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Adaptive Leadership Skills: What's Needed Today

Become the Project Leader Who's Best Prepared for the Unexpected

The Changing World of Work Demands New Skills

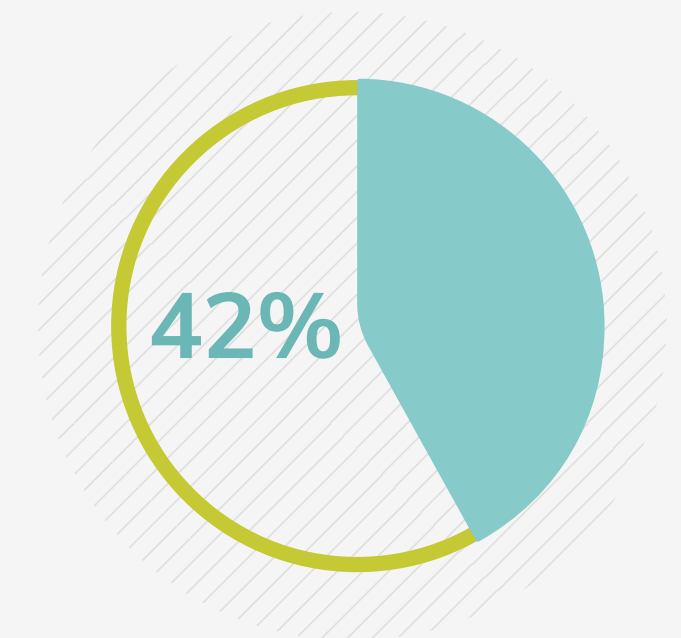
We're living in a time of radical, constant change — in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. To keep up, you need a shift in mindset, and you need a unique combination of new skills and behaviors that can equip you with the expertise to execute and lead in any context.

Work has gotten more complex, priorities are shifting more rapidly, and team collaboration has become more common — and more critical. Meanwhile, you're facing increasing pressure to help boost the bottom line, meet tightening deadlines, and expand your team's ability to deliver innovative work, maintain compliance, and outpace the competition.

The shifting world of work now increasingly demands:

- Developing new, relevant skills to be more effective
- Leading a team — motivating people to work smarter, mentoring and coaching them, and helping them navigate through ambiguity without losing focus
- Managing and getting buy-in from key stakeholders — building and nurturing relationships
- Understanding how the external environment can quickly change strategic priorities and alter the course of your work

This unique combination of challenges demands a shift in the types of skills we should be building. Instead of only focusing on the tactical or relational skills required to drive work forward, leaders now need an extra layer: the skills and mindset to lead projects and execute work in ambiguous and unpredictable environments.

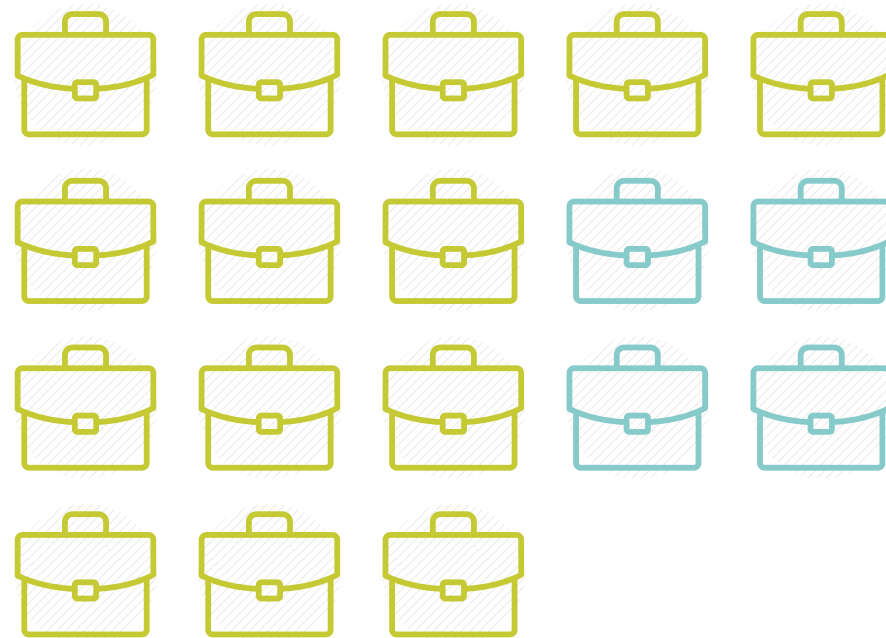


42% of major companies now believe that it is very important to invest in developing leaders — [Deloitte](#)



Adaptive Leadership: The New Way Forward

From innovative technologies like AI, machine learning, and automation to trends like outsourcing and globally distributed teams, disruption is everywhere.



In fact, 14 out of 18 industry sectors are either experiencing disruption or are susceptible to it.¹

To thrive in this digital transformation, you need to adapt to these trends and change your default way of thinking. As one CEO puts it,² these “change-agile” leaders:

- Have a clear purpose
- Think with the future in mind
- Fix what’s broken
- Take risks
- Strive for partnership

But how do you get there? How do you acquire that mindset and the critical skills to act on those intentions? You need to develop two types of skills:

Tactical and Adaptive.



