

Growing as a leader



Contents

Summary	3
Leadership in times of crisis	4
Introduction	5
Communicate with clarity	6
Value your team	7
The Leadership Lid	8
Good to Great	9-14
WHO not HOW	15
What you have to do	16
Coaching for Leaders	17
Inward reflection and Outward trends	18
Leading with Purpose	19
12 Steps of Leadership	20
Conclusion	21
Success Story	22-23
Recommended Reading	24
Resources	25

Summary

A key part of being a great leader is about having self awareness and taking responsibility for your own behaviours and performance.

Do you aspire to be the best version of yourself that you can be? If you don't, how will you inspire others to follow you?

Being a leader is very different from being a boss. Leaders don't 'boss' subservient staff around, leaders inspire action, loyalty and commitment from an engaged team.



Leadership in times of crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the world of business. Now more than ever there is a need for strong, clear, decisive leadership to lead organisations through the crisis.

The most important skill in a crisis is the ability to adapt quickly. Your first response might not be your final response, and strategies may change along the way. That is fine. You can't be tunnel-visioned: if things change, you should too. Good examples include schools, gyms, and yoga studios moving to online classes or restaurants changing to delivery-only.

Remote working is also not to be feared. Social distancing has made it all but inevitable, but any lingering worries about employee engagement are unfounded. ADP Research Institute found some of the most engaged employees work remotely 80% of the time.

“The best leaders take anxiety and turn it into confidence.”

Marcus Buckingham,
Author and Global Researcher

Many successful leaders are focussing on enriching the lives of individuals, building better organisations and creating a more caring world by considering what you can do for others.

Author Jeffrey Hayzlett suggests 4 steps to become a better leader:

- 1 Encourage diversity of thought**
Motivate your team to think outside the box and give you more options to consider when it's time to make a move.
- 2 Create a culture of trust**
Communications need to be disseminated to every level of the organisation. Trust is earned and hard to repair once broken.
- 3 Have an unselfish mindset**
The best leaders show their teams they are valued, supported and trusted. Handled well, crisis management can actually empower teams, forging a sense of community by getting through tough times together.
- 4 Foster leadership in others**
With the right leadership, your team, your organisation, your community won't just make it through a crisis but become better because of it.

Introduction

“It’s not who you are underneath, it’s what you do that defines you.”

Rachel Dawes to Bruce Wayne
- *Batman Begins* (2005)

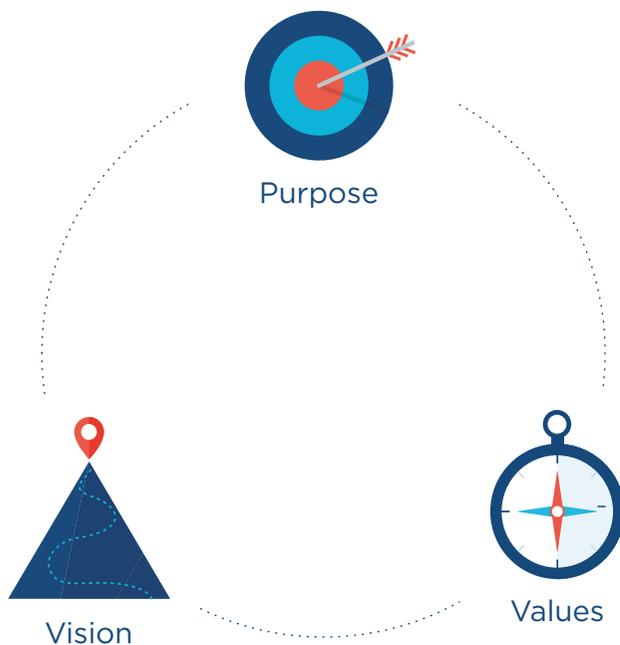
“Be the change that you want to see in the world.” said Gandhi, and what this means is: if you want something to happen, take action towards making it happen.

