LEADING OTHER
LEADERS

When you consider the primary factors that will continue to shape the development of leaders moving forward, start with change. The disruptive kind. The kind that shines a spotlight on whatever experience and skills you and your team have developed over time and renders them partially transferable (at best) or even obsolete.

> **IF IT WEREN'T FOR CHANGE, PEOPLE WOULD PROBABLY CARE A WHOLE LOT LESS ABOUT LEADERSHIP.**

There has been more disruptive change in the last three years than in the previous 300. That reality hasn't been lost on anybody. And there is no reason to believe that pattern isn't going to continue to repeat itself (perhaps even more aggressively) moving forward.

The implications of those disruptive patterns on effective leadership are profound. As a matter of fact, when you think about it, if it weren't for change, people would probably care a whole lot less about leadership. In effect, leadership is the language of change. Leaders have long been the people that helped the rest of us recognize and respond to change. In the midst of all the chaos and uncertainty, those leaders had

a plan. That plan was grounded in some sort of informed insight. That plan would guide the manner in which we would adapt, adjust, retool and deliver results, regardless of the obstacles change put in our paths. Leaders told us what we had to do to navigate our way around, or directly through, that disruption.

However, the dynamics of change are becoming so much more complicated. Leaders struggle to leverage informed insight to point us in the right direction, because quite often they don't have any. Leaders haven't "thought things through," because the things they are challenged by require real-time thinking with limited points of valid reference.

With ever-increasing regularity, leaders no longer have the answers. In many cases, leaders no longer even know the right questions. Leaders stand with the rest of us, facing unique challenges that few of us could have imagined just a short time ago. So, how will the leaders of the future add value?

They will start with relevant data, and they will openly share it with all of us, transparently and across the board. We will know what they know. We will be able to see, with intimidating clarity, where we are and where we need to go. Leaders will spend less time explaining the nuances of the numbers and more time putting the numbers in front of our faces and asking us to interpret their meaning.

After we analyze the information that most accurately pinpoints our position, we will need to formulate a plan. This is where things will really get weird. The leaders of the future will place responsibility for the formulation of that plan squarely in our hands. It's not that they won't have an opinion or a perspective on what we should do. It's simply that they will recognize that if they share their opinion, there will be a strong probability the members of our team will adopt it (in whole or in part). At that point, it becomes the leader's plan, and not ours.

Once a plan is in place, the leader will focus on providing feedback, which will drive escalating levels of transparent accountability. Each member of the team will be inescapably aware of their role, their responsibilities to the team and the quality of their contribution relative to the expectations that have been established. In essence, the leaders of the future will be facilitators of the leaders on their teams as they embrace and adapt to whatever change may bring. ⏱

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