Automation



Big Data & Advanced Analytics



New Access to Information



New Customer Strategies

Boston Consulting Group identified 60 major trends causing fundamental shifts in the way work gets done — forces including automation, big data and advanced analytics, new access to information, and new customer strategies.³

¹ Accenture. Breaking Through Disruption. 2019. <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/consulting/business-disruption-innovation>

² Forbes. 5 Leadership Traits Required for Digital Transformation Success. 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2018/06/14/5-leadership-traits-required-for-digital-transformation-success/#127393ce7595>

³ Boston Consulting Group. 12 Forces That Will Radically Change How Organizations Work. 2017. <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/people-organization-strategy-twelve-forces-radically-change-organizations-work.aspx>

1. Tactical Skills

To be an adaptive leader at any level of your organization — and everyone is a leader in some manner — you first need the foundational project management skills that give you the expertise to execute work successfully. You need deep knowledge on how to build requirements and scope work, manage risk, engage stakeholders, and negotiate with vendors.

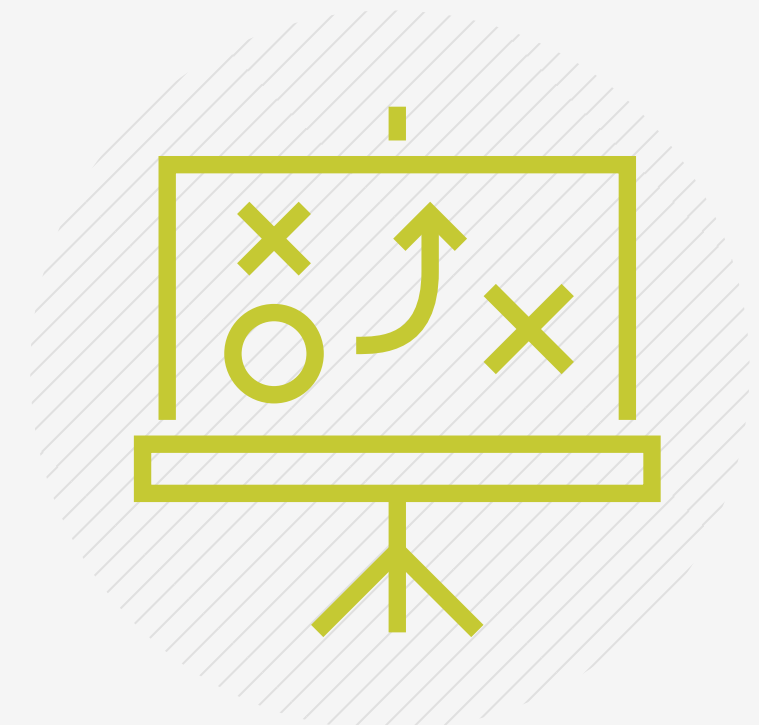
Among these necessary skills are the ability to:

- Build a solid project plan
- Manage schedule, scope, and performance
- Establish effective routines
- Maintain accountability
- Leverage modern approaches like Agile and Lean

Unfortunately, the old way of working and leading — the traditional “Command and Control” approach — no longer works.

Those styles of planning and leadership were based on old paradigms:

- A linear project and work-planning strategy
- A top-down organizational structure
- Working with clear, unchanging, and known outcomes
- Siloed roles



Tactical Skills

2. Adaptive Skills

While tactical skills like those mentioned above are critical for successful leadership, they are also continuously being undermined by shifting priorities and demands on your teams and how they're managed.

That's why, to successfully move forward in this increasingly complex world of work, you also need to be able to continually reassess your strategy, identify necessary course corrections, and make adjustments to your plans.

These are adaptive skills — skills that will further enhance your ability to deal with more variability, greater complexity, and increased uncertainty looking forward.

For example:

- Driving collaboration faster and across more boundaries
- Innovating by owning problems and designing solutions to emerging challenges
- Knowing when and how to drive change to accelerate performance
- Engaging and developing team members
- Making decisions and taking action even when there are unknowns



Building Skills to Prepare for the Unexpected

So, how can leaders set themselves up to lead amid the changes affecting the world today, while anticipating the changes coming tomorrow?

Unlike outdated leadership development designed for a different business era, leaders today need training that builds a set of capabilities needed to manage, lead, and execute despite increasing complexity.

Adaptive leadership equips you to:

- Make sense of your external environment
- Develop and use influence across teams
- Manage complex stakeholder relationships
- Make good business decisions to deliver optimal value
- Align strategy with work activity to reduce the performance gap
- Apply new ways of framing and solving problems
- Drive and execute change
- Build and lead effective distributed and diverse teams

If you're ready to learn more about becoming an adaptive leader, [contact Strategy Execution today](#). We've trained thousands of professionals like you with our innovative, research-based curriculum built on a foundation of university partnership.

Take the next step toward becoming a leader of the future.

Measure Your Adaptive
Leadership Skills:
Take the Adaptive Leadership
Practice Assessment Now.

[TAKE THE ASSESSMENT](#)

As the global authority in project leadership training, we equip your people with the complete package of technical and leadership skills — the mindset, adaptability, and expertise to lead and execute projects in any context. With curricula in adaptive strategic execution, project management, business analysis, contract management, and more, Strategy Execution partners with your organization to build skill sets and change mindsets. It's time to declare a new standard of performance.

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