We know that Gandhi was a man of peace, so he never demanded that people follow him or take his instruction. He was a passive man, but an inspirational one, this meant that his followers respected him and were inspired to follow him and to take on board his ideas and suggestions. Can you be that kind of leader?

In other words, can you walk the walk? This is vital because what people see you do is far more important than what you say you do. You must embody the values, purpose, vision and strategy of your business. If you don’t - who will?

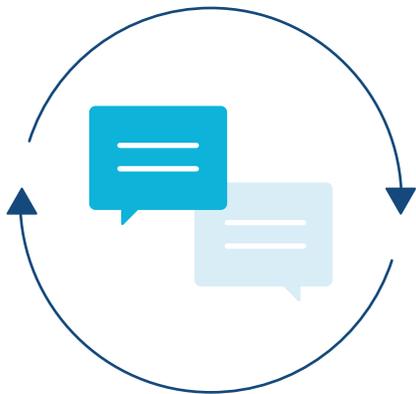
For example: A senior member one day arrives at work grumpy and uncommunicative, then the next day all smiles and chatty. What impact do you think this has on their team? How do you think this person was viewed?

If you want to see certain attributes in your team members you need to exemplify those behaviours yourself. You don’t attract attributes that you want, you attract attributes that you have, so make sure you are living and breathing the attributes that are required to fulfil your purpose, vision, values.



Communicate with clarity, consistency and regularity

One (or two depending on how you look at it) of the key behaviours to being a better leader is to communicate with 'consistency and persistency'.



This means it's not enough to say you have values. You must commit to them and live and breathe them every day. You can't just talk about them when you're on-boarding a new team member, you must review performance, decisions and behaviours against these values.

It's not enough to have your mission or purpose on your website or painted in 6ft tall letters on your office wall (these are great as reminders though) but you must communicate, act and exemplify your values, messages or mission regularly, clearly, persistently and consistently.

"The more I practice the luckier I get."

Gary Player, Golfer

This quote from Gary Player is important because it reiterates the importance of 'consistency and persistency'.

It means never taking anything for granted and always seeking to improve. You must continue to practice, you must reiterate your key messages, you must explain what you are trying to achieve again and so that everyone understands.

This is not to contradict our previous advice in our Growth white paper. "Albert Einstein famously said:

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

He was right. Is fear of doing something different holding you back? Are you running the business in exactly the same way you were when you started out? It could be time to review what's worked and what's not and make some changes."

Value your team and relate to them

With your team it's so important to listen, question, listen, and learn.



Your aim as a leader should be to help them to grow, learn and develop. Don't be afraid that they may grow past you. In fact you should actively seek to surround yourself with people who are brighter, more creative, more task focused and more intuitive than you.

Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz retired in 2000 and Starbucks began to decline and fail. He was re-engaged in 2008 and he described what had happened to his vision for the business in those 8 years.

Put simply, Starbucks had become a retail business that sold coffee. Under his stewardship it had been a people business which happened to sell coffee. He understood the key to Starbucks success wasn't just the coffee. It was the whole experience. And that experience is delivered by happy, engaged, motivated people.

To achieve a happy and engaged team, you need to be a leader not a boss. The idea of a 'master > servant' dynamic achieving great results is an outdated and deeply flawed concept.

That's why you must create a tribe...a tribe - with a flat or inverted hierarchy, that has bought into your company's vision and is dedicated to achieving it together.

This means you must swap the need to 'Command and Control' for an environment where you 'Support and Develop'.

"You can't have a tribe without a leader—and you can't be a leader without a tribe. A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea."

Seth Godin (Tribes)

The Leadership Lid

John C Maxwell who has written numerous books on leadership also talks about five levels of leadership and he describes the limits of the 'Leadership Lid'.

