

RECONSTRUCTING LEADERSHIP

ALIGN TALENT FOR CHANGE,
VALUE AND INNOVATION

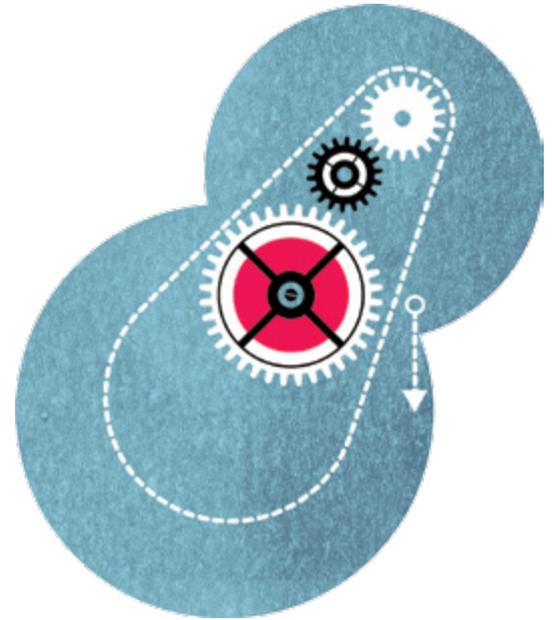
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CONTENTS

- 03 A new call to action: relevance
- 06 Keeping strategy real
- 08 The vital components of leading people
- 09 The qualities of relevant leaders
- 10 Resources

A NEW CALL TO ACTION: RELEVANCE



LEADERSHIP: Business people never grow weary of chasing it or proclaiming it.

Even though the basic elements of leadership remain constant, we always grapple with how to be leaders among our competitors. Commerce, unlike leadership basics, evolves constantly. For example, major market evolutions always seem to happen on or around the turn of a new century.

The twenty-first century version has been fueled largely by the accessibility of technology. It's personal. It's mobile. It's constant. On our hips and in our handbags, technology has changed not just how we communicate but what we communicate.

Everyone is a producer, not just a critic, of content—all types of content. Word of mouth has been amplified to unimagined degrees. We don't just recommend a new detergent to our neighbors, we like it on social networks and write reviews on e-commerce websites. Customers influence markets and talent pools 24/7. Geographic boundaries are no longer an issue for data transfer. Add this phenomenon to other innovations in products and manufacturing and we have, yet again, a whole new set of demands for corporate management.

RELEVANCE: It used to be that annual increases in profitability and market penetration depicted market relevance.

Since the 1950s, companies have put business planning in the realm of strategy. Like military campaigns, business strategy needed time to cook; the speed was in the execution.

Thanks to databases populated at warp speed and immediate recognition of the voice of the customer, today's companies must have strategic platforms that can absorb impact as much as they forecast the future. Companies must pivot—but they have to do it in a way that keeps them relevant on two levels: to the marketplace as a whole and to every customer, individually. Between the immediacy of communication and the speed of production and delivery, companies can only achieve relevance on every level by combining assembly line efficiencies, high quality and a responsive personal touch.

The thirst for relevance is an internal reality, too. A company's workforce is just another important customer segment. It has the same power and faces the same pressures as external customers. However, employees present another set of considerations to address in business strategy. Employees now want to see a path cleared to their professional satisfaction, not just competitive compensation and promotions. And their endorsement of a company's strategic model—their belief that it is relevant to them as well as to customers—now affects management's ability to lead change, value creation and innovation.

REALITY: Leading today's workforce can be as rewarding a management experience as entering new markets, creating new kinds of organizational value, or producing innovative customer experiences. First, though, executives must recognize the new strategic imperatives that separate the leaders from the managers.

Leaders emphasize the health of the organization: fiscal, competitive and emotional. They identify and mitigate the issues that can poison work environments. Leaders consider the workforce in terms of its talents, not as a source of risk—creating a positive, optimistic energy level.

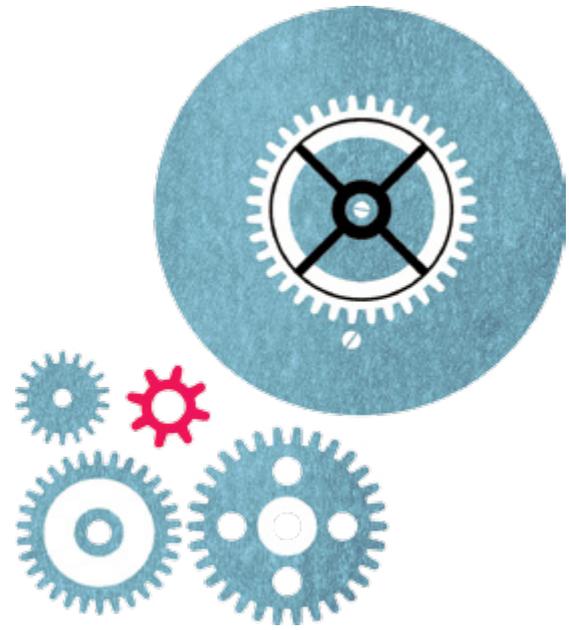
Leaders distill what is happening in the marketplace and share this knowledge with employees. Because leaders are candid about the impact of the business environment on the company, workforce adjustments like termination and reassignment don't come as a surprise.

