Take me to your leader

Organisations need business leaders who can adapt to changing circumstances, inspire confidence in the board and stakeholders, and meet challenges with equanimity, writes Patrick Dailey.

Patrick Dailey

Patrick Dailey has held senior-level human resources positions at Hesselt-Pickard, Lucent Technologies, PepsiCo, Herbalife and UK-based The BOC Group. He currently works with Chicago Change Partners, a Chicago-based consulting firm.

I am in the tempestuous world of modern business, leaders must be adaptable to changing conditions. If they can’t, they fail. To be successful, they must be able to confidently switch between reactive and dynamic approaches. The ability to be agile and nimble is as important as being proactive and capable of driving innovation. It requires skill to transition between these two positions. Leaders must also be able to identify and articulate threats (see Table 1). These challenges are somewhat controllable and require proactive leadership tactics. Reactive challenges test leaders’ early warning instincts, rapid response mobilisation, course correction skills and savvy.

Adapting to a changing market

 Stakeholders expect leaders to bring focus to a company, drive performance, offer transparency and provide support. However, the wider world is much more of a determinant. Concepts about of a company, are essential for its sustained performance and the longevity of its leader.

Inspirer confidence

Figure 1 illustrates the primary roles essential for executive success within a contemporary commercial enterprise. These roles define an executive’s contribution to an organisation’s mission and its long-term viability. Exceptional leaders should be able to articulate a convincing case for change and chart the path forward with a committed coalition. Their organisation are alert to game-changing signals in the marketplace that indicate risk or opportunity and have an innate sense of leadership, therefore, need to be updated and recasted as a consequence of the changing business demands of the 21st century.

An increased emphasis must be placed on the external arena where influence, driving ideas and connecting networks as well as tactics to protect the reputation for a company, are essential for its sustained performance and the longevity of its leader.

The path toward a sustainable competitive advantage is guided by men and women of character and razor-sharp vigilance.

Figure 1. Roles for executive success.

Set direction

Critical thinking

Temperament

Build the team

Influence stakeholders

Execute the plan

Table 1. Challenges faced by 21st century leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Proactive challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time compression</td>
<td>Leaders have increasing degrees of complexity to deliberate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility - personal and corporate</td>
<td>Stability and security; identity and integrity of their leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inaccurate predictive models</td>
<td>Long-standing predictive models no longer provide accurate decision-making support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent flight</td>
<td>Talent, like any other resource, will flow to the highest bidder with the most attractive value proposition.</td>
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Table 1 continues...