

What does it require to be a good leader? What are the abilities you require? What method do you use?

In the olden days, answering those kinds of questions was quite easy. Our universe was greatly stabler, and a company could create a ten-year plan with clear end goals – and then just abide by that plan. Leaders could focus on developing approaches and making people execute them without stressing a lot on unforeseen hindrances.

Sadly, this leadership method doesn't relatively cut it again. We live in a universe of persistent economics, social and political uncertainty, which affects every business, from big businesses down to budding start-ups.

Not just that; however, global society is going through a big digital and AI revolution. If leaders wish for their businesses to withstand these uncertain periods, they'll need to take control of their own destiny and turn into the shapers of their own future.

Chapter 1 - We are living in an uncertain universe, and companies are at risk.

Maybe it goes without saying; however, the globe we live in is growing more and unstable. Sometimes, it can feel overwhelming just seeing the news in the morning, with its headlines about populism, corruption, terrorism, climate change, and other worldwide ills.

Increasing this disturbing instability, fast developments in technology are transforming– well – everything.

Global society is going into the fourth industrial revolution – an era shaped by new scientific and technological advancements. These advancements comprise artificial intelligence (AI), precision machines, as well as blockchain technology, each of which is changing our world in various manners.

For beginners, these new technologies are disrupting industries. For instance, in the financial industry, the advent of digital banks has forced traditional banks to improve their online services so as to compete.

For instance, there's AI – self-driving cars,– which is perplexing and transforming how we work and live.

Although the digital revolution assures limitless opportunities for companies, it's also formed a feeling of global instability as well. Technology is a disturbing area: it poses new risks, increases ethical issues, and aids as a reminder of the future's unpredictability.

This is the reason why being a leader in 2020 is more difficult than ever before. CEOs as well as management teams are on what the author refers to as “constant threat alert,” where they need to predict transformations, be creative, and regularly pivot in order to their companies afloat.

For example, a lot of brick-and-mortar shops have made their goods accessible online to suit their customers' digital shopping ways. Also, those shops that haven't done that may soon see themselves out of business.

The issue is, if you're a leader on regular threat alert, you'll never get the time to move back and learn about the leadership abilities that will assist you to navigate this present day persistent, ever-changing business surrounding.

In order for businesses to withstand these uncertain periods, they'll require their leaders to take charge, empower their teams, and be dedicated in the face of overwhelming difficulties.

Chapter 2 - In order to be a future-shaping leader, you have to specify your long-term vision.

Let's start with a narrative about a great leader in history.

During the early 1960s, John F. Kennedy the American president of that had a vision. In basic words, Kennedy talked about what he wished to accomplish: “To place a man on the moon during the end of the decade.”

Kennedy’s vision was definitely ambitious. However, that wasn’t what made it effective. Read that once again. There’s no uncertainty, no unclear discussion of “the future.” Kennedy not only made clear what he wished to do but by when he wished to achieve it. Yes, his aim was ambitious. However, more significantly, it was precise.

What Kennedy might have referred to as a “vision,” the author names it a preferred future result, or preferable for short. Also, as you recently learned, when finding preferables for your business, the main thing is to be specific. For instance, it’s no point mentioning that you want to “change the universe” or “make a difference.” These aims are very broad. Where would you even begin?

This whole advice might seem obvious. However, you’d be shocked by the number of leaders that set vague goals that leave their workers with a feeling of confusion about what they’re working to achieve. This is essentially due to the fact that leaders are really fixated on the details –solving daily problems and planning for the worst-case situation– that they fail to see the bigger picture.

If this seems like you, attempt pausing for an instant. Move back and question yourself the reason why you’re a leader. What inspired you to take the position of leadership? What long-term effect are you attempting to have? How can you evaluate your success?

A perfect illustration of a leader who had strong answers to those kinds of big-picture questions is Henry Ford, the owner of Ford Motor Company. Right from the onset, he had a clear and purposeful preferable in mind: to offer affordable mobility to the public. Also, he understood the reason why he wanted to accomplish this goal– he really cared about building a motor car that was appropriate for everybody.