Leaders put talent, not products or services, at the center of their business models. They assume that talent, whether resident in the company or sourced elsewhere, is constituted not just by technical skill, but by a connection to the company and its customers. Workers consider themselves to be customer representatives, whatever their specific roles.

Leaders align every workforce program with customer satisfaction, not just internal performance measures and cultural traditions. Besides obsessing over the customer experience with products and people, leaders elevate employee matters to the same priority level. They invite employees to think in terms of experience as well and to take ownership of the company's success.

Leaders keep things practical. Strategies included. There simply is no time to create strategic planning in a bubble and then manage its flow down into the organization. Strategic planning in this millennium has an element of scrappiness to it. Leaders keep it real. And they encourage employees to see themselves as part of that process.

KEEPING STRATEGY REAL



A hierarchical approach to setting strategy was appropriate for the era in which strategy first became a part of doing business. Every organization followed a hierarchical operating model and every decision generally moved top-down. This was how people were expected to work. And they had no reason to expect anything different.

Companies had more time to absorb customer and market data because there was less of it. Plus the data arrived at a slower pace. Even the invention process happened more deliberately; this was before Gordon Moore observed and recorded his “law,” generated by the production of computer power on a chip.

Technology has extended the reach of people in regions far from metropolitan hotbeds of invention. It’s also made us reachable for personal calls and emails wherever we are. People entering this century’s workforce are used to programmed time but for activities that center around them. Company managers often must help these workers learn how to focus outward as well as manage distractions that didn’t even exist ten years ago.

Besides the speed of technology, changes in society have influenced everyone’s career expectations. The introduction of democratic thinking and structures in every corner of the world has enabled people to think bigger about their own prospects – to push themselves and to ask for a return on their investments in schooling, lifelong learning efforts and hours spent at the office.

Time is not on the side of the contemporary leader. But a desire to be engaged—as workers and as customers – presents a significant benefit. Leaders know it, just as bygone leaders recognized the potential in the major shifts of their lifetimes.

Contemporary leaders use workers’ desire and capacity to engage for strategic purposes. They build reliable strategic frameworks that enable employees to own the process of serving markets, not just the tasks of executing strategy.

KEEPING STRATEGY REAL

1950s—2000	2000+
Assumptions about market needs and expectations	Verified market and buyer needs
Hyper speed to market in mass quantities	Limited runs of a minimum viable product
Tasks and tactics outlined for employees	Connected, compatible, incremental performance milestones
Fire hose of data	Big data
Gee-whiz features	The user experience
Cultural icons	Cultural markers
Mandates	Explanations
Skills-centric training	Customer experience-centric development
Annual assessments	Real-time feedback and adjustment

Leaders understand one thing: business strategy must be shaped in the marketplace and owned beyond the executive suite. To be a tool for leaders, strategy must be a tool for workers, too.

The biggest difference between command-and-control leader-managers and today's counselor-leaders? Today's leaders don't worry about how to keep employees in line. They think about how to democratize strategy without compromising competitive advantage. The people who deliver the company's products to market and take care of customers are part of the action.

Contemporary leaders help employees align with strategy by using deft structures that eliminate redundancies. These executives are not just rewriting strategy, they are rewriting management to eclipse any drag on ideation and execution.