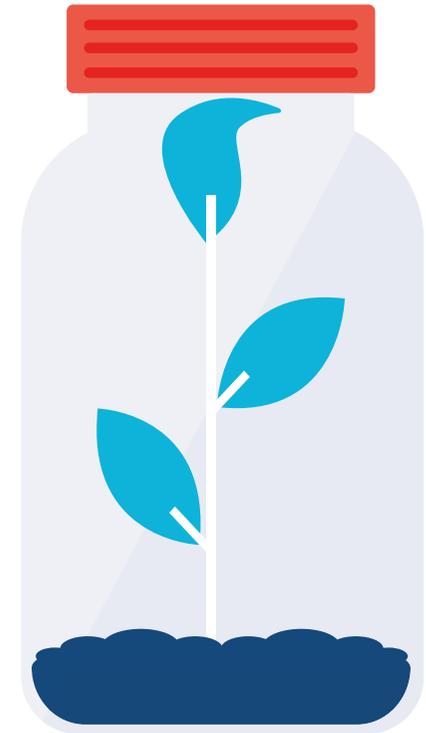
To visualise this lid, please imagine a figure in your head for your score as a leader between 1 and 5.

Say for example it is 3. That would mean you're right in the middle, you're a good leader, not bad, but not great. So if you're a 3 this is the lid for the organisation, this means the scale of organisational success is likely to be a 2.

However if you score 3/5 as a leader - what sort of people or tribe do you think you will attract to your 2/5 organisation?

"The people who make it to the top, whether they're musicians, or great chefs, or corporate honchos... they're the ones who'd be doing whatever it is they love, even if they weren't being paid."

