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5 Key Competencies to Cultivate in Your Future Leaders

Adapting and driving a company vision, inspiring innovation through collaboration, and creating a globally connected, flexible, diverse workplace are all skills and approaches that tomorrow's successful business leaders will need to master that differ somewhat from those of today's leaders. Who will lead the next generation of employees? How are tomorrow's business leaders different from successful leaders today? How do you best prepare up-and-coming professionals to take on leadership roles?

As you identify employees with the highest leadership potential, you'll need your talent management plan to keep up with evolving skill and competency requirements. Let's look at five key competencies to cultivate in your future leaders.

1) Agility

Businesses are doing what they've always needed to do – reinventing themselves to keep up with the times. Successful leaders have long known how to manage through periods of change.

What's different is the accelerated pace and perpetual state of change. Leaders must continually track and manage through the latest trends and developments that shape markets, countries and industries. Change really is constant. It's no longer enough for leaders to simply manage through a transition; they need to create organizations that thrive on change.

Our next leaders will need to create a culture of curiosity and fearlessness. Then they'll need to be able to harness and direct employees' creativity and energy to deliver on the company vision in a dynamic world.

2) Connect Authentically

Connecting with others isn't new. What's different is figuring out the best way to connect with others across time zones, geographies, generations, cultures and devices. It's also increasingly important that leaders must be transparent in their communications and



actions. Technology has helped and hurt us, making it easy to communicate quickly by email, texts, online discussions and emojis. So easy that the non-verbal side of important conversations and relationships risk getting overlooked. The challenge is to penetrate digital work collaborations with real-world connections and communications that shape and inspire.

Future leaders must possess the ability to cultivate authentic connections, so they can evaluate, advise and inspire personnel in real-time.

3) Cultural Intelligence

"Experience and business acumen will only take a leader so far ... Because we are becoming more globally entrenched as a society, understanding, appreciating and leveraging differences each become critical to effective leadership," claims Karima Mariama-Arthur in [this](#) Forbes article.

It's true. Diversity in the workplace is the norm. As organizations expand their geographical borders and circle of business partners, they are interacting with an increasing number and

variety of approaches, preferences, priorities and communication styles. What used to be a novelty is now a way of life.

Tomorrow's leaders must effectively operate in – and promote – a culture that feeds on diversity. They will adeptly cultivate ideas and contributions from a broad mix of people with different backgrounds and experiences, to benefit the company, its customers and employees alike.

4) Flexibility

Most leaders will tell you that a willingness to be flexible is one key to success. A bit of give-and-take is the hallmark of any successful negotiation and leaders understand that small concessions for the greater good is a win.

What's different now is that everything is different. Things are changing so quickly that pretty much everything is up for review. Flexible work schedules. Flexible benefits. Established job titles and roles are becoming obsolete as quickly as new ones emerge. IT development projects no longer start with detailed requirements; through short bursts of coding, teams figure out and adapt solutions along the way. Artificial intelligence is here and growing, promising to redefine how work gets done. And younger workers are pushing companies to look beyond themselves to the greater good.

What's left is a need for future leaders to be thoroughly comfortable weighing the disparate needs and wishes of stakeholders – the benefits and costs or risks of each request – against the vision, mission and success of the company.

5) Deliver on a Vision

Leaders have always been the ones to make the final decisions. Successful leaders have a clear vision of where their organizations are headed, and they understand it's their job to align the workforce and other company resources to deliver on that vision.

With so many factors driving change, it's surprisingly easy for professionals to get distracted by a new technology, trend or development. It's tempting to make decisions that are popular or have near-term gain. What's more difficult – and more important than ever – is for leaders to make those decisions against a backdrop of a defined vision.

Tomorrow's leaders, who will be flexible and transparent and open to change, must also be competent stewards of their companies' visions. No one else can do that for them. Workforce performance, recruitment efforts and overall company performance all depend upon the stability provided by alignment with the company vision.

Is Your Succession Plan Up-to-Date?

How well is your talent development plan helping your employees achieve their leadership potential? Is your succession management plan on track? We've helped dozens of organizations to improve their leadership development efforts. [Contact us](#) if we may be able to help you, too!