The vital components of leading people

INTENTION: SETTING THE COMPANY'S PURPOSE

- Priorities
- Expectations
- Strategic sensibility
- Desire to create and contribute
- Ability to inspire a sense of destiny

ATTENTION: LISTENING, WATCHING, ANTICIPATING

- Perception of the opportunities within stressful situations
- Linking the business environment to the company's purpose
- Absorbing wisdom
- Assessing risk
- Noticing displays of natural talent

CLARITY: TELLING THE STORY

- Engaging constant, meaningful dialog around purpose, values, customers, best practices
- Articulating strategy and aligning it for every possible constituency
- Being authentic about the meaning and purpose of strategy
- Bringing the strategic model to life
- Connecting talent to strategy
- Establishing a context for each employee's role

READINESS: CLEARING THE PATH

- Incorporating disagreement
- Putting every area on point with the company and its markets
- Building a culture that promotes respect among functions
- Obliterating the need for siloes and sub-hierarchies
- Demonstrating openness to change
- Alerting to behaviors that aren't tied to core values, purpose, customers, best practices

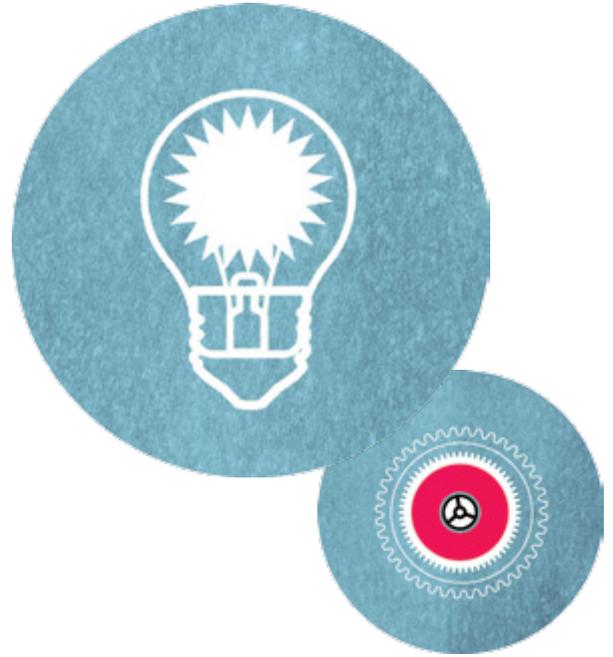
ORDER: ALIGNING TO EXECUTE STRATEGY

- Identifying the right talent at the right time
- Making it possible for everyone to think globally and act locally
- Setting a methodical approach to implementation
- Adjusting strategy in real time
- Making course corrections

DRIVE: INSPIRING ACTION

- Finding opportunities to collaborate
- Compelling action from every corner of the company
- Thinking big
- Playing to win
- Recognizing and acknowledging loss
- Getting ready for another day

THE QUALITIES OF RELEVANT LEADERS



- Honor diversity of thought, life experience and professional experience
- Listen to customers
- Relate to employees
- Read, study and benchmark
- Define success and its factors: staff engagement, customer satisfaction, market reputation, financial results, the sources of competitive advantage
- Grasp a situation by turning to employees and customers who they have already engaged with in regular conversation
- Share credit
- Admit, explain and learn from mistakes
- Remain impartial to everything but facts and shared values

Historian David McCullough said, "History ... shows how the demands of leadership change from one era to another, from one culture to another. The leaders of the past experienced their present differently from the way we experience ours. And remember, they had no more idea how things were going to turn out than we do in our time. Nothing was ever on a track, nothing preordained ... Spotting talent is one of the essential elements of great leadership. (George) Washington had it to a remarkable degree. Washington was not an intellectual. He wasn't a spellbinding speaker. He wasn't a military genius. He was a natural born leader and a man of absolute integrity. And he could spot ability when it wasn't necessarily obvious."

RESOURCES

[The Center for Leadership Studies, Paul Hersey](#)

[The Leadership Challenge, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner](#)

[A Navy Seal talks about chaos, leadership and innovation](#)

[The 3 leadership habits of innovation heroes](#)

[Managing Alignment as a Process](#)

[Life's Work: David McCullough](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHRISTOPHER P. JOCK is vice president and practice leader of Kelly Outsourcing and Consulting Group. Appointed to his current post in 2009, as global leader for KellyOCG's Center of Excellence (CoE) for Global Managed Solutions, Jock works with his team to assist companies with the operational management of their core and non-core functions, ensuring and increasing efficiency, productivity and quality.



No stranger to effecting and leading organizational change and transformation of varying size and complexity, he has been involved in well over thirty such projects engaged in various roles over his career. He is a well-suited and experienced to be a trusted advisor to organizations that might find themselves in similar situations. He is responsible for strategy, brand relationship management and business development and support for Managed Solutions worldwide.

ABOUT KELLYOCG

KellyOCG is the Outsourcing and Consulting Group of Fortune 500 workforce solutions provider, Kelly Services, Inc. KellyOCG is a global leader in innovative talent management solutions in the areas of Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Contingent Workforce Outsourcing (CWO), including Independent Contractor Solutions, Human Resources Consulting, Career Transition and Organizational Effectiveness, and Executive Search.

Further information about KellyOCG may be found at kellyocg.com.