



## FROM CONTROLLING TO EMPOWERMENT: LEADERSHIP IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The automation of work and the digital disruption of business models make it almost impossible to predict the future with any degree of certainty. In such a climate organizations need leaders who can create a vision of change and frame it positively.

### From hierarchies to networks

Leadership must be driven by an attitude of openness and a genuine hunger for knowledge. Management needs to understand how technology can improve their business and the customer experience. Moreover, changing work force dynamics make managing people an increasingly crucial skill for leaders. Leaders need to learn how to keep their talented people happy, or risk losing them.

Traditional organizations have usually been structured as hierarchies. By contrast, the digital workplace is characterized by flat hierarchies, network structures and redefined labor and management relations. This requires networking on an equal footing with everyone, information sharing through networks, and empowering employees.

### Empathy and communication skills

The digital age needs leaders exploring new business models and collaboration with new partners. This asks for empathetic leaders who are able to adapt, build on the strengths around them, and relate to their environment. The ability to connect with and relate to customers, suppliers and employees is the force that moves businesses forward. In a connected age we need to instill passion and purpose around a shared mission. Empathy must be the driving force behind business communication.

Effective communication skills are an important aspect of any leader's portfolio of skills and experience. With transparency and flexibility becoming more important, stakeholders need to be well informed and aligned with what's important. If you can't explain why an objective or task is important, then you can't expect others to rally around it.

### From controlling to empowerment

Leaders need to be sure that the business is fit to react quickly to whatever the future may throw at it. That means filling it with adaptable, creative people, working in a culture where energy fizzes and ideas spark into life. A lot more tasks are given to people lower down in the organization. There's more empowerment and freedom given to people.

There's the basic question of planning for the skills that are needed: Which roles will be automated? What new roles will be needed to manage and run emerging technology? What skills should the company be looking for, and training their people for?

Business leaders need to concentrate on their organization's ability to learn, adapt and innovate. An investment in staff training and development can help alleviate skill shortages, either by providing training for new hires or by helping your current staff handle increased responsibilities or new technology.

### It's about people, not technology

Whatever technological innovations are ahead, it's the people that will make the difference between eventual success and failure. Hence, what companies need isn't just a digital strategy; it's a people strategy for the digital age. This means managing people well and as technology develops, creating the right mix of automation and human creativity.

That, of course, demands truly great leadership.

The digital working environment demands new competencies and skills from leaders. The coaches of MFB Resultants help your top management to reflect on the challenges of the digital world and benchmark their own digital preparedness. We support your team to develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in the digital world.

**MFB Resultants – We deliver results.**