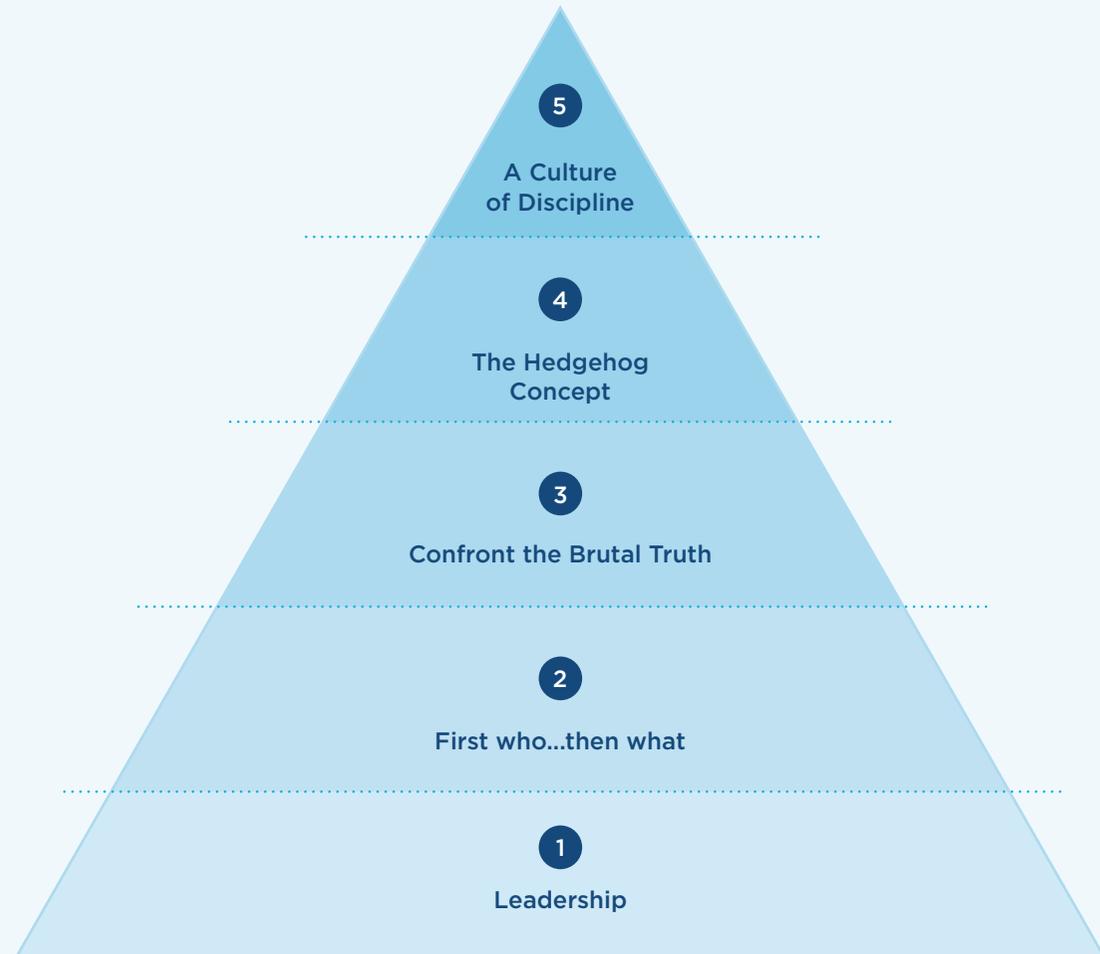
Quincy Jones



Good to Great

To help you lift your 'Leadership Lid' it's worth looking at another excellent author on all things leadership...Jim Collins.

In his book 'Good to Great' Jim studied the main differences between highly successful organisations and averagely performing ones. He uses five levels to describe the most successful organisations, who are invariably led by level five leaders. The attributes Jim identifies are...



1 Level 1 : Leadership

Many people mistakenly believe that amazing success lies in the flashy, 'larger than life' charismatic corporate genius.

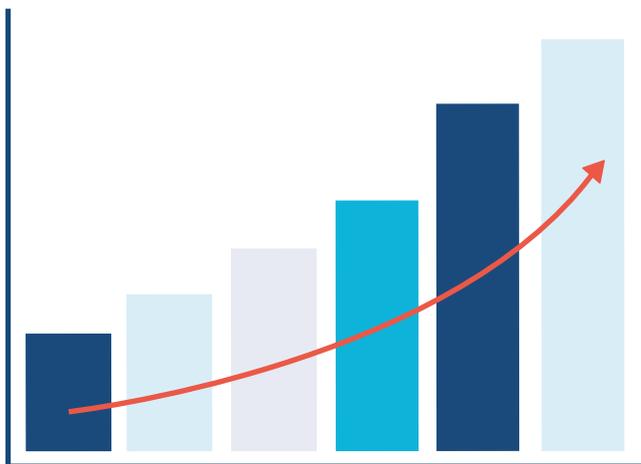
Collins demonstrates how this belief of the 'larger than life' charismatic corporate genius in fact is quite the opposite. Two traits unifying all the truly 'great' leaders are "Humility and Will".

Humility

Level 5 Leaders compliment their people for the businesses successes. When things go wrong Level 5 Leaders fully accept personal responsibility.

Will

If anything, a Level 5 Leader makes small steps daily; small steps that eventually build upon themselves and gain momentum until finally the progress becomes unstoppable. Level 5 Leaders are 'ordinary people quietly producing extraordinary results'.



2 Level 2 : First who...then what

Before blazing trails with a new vision and a new strategy, the first thing the great companies work on is...

- ✓ “Get the right people on the bus”
then...
- ✓ “Get the right people in the right seats on the bus”
- ✓ And if necessary “Get the wrong people off the bus”

The companies who successfully made the good-to-great transition understood, “People are not your most important asset, the right people are.” The great companies did not need flashy campaigns, gimmicks or generous reward schemes to motivate their team.

They discovered how the right people are self motivated, the right people demand excellence for its own sake, the right people cannot settle for anything less. With the right people, problems of commitment, alignment and motivation vanish.



3 Level 3 : Confront the Brutal Truth

You cannot make a good decision without first confronting the brutal truths of your situation.

Start with an honest and diligent effort to uncover the hard facts of your circumstances...the right decision then becomes self-evident.

Truly great companies have melded the habit of looking at the brutal truths and pay close attention to their real-time challenges. But this can be soul destroying without a second vital component – the faith they will prevail in the end. This means maintaining an eye on the long term or vision of the company during this short term pain.