If you, just like Ford, can find a preferable and mention the reason why you want to accomplish it, then your workers will always understand what they’re working toward and the reason why.

Also, you will get the time as well as the mental space to marshal your resources and direct the way.

Chapter 3 - The best means to identify your goals is to ideate without restrictions.

Visualize you're an artist sitting directly in front of an easel. Right in front of you is a blank canvas and, on your right, is a set of paints and brushes. At this point, there are no guidelines: you can paint anything you want. It's this freedom – the limitless potential of that blank canvas – that allows artists to be creative.

Just like artists, future shapers looking for creative solutions need freedom as well. As a matter of fact, when trying to find what your vision is for the future, it's better to allow your imagination run wild – and to forget your worries for how you will carry out your vision

This tactic has produced a lot of breakthrough ideas. Consider the illustration of self-driving cars. Initially, the notion that an automobile could drive itself without anyone controlling the wheel was, only a desirable outcome. At the moment, driverless cars are on the edge of turning into a widespread reality.

Also, we can consider artificial intelligence for example. One time, robots were nothing but a fanciful idea –however, nowadays, humanoid robots are working as customer-service terminals in airports and even working as TV news anchors in a country like China.

This shows that when you imagine what your target is – and you temporarily shelve your worries about how to achieve it– you offer yourself the liberty to visualize the wildest possibilities.

Imaginative freedom is important. However, it won't take you far except you fuel your imagination as well. Also, this needs leaving your own “echo chamber” and accepting new viewpoints.

These can be done by looking for means to meet individuals from various industries, different cultures as well as professional backgrounds, and then paying close attention to their ideas and experiences.

Next thing: pay attention to the zeitgeist. Think about what trends and patterns are developing globally, and pay attention to what consumers want. Also, stay up to date with the current inventions in technology as well. Tapping into new ideas immediately they occur will assist you to remain ahead of the curve.

As the last clue, create some time in your day to declutter your mind and let yourself fantasize. With a pure mind and a blank canvas, and the liberty to just create, you might just devise your best idea yet.

Chapter 4 - In order to earn support, leaders have to communicate a clear vision as well as offer a roadmap on how to reach there.

During the early 1990s and the decades before that, the industry of business seemed very different than it does now. During those times, it was usual for the leaders of business to sit at the head of a long boardroom table, providing instructions and allocating duties. Leaders were king – or queen – of their business field.

This model has completely transformed. Nowadays, the old “command and control” model of leadership doesn’t work anymore. There are two causes for this. First of all, workers are more educated, autonomous, and empowered, than ever before. Secondly, traditional business hierarchies have been crushed. Meaning, business work less like monarchies and much more like democracies.

What does this signify for leaders? Well, if you wish to change your preferable into outcomes, you’ll require the support of a good team –however, you’ll need to earn that support.

Therefore, how can you earn support?

Begin by laying out your preferable. Clearly and concisely, explain what you want to achieve and the reason why it is significant for the company to achieve it. Attempt revealing your potential followers a real-life illustration of what you're attempting to accomplish. Maybe you have a current illustration from a different industry that you can utilize— or perhaps you could come up with one to show what you're trying to achieve.

It must be totally clear how accomplishing your preferable will transform the company and the reason why that change will be for the good.

Keep in mind to make use of strong imagery to spice your pitch up. Research has revealed that individuals are more likely to be swayed by the things they can visualize. Stories that include related characters will make your preferable very easy to grab and it will inspire your listeners.

Now that we've talked about how to communicate the "what," let's examine means to communicate the "how."

For beginners, you'll have to provide your followers with a step-by-step guide of how to accomplish the desired result. Also, you'll have to communicate the resources you'll require to support you in this process –it could be extra finances, equipment, or manpower.

