requires a rigorous confrontation of reality. What does the current state of

your business look like? What gaps or barriers exist? Why are you having these challenges? What’s good or bad about the company culture?

But this approach can never be an effective effort if leaders don’t go first in being brutally honest about the most significant behaviors they must personally change. When leaders go first by identifying their own personal behaviors that are inconsistent with the new strategy, they send two critical messages:

a. They are setting the precedent for others to be vulnerable and acknowledge the importance of embracing the discomfort associated with being accountable to drop old behaviors and adopt new ones.

b. If leaders are publicly vulnerable on behaviors that need to change, they send the signal it is safe to talk about other company weaknesses and it encourages managers and employees to make key suggestions to change behaviors, practices, rituals, habits and routines for executing the new strategy.

Letting Go – Letting go is hard to do. Yet it is core to successful change. During the IBM transformation of the late 90s, Former IBM CEO Lou Gerstner constantly referred to the metaphor of Tarzan. He often encouraged his leaders to think of their role of leading change as swinging in the jungle and letting go of the vine of the business. They knew to grab the vine for the new business that

they were creating; all with the threat of hungry lions below and the horizon of success slightly visible through the trees. Letting go of the business we know also involves letting go of the actions, behaviors, and roles that provided the current sense of value, achievement, and recognition.

It also means letting go of what someone was very good at to develop new skills vital to the strategy for the future. At the heart of letting go is the willingness to move away from what we know how to do in the business of yesterday, which we have been good at and rewarded for, to take the risk to do what we don't know how to do and will be bad at for a while, that is critical to the business of the future.

Build speed through trust — There is nothing like a new strategy and the need to move fast that exposes areas of behavior change that have been ignored in the past, but are now on the critical path to success. In order to be successful with the new strategy though, it is important to establish new behavioral standards to drive strategic change. As trust goes up, transaction cost and time to results goes down.

Behavior Ground Rules for Change Success

Over the past 10 years, most senior teams have understood the need to establish new behavioral contracts that individually and collectively establish behavioral ground rules that are necessary to build a high-performance team ready to deploy the new strategy.

But what is most interesting is that over the last decade, regardless of the strategy, each team prioritizes some of the same each behavioral ground rules to build trust and the speed of execution. The top eight behavioral ground rules:

- Assume positive intent and trust the experts.
- In the face of ambiguity, our responsibility is to achieve clarity for ourselves and our people, and not to stop until we do.
- Balance the need to make fact-based decisions with the urgency to act before we have complete information.
- Own the whole of the business before your piece.
- Have open, honest, candid, and direct conversations that are tough on the issues and respectful of the people. (Don't say it in the hall, if you didn't say it at the table.)
- Decisions made in the room, must be publically supported outside the room. No pocket vetos, and if decisions need to be reconsidered, they must be brought back to the team.
- Rapidly share learning's that are uncovered in success or failure.
- Support and encourage telling the truth about execution without being executed.

The next step for any team is to rank the importance and their performance on these behavioral ground rules, identify the ones with the biggest gaps and diligently work to close those gaps with specific new behaviors.

The former CEO of the Fortune 300 company suggested, "It is our responsibility to lead change, build team, and make it personal. And it starts with me." He said, "If the organization is going to change, I have to change first, and in that regard, I can't be constrained by any friendship, past relationship, or position of a leader."

While that is generally easier said than done, it is that sentiment and that mentality that has a profound effect on whether an organization successfully creates strategic change. For leaders who don't step into the discomfort of changing their own behavior to lead the execution of change, they will find out that what they are waiting for will never come. The emotional and behavior change we expect of others must first be the expectations of ourselves.



Jim Haudan is the Chairman, Co-Founder at Root, Inc. For more than 20 years, he has been helping organizations unleash hidden potential by fully engaging their people to deliver on the strategies of the business. With his background as a coach, it's not a stretch that the company Jim co-founded focuses on tapping employees' discretionary efforts - the kind that produces winning results.



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