“Part of leadership (a big part of it, actually) is the ability to stick with the dream for a long time. Long enough that the critics realize that you’re going to get there one way or another... so they follow.”

Seth Godin

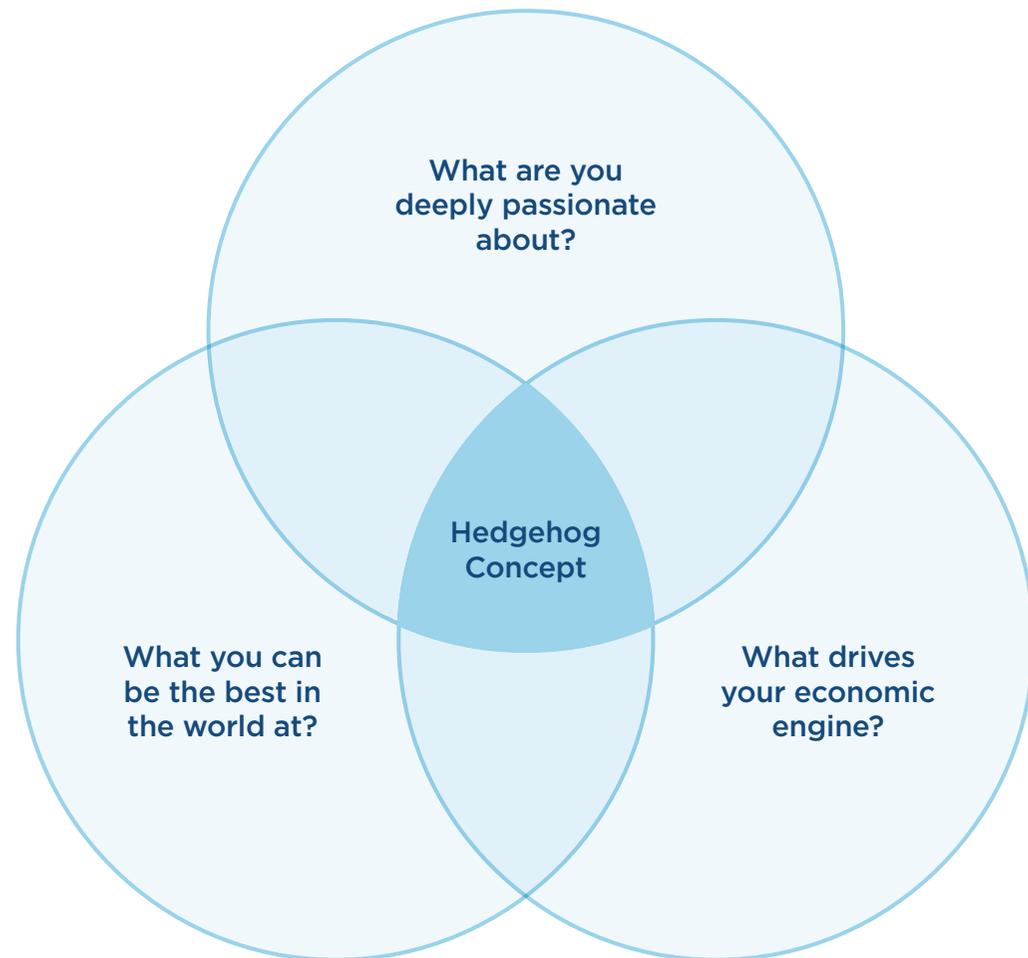


4 Level 4 : The Hedgehog Concept

Whenever attacked or threatened, the hedgehog uses just one strategy. It simply curls up into a ball.

The hedgehog does just one thing, incredibly well. The good-to-great companies do not only focus on what they must do to become great, they also focus equally on what they need to stop doing.

Great companies realise how some of their actions 'take away' from their main goal or purpose. They simply identified these things and stopped doing them.