One vital thing to bear in mind is that individuals resist change except they're sure that the outcome of the change will be worth the stress. Therefore, rather than overwhelming individuals with your enthusiasm, let them understand your ideas, ask questions, and dwell on how they can support you.

Chapter 5 - Form a creative as well as a resilient team through diversity and inclusion.

Visualize two teams. One team is diverse. It comprises of men and women, black and brown, younger and older people. The second team is homogenous – a group of men, the majority of them are white, all about 40. Some people might consider this shocking; however, the diverse team steadily exceeds the homogenous team, in spite of its members having far fewer commonalities. Why is this so?

Before going into the reason why diversity enhances performance, let's discuss the meaning of diversity.

If you work in a big company, you're most likely conversant with the word diversity and inclusion. This term talks about the tactics as well as the practices a business has in place to support an inclusive workplace. For instance, the firm may have initiatives to grow the proportion of women in senior management positions, or it may conduct workshops on how to minimize stereotyping at work.

When we talk about the recruitment process, recruiting for diversity signifies hiring people of various sex, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, as well as even educational qualifications – which ought to be high on any business's plan to guarantee equality.

The majority of people would accept that equality is a good thing. However, what is the reason why is it good for business? There are two reasons for this. First and foremost, diverse teams have a tendency to be more resilient. Similar to how a person who's had a lot of experiences is better equipped to deal with the unexpected, a diverse team is very likely to have the means to handle uncertainty and change. Secondly, diverse teams have a tendency to be more innovative. The reason is that people from different cultures and with various experiences grow the range of a company's ideas and also its ability to address issues.

Therefore, having a diverse team is definitely a good thing; however, sadly, this can't happen overnight.

Leaders will have to work really hard to embed inclusion into their recruiting practices. Also, they will have to nurture a team culture that is essentially favorable to accepting new ideas. One method this can be achieved is to foster open communication in the place of work and let everyone in the room to talk and give their contribution.

More significantly, diversity as well as inclusion shouldn't only be regarded as a "special project" or an HR initiative that's nice to have. Rather, leaders ought to see inclusion as a vital aspect of their business tactic.

Chapter 6 - Foster connections in order to build your platform.

Meet Sanjay the senior commercial lending manager in a bank, and he's had a great idea. Sanjay has noticed that his bank is comfortable loaning money to bigger corporations; however, it's reluctant to fund entrepreneurs. Totally aware that Apple as well as the other major global companies started as scrappy start-ups that needed capital, Sanjay chooses that he wants to incubate an "entrepreneurial bank for entrepreneurs."

However, then Sanjay comes across an issue— a platform issue.

If you wish to put your future-shaping idea in place, you'll have to look for a means to make your voice heard. The best method to do this is to create what the author refers to as a platform. What precisely is a platform? Visualize you're delivering a speech in public. You definitely need a stage,— a place where individuals can watch you and hear you.

Your platform is your stage.

Therefore, how do you build a platform? Well, the first thing is creating connections. This entails finding individuals who can assist you help your future-shaping vision, and also putting in the effort to form a good relationship with them. If you don't do this, your idea may never even be heard.

Also, that takes us back to Sanjay and his platform issue. He didn't have any connections to assist him to turn his idea into a reality. Although he could say the name of the CEO of the bank he worked for, he couldn't mention any name of the company's leaders at the next level down.

At this moment, Sanjay wished he had put in more time in nurturing a good relationship with his boss, with his boss' boss, as well as other influencers in the company. It didn't really matter that much that he had a great idea due to the fact that he had no platform where he could share his ideas.

Therefore, powering up your network at the beginning is vital to getting your ideas heard. Begin by thinking about the person you want to connect with and the reason why – and what abilities or connections you possess that could help them. The main thing is to show that you can be beneficial to this person. Maybe after that, they could just assist you to get your idea started.

Chapter 7 - Being a joyful as well as an energized leader forms the best surrounding for great work.

