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7 Crucial Leadership Skills for Creating Successful Organizations in a Constantly Changing Environment



*Leadership in an ever-changing world is a highly complex field. Leaders are asked to take actions and make decisions even more quickly and be accountable for them. They need to be or become physically and psychologically resilient while meeting the challenges and contradictions that come with complexities. New risks and an increased use of multiple technologies put further challenges on leaders. stars Alumna **Isabelle NUSSLI**, Chief Energizing Officer of [Leverage YourSelf](#), identifies 7 skills and qualities for leaders to deal with the challenges triggered by the need to constantly adapt.*

1. Be Emotionally Intelligent

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a fundamental leadership ingredient, especially in today's business world, in which cross-cultural interactions, the ability to attract, develop, and retain talent at all levels, teamwork, and increasing pace of change have become the new normal. EQ consists of five components: self-awareness, self-regulation (containment), motivation, empathy, and social skills. Only that which is recognized can be managed. If leaders become more aware of their emotions, feelings, behaviours, and drivers, they can become more effective. A developed EQ helps leaders find the presence and behaviour needed in a process of change.

2. Be Agile

Although many books, models, and theories have tried to define agility, it is more challenging to grasp for practitioners because – as Sandhya Johnson puts it – “agility is a complex, multi-dimensional, and context-specific concept that includes the ability to sense unpredictable, environmental change and quickly respond by flexibly marshalling resources, processes, knowledge, and capabilities.” Agile leaders need to be capable of transforming themselves (shift to a mindset of discovery), transforming their teams (build

small, diverse, empowered, and connected teams), and transforming their organization (co-create an agile organizational purpose, strategy, operating model and culture).

3. Be Able to Inspire

The ability to inspire is one of the top leadership skills that employees ask of their leaders. Inspiration is drawn from within. It is an influencing process that stimulates others to do something creative or extraordinary. It is a pulling and not a driving force that provides a sense of excitement and effortlessness. Especially in situations of change, when a leader wants people to do something different or to change, the desire needs to come from within, as it is one's values, beliefs, experiences, and preferences that increase the good feeling of achieving something.

4. Be Authentic (and Hold Yourself Personally Accountable)

Authenticity in the context of leadership means the self-awareness of one's fundamental values, views, and beliefs that, together, form a person's moral compass. Leaders are authentic if they know their moral compasses and align their behaviour accordingly. Authenticity is very personal. Thus, one needs to be true to oneself and hold oneself personally accountable for individual words and actions. Personal accountability is a crucial step toward the improvement of leadership and lays the foundations for a positive business culture. Being accountable means standing up for one's results, which strongly contributes to an increase in organizational effectiveness.

5. Be Courageous to Speak the Truth

It is not unusual for businesspeople to get frustrated and angry, but many of them would not find the courage to disagree openly and directly with someone else. There is a tendency to wrap difficult messages in euphemistic language. The reason behind this behaviour is the discomfort in the very moment of telling the truth because it can be shocking to hear the brutal honesty. One need not be brutal when it comes to telling the truth. Instead, one needs to combine criticism and caring, which reduces ambiguity and passive-aggressiveness and helps improve both relationships and business outcome.

6. Be a Good Listener

It is widely acknowledged and proclaimed that good communication skills are critical for a leader. But in the learning process of becoming a better communicator, the other half of the equation often gets neglected: being a good listener. Listening skills are important in all areas of life. Listening is more than just hearing sounds and words. Listening means putting time and effort into the activity, moving aside the self, and concentrating on the speaker. Good listeners tend to make fewer mistakes, get into fewer conflicts, and are more effective thanks to their receiving and being able to use higher-quality information.

7. Be (Self-)Reflected

The ability to practice self-reflection is influenced by several variables: a leader's strong, healthy sense of self and identity; the practice of testing reality on a regular basis; the degree to which leaders control/contain their emotions/impulses, anxiety tolerance, and acceptance of their own limitations. These aspects help deal with the ambiguity that leadership brings. Those who practice self-reflection have a much lower chance of adopting and/or exercising pathological behaviours or misusing power. Since most of an individual's behaviour is automatic and repetitive, it is only the new, the unexpected, and the discomforting that triggers self-reflection and encourages change.



stars Alumna **Isabelle NUSSLI** (isabelle@leverage-your-self.com) is a multiple Amazon bestselling author and an international senior executive specializing in business strategy, crisis management, and corporate innovation. As the chief energizing officer of [Leverage YourSelf](#) and the co-founder/chairperson of Responsible Leadership, she coaches business leaders and startups in capitalizing on their full potential. Isabelle's focus areas include navigating change and developing strong organizational dynamics at the individual level. She is the former chairperson of the NUSSLI Group. Isabelle holds master's degrees from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, INSEAD, and the University of St. Gallen.

This article was adapted from Isabelle's book [Beyond Corporate Governance](#). The views expressed here are solely those of the author and they do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the stars Foundation.

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