

## Welcome to the complex world of modern-day leadership!

**Leadership is the art of mobilizing and bundling the intellectual and emotional resources of the entire workforce for the benefit of the company stakeholders. Considering transformation and the pace of change, management is under constant pressure to deliver and outperform. Exchanging views and getting input from an external sparring partner is helpful for independent feedback and good for morale.**

Is leadership getting more difficult? Maybe not, but certainly more challenging. Environmental developments, the brutal struggle for market share and external factors lead to increasing distraction and risks tied to volatility and pressure for short-term achievements. To compete, a company needs to mobilize every ounce of intelligence, every day. A handful of senior managers – no matter how brilliant and experienced – is no longer sufficient to secure corporate success. Using the combined brainpower of all employees is the only way to maintain the grip on the turbulences and hazards of today's environment.

***As a leader, you weren't given a crown - you were given the responsibility to bring out the best in others.***

*(Jack Welsh)*

Never have leaders been more of a role model than today – with their visibility, they are accountable and under constant pressure to set the course for reaching targeted results. It is crucial for them to exhibit a convincing behavior, the ability to communicate openly and to inspire larger, diversified groups of stakeholders.

Leaders have the responsibility to reduce the barriers that prevent people from reaching their maximum contribution, for instance by breaking down hierarchical behavior. Trust is the ultimate result of managing with appreciation. Managing with appreciation and trust is encouraging emotional factors such as mood, working atmosphere, vision and culture. A company's success depends mostly on its ability to mobilize its creative, productive and motivated employees.

A successful leader has a mature personality and is a strong communicator. Besides the required business competence, a leader needs to be able to “sell himself” without outshining the achievements of his team. He needs to have the appropriate social skills while staying natural and true to himself in the process.

To carry responsibility and to be convincing at the same time, the behavior must always be authentic.

Because leaders strongly influence the culture within organizations, it is upon them to recognize and to address dysfunctionalities in management tasks, team performance, communication and networking. As the leadership skills develop, so are the efficiency, the effectiveness and the profitability of the firm.

### **Research proves the high importance of effective management**

Based on a study conducted by Hewitt Associates, there exists a clear link between investing in leadership development and delivering value to shareholders. It shows that a continual investment in leadership competence improves employee commitment and reduces turnover.

Research by Jeffrey Pfeffer, a business professor from Stanford University, reveals that companies who manage people effectively will outperform companies that do not by a factor of 30% to 40%. In a market where there is a small margin between success and failure, leveraging leadership competence becomes the true competitive advantage.

To achieve measurable and positive impact on teamwork, creativity, knowledge sharing, efficiency, productivity and profitability, an organization needs to invest in the alignment of the leadership skills of its key people. Enhancements in the core leadership skills will directly translate in an improvement of the key success factors of the organization.

Initially, leaders may feel a bit uneasy about accepting advice and getting some tips on leadership topics from an external sparring partner. However, the benefits of independent input will create relief and revitalize energy levels in the ongoing challenge to maintain strong leadership performance.

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## The Consulting Partnership

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