5 Level 5 : A Culture of Discipline

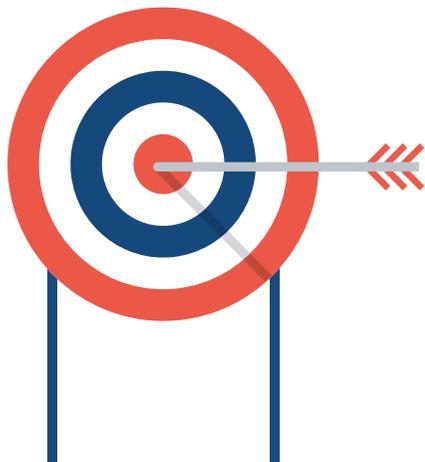
The good-to-great companies understand how driven, motivated and disciplined people need little bureaucracy to maintain discipline.

So good-to-great companies instill a culture of discipline by recruiting disciplined people. These people are engaged in debate about brutal truths and hedgehog principles. These people know what needs to be done and what work needs to be avoided or stopped.

Great companies create an environment, a culture, allowing the right people to do the right work, without overloading them with red tape. These people are then given the freedom and responsibility to achieve their goals through a flexible framework. But these people are also held rigorously accountable for their objectives.

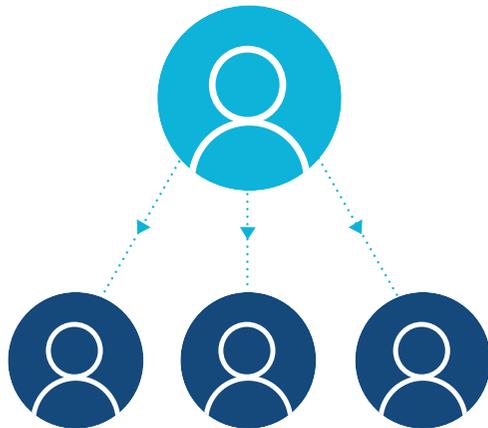
Good to read

Obviously, this is a very brief overview of one part of 'Good to Great'. You can of course read the whole book to fully immerse yourself in Jim Collins' ideology.



Try thinking WHO not HOW

This is a real skill that a lot of entrepreneurs struggle with.



It is rooted in the start-up philosophy of “It’s my business, I’ll do it, I know what’s best for my business, and anyway...no one will do it as well as me.”

If you want to be a true leader you need to delegate and you need to trust your team to get the task done. Even if it’s not done your way. Thinking WHO not HOW gets you thinking about who would be the right person for the task, rather than putting everything on your To-Do-List. This will free you to focus on the ‘Important/Not Urgent’ tasks on your list.

“I have two kinds of problems: the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Former U.S. President

He recognized that great time management means being effective as well as efficient.

In other words, we must spend our time on things that are important and not just the ones that are urgent.

- Important activities have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.
- Urgent activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with achieving someone else’s goals. They are often the ones we concentrate on and they demand attention because the consequences of not dealing with them are immediate.

When you know which activities are important and which are urgent, you can overcome the natural tendency to focus on unimportant urgent activities, so that you can clear enough time to do what’s essential for your success. This is the way you can move from ‘firefighting’ into being a true leader who will succeed and grow their business.

You can read more about the ‘Eisenhower Principle’ in Hallidays White Paper: Accelerate Your Growth (Link in Further Reading)

What you have to do vs What extra you can do

Similar to the Eisenhower Principle, you can also divide your role into four sections. leading, managing, doing, and coaching.

In most organisations managing and doing are the lifeblood of the business, if you don't do them your business won't survive. Leading and coaching require choice and voluntary action, these are the extra areas of leadership that will propel your business to great success.

Think of them as..