As a leader, you'll usually have a team of individuals relying on you for guidance. If you're lackluster about your goals, it won't just affect your own level of motivation; however, it will affect your workers, as well.

Workers, whether consciously or unconsciously, have a tendency to imitate the mood as well as the behaviors of their leader. For instance, if you go into the office with a thunder cloud above your head, it's possible that your workers' moods will become gray, as well. Conversely, if you can put set your concerns aside and be motivated and energized all the time, your team's productivity will be positively affected due to that.

As a future shaper, it's your duty to motivate individuals to bring their A-game. If you can notice your team's motivation getting weaker, think of the following questions: Am I taking my time to pay attention to my workers' ideas and worries? Am I thanking them for their hard work? Am I bringing sufficient positivity to my place of work?

If you answer no to these questions, then set some time apart to discuss these issues. For instance, just allowing your workers to understand that your door is open all the time – should in case they require anything – can assist them to feel happier and more secure in their duties.

One other vital thing to remember is that every leader – even future-shaping ones – are human. Also, they require time to rest as well as recuperate, just like every other person. This is the reason why it's vital to have a great support system of friends, family, as well as coworkers who can assist and nurture you during times of need.

A good self-care habit is necessary too. Future shapers understand that a healthy body as well as a healthy mind are vital to set clear goals and to accomplish them. In addition to following this whole usual advice – get adequate sleep, eat your greens, create time for working out– it's also vital to main a positive viewpoint.

Anything it requires for you to do that, ensure to remember your intrinsic mission. This will assist you to do your role in a manner that is significant to you.

Chapter 8 - Be determined to withstand this present volatile business surrounding.

Steve Jobs. His name has become synonymous with success, invention, classy design –the whole thing that businesses desire to accomplish. However, a key part of his career was defined by failure.

During the year 1976, he began Apple, which started out well. However, after an unsuccessful product launch in the year 1985, he was removed from his own company. Then he established a new company known as NeXT.

NeXT was not successful from the actual start, and it stayed that way until Apple bought it. However, that didn't occur until the year 1997 – 12 years later Jobs established NeXT. Twelve years! Why, during these whole time, didn't Jobs quit? The answer to this question is one of the keys to success.

In business as in life, persistence is essentially about moving forward, searching for solutions, as well as working toward success. Also, it is about maintaining your resolve when the going becomes hard.

Much of being persistent boils down to being confident. Steve Jobs was successful due to the fact that he believed in himself, in spite of the odds. He just didn't give up. He understood that, if he didn't believe in himself, nobody would.

The issue is, there's not actually a step-by-step guide to building self-belief. It's not essentially an ability you're born with; it's a thing that you need to learn and work on all through your career.

You can begin by creating a few confidence-boosting tactics for when you're feeling down. For instance, remind yourself of your leadership aim. Question yourself on what made you lead and the reason why leadership is vital to you. Also, it might be beneficial to devise with your own personal mantra to make you consoled and motivated during difficult periods– something like “Just keep moving forward” or “This as well shall go.”

Being confident is what will offer you an advantage as a future-shaping leader. It will assist you to think big, be self-confident, and also making the best choices for your business.

Future Shaper: How Leaders Can Take Charge in an Uncertain World by Niamh O'Keeffe Book Review

There is no leader that can foretell the future. However, they can assist to shape it. In a more and more uncertain world, it's left to you to choose the type of future you want to form, and the tactics for how to reach there. In addition to motivating your team, paying attention to recent advances, as well as having clear aims, it's vital to have self-belief. If you don't have confidence in yourself as well as your ideas, then it's possible that nobody else will.

Be a doer and not a talker.

Everybody likes to hear about new concepts as well as future possibilities. However, if leaders are just talking without action, it's very unlikely they'll get the support of their team members. Therefore, when next you go to the podium to talk to your workers about your vision, ensure you have a clear action plan on how to achieve it. This will assist you develop a reputation for being a trustworthy and results-driven leader, instead of a preacher of empty words.

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