THE NEW FACE OF LEADERSHIP

HOW THE EMERGENCE OF THE DISRUPTIVE LEADER IS CHANGING THE GAME

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N 2018, disruption driven by technology, consumers and artificial intelligence (AI) will accelerate. Disruption is no longer just a catchphrase. Cultivating leadership for this unpredictable environment is not only required, but it is also essential for survival. For leaders, disruption typically takes place on two levels. Firstly, long-standing business models are disrupted and, secondly, self-disruption takes place. Self-disruption is a natural outflow, as the two concepts are inseparable, according to KPMG’s Global CEO Outlook.

Every day, leaders must deal with many competing priorities. They have to:

- Act and deliver - with speed, urgency, and decisiveness
- Interpret and visualise the future, engaging employees and key stakeholders
- Lead from the front with humility
- Have an adaptive mindset in a disruptive environment with the ability to continually re-position the business

Constant change, even in uncertain times, is becoming increasingly necessary for business success. Progressive companies will focus the development of their leaders through non-traditional models.

The future trends in developing leadership are discussed in a white paper by the Center for Creative Leadership. In summary, they propose that leadership development will take the following direction:

- More focus on vertical development - rather than receiving training from a single expert (horizontal development), vertical development will be earned i.e. self-development.
- Transfer of ownership for development to the individual - the leader becomes responsible for their own growth.
- Greater focus on collective, rather than individual, leadership - leadership development becomes an inclusive process spread throughout networks of people.
- Much greater focus on innovation in leadership development methods.

As we look at 2018, what will continue to be the key business disruptors globally?

- Customers. Foremost, this is likely to continue to be the biggest driver of global disruption. How customers want their products, in what format, where and when will continue to drive disruption of any business model.
- Technological advances. Better and smarter technology allows for more efficient production processes.
- Competition. The rapid rate of disruption and emerging competitors in sectors previously protected by patents and high entry barriers.
- Where and at what rate customers want their products will continue to drive disruption of any business model.
- Organisational structure. The disruptive influence of technology and innovation.
- Disruption will continue, but what business trends can we expect in 2018? Ian Altman’s Forbes article - The Top 10 Business Trends That Will Drive Success in 2018 - identified some key business trends. Some of the relevant thoughts for this article are:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) drives customer experience — innovative leaders realise that AI in performing repeatable and redundant tasks, doesn’t affect human interaction, it enhances it.
- Communities embrace live interactions over social media - top companies realise that building greater communities engenders brand loyalty. Nothing drives strong communities better than in-person and live interactions.
- Social learning outperforms remote learning - social learning takes place through peer social interaction.
- Disruptive leaders, leaders that thrive in disruption. And growth.

These elements continue to democratisation leadership to all levels of the organisation.

Cultivating disruptive leadership for this unpredictable environment is not only required, but it is also essential for survival. Leaders should respond to this environment by not perceiving disruption as having a negative impact, but as an opportunity to be embraced. To achieve this, consider the following strategies:

- Challenge your own leadership and your role.
- Is your role one of positional power, or do you empower and influence your team to cultivate innovation, risk-taking, and creativity?
- The key findings from the PwC Global CEO Report explains the impact of robotics and AI on people, and how chief executive officers (CEOs) should respond.

"Twenty years ago, there were fewer than 700,000 industrial robots worldwide; today there are 1.8 million, and the number is expected to soar to 2.6 million in another two years.

"More than three-quarters of CEOs globally believe technology will cause job losses over the next five years.

"The role of the CEO is to not see this as a threat, but recognise the window of opportunity to rethink and redesign the way they employ, manage and interact with people.

Many senior executives are spending more time than ever on self-development and self-management.

Organisations get flatter, information is more readily available, and key empowerment becomes increasingly critical to succession.