Leading

Invent the future, create the vision, inspire others to act

Managing

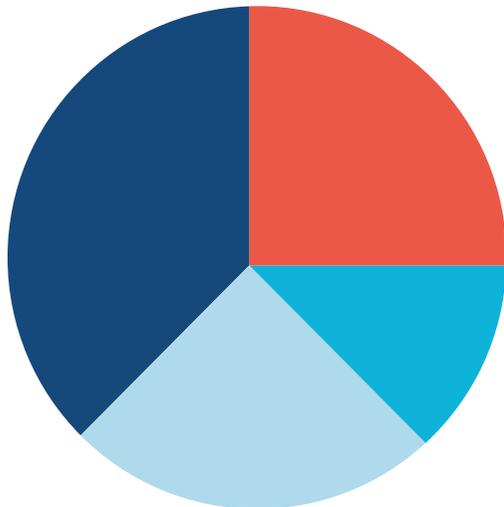
Directing others to act, translating the vision

Doing

Taking action, walking the walk

Coaching

Opening up new possibilities, maximising potential, developing people



Coaching for Leaders

Coaching is a vital tool for anyone who wants to succeed and grow.

Doing the 'GROW' exercise on your own will not be anywhere as effective as with a coach who will bring more solutions, ideas and reflections out of you, but it does give you a taste of how coaching will benefit you on your journey to become a great leader. These steps and exercises fit in well with Jim Collins thoughts and discoveries in 'Good to Great'.

All the best athletes in the world have a coach who helps them with the mental and physical preparation needed to be at the top of their game. The personal benefits of coaching are wide-ranging and can positively impact your career and personal life.

Coaching is proven to boost your confidence, performance, and improve your ability to communicate. One of the coaching exercises you can try out before engaging with a coach (but ideally with someone else to bounce ideas off) is the GROW technique.

GROW is an acronym for the 4 steps you should follow...

- 1 Goal**
Become a better leader but define it in such a way that you know you have achieved it.
- 2 Reality**
Where are you now? It is particularly helpful to have a coach here to avoid self delusion about what your strengths and weaknesses are right now. It is easy to spend time and effort working on the wrong things if you deceive yourself about where you are starting from.
- 3 Options**
What choices do I have? In order to open this up you can ask yourself open questions - what would I do if I had a magic wand, who do I need to help me, what would I do if money was no object?
- 4 What will you do?**
You need to agree your actions and arrange the next meeting where your coach will hold you to account. Explore the reasons for success, and maybe also discuss and address any lack of progress.

Inward reflection and outward trends

Take the time to step back and look objectively at your business and what else is going on in the world.

While GROW will help you look inward and reflect on how to improve yourself and your business, you can't only look inward to understand how our own business is doing – you must look at it in the context of what is going on outside.

When you first defined a vision for your business you did it by thinking about what was going on in your sector and what changes you expected in the future. You thought about how you could be different, how you would disrupt your industry, how you would make it better.

Your vision (or purpose) must stay true, but you may have to be flexible in how you lead to achieve that vision.

You need to be flexible because we live in a VUCA world – (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) which is changing at a phenomenal rate – but our purpose must stay fixed despite that – leaders must focus on the key things that they believed in, the key changes they believed should happen.

The term VUCA comes from the US military to describe the extreme conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq. We can adapt it to the business world, compare the present day to 50 years ago – even 20, 10, or 5 years ago. How much has changed? Nothing stays the same for long.

In this world we have to be ready to move fast, change and modify plans. We need to recognise that things which worked yesterday won't work tomorrow. It needs open minds, forward thinking, and focussing on your vision and goals. But being prepared to tailor your plan, your strategy, your actions to accommodate the VUCA world.



Leading with purpose

To lead with purpose it is vital that you are passionate about it and that there are other people who will feel inspired by both your purpose and passion.



For example, Gandhi, Mandela and King didn't invent their purpose – it already existed in the hearts and minds of all the individual people who supported these three causes before any of them became leaders.

These leaders merely shared the same purpose as their followers, what made them different is that they were able to articulate it with passion, it is this combination of purpose and passion that inspires people to follow.

These leaders were prepared to see a different future from anyone else and to always walk in that direction – irrespective of where everyone else was going, irrespective of how they would be seen. They were true to themselves, their beliefs and their purpose.

Do you have a purpose that is intrinsically linked to your business? Can you ensure that everyone in your organisation knows and understands the purpose? Can you then ensure that everything your business does is consistent with the purpose?

To achieve these seemingly huge tasks, you need to be true to yourself. People will follow you if they see that you are true to yourself and true to your purpose. They will follow and advocate your business if they believe in your purpose.

12 Steps of Leadership

1

Model what you want to see - set the visible example

2

Connect with the people you want to lead

3

Involve the team in what you are doing where you are going and how you are getting there

4

Study leadership - focus on it, develop your skills, learn

5

Practice what you have learnt

6

If you want your business to grow and develop, you need to grow and develop as a leader

7

Take Action

8

Think about the future to create and articulate your vision

9

Be determined and resilient

10

Take risks - be prepared to take planned risks where if you fail you learn

11

Love your people

12

Be Brave

Conclusion

To be a great leader we have to work on ourselves first. We can't make people follow us – people choose to follow a leader. This means that we need to work on ourselves, to be the best version of ourselves.

Paper Salad

Paper Salad design and publish greeting cards and giftwrap. Needing support to understand, develop and lead their expanding team they turned to Hallidays HR who applied DISC behavioural profiling to assist them.

Key Challenges

- ✓ Designers by profession, Paper Salad found running the business and managing a rapidly expanding team a new challenge.
- ✓ Leading, motivating and developing their growing team was important to them but they lacked the experience and confidence to do this.
- ✓ Instances of low level conflict and poor communication in some parts of the business was becoming a concern and undermining team performance.

Outcome

DISC Behavioural Profiling provided Karen and Claire with a better understanding of their own leadership styles. It also highlighted their natural behavioural strengths and where they might need personal support or development allowing them to provide more effective leadership to their team.

The team also gained a better understanding of each other, which has led to improved communications, creating a happier environment where everyone understands the role they have to play.

In addition, using DISC as a recruitment tool has given Karen and Claire peace of mind that their new recruits will quickly settle into their role becoming a valuable addition to their unique team.

“DISC Behavioural Profiling was fascinating. This wasn’t just the managements’ view, our whole team found it interesting and valuable for making the changes required. We underestimated the effect on motivation that investing in the personal development of our team would have.”

Karen Wilson and Claire Williams
Directors - Paper Salad Ltd

Recommended reading

List of books to inspire personal and business growth, recommended by the Hallidays team:

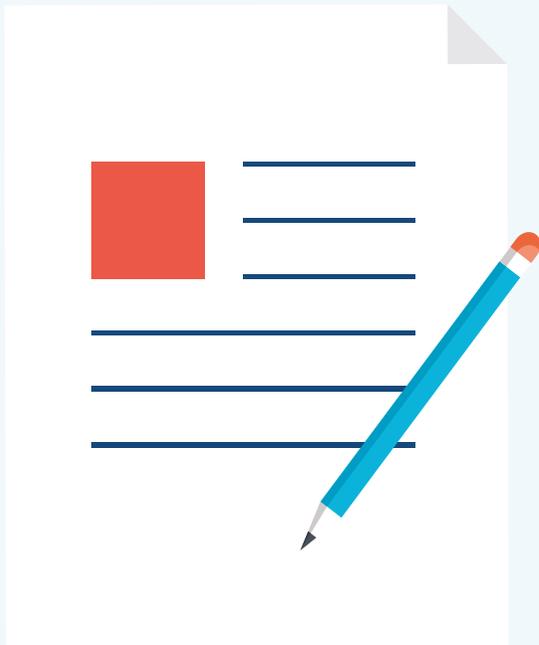
- **Good to Great,**
by Jim Collins
- **Tribes,**
by Seth Godin
- **From Mercenaries to Missionaries,**
by Martin Murphy
- **First Man In : Leading from the front,**
by Ant Middleton
- **Accelerate Your Growth : Hallidays White Paper,**
[Free download](#)



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