INSPIRE

THE NEW LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

WHY REMOTE INNOVATION IS KEY
REMOTE WORKING IS HERE TO STAY

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6 STEPS TO REMOVE COGNITIVE BIAS
BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN BIASES

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A STORY-TELLER TO TELL STORIES
BRINGING STORYTELLING INTO YOUR LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

LEADERS WITH
IMPACT

Leadership is the task of making things different.
Because of this every leader can be described as making an impact,
but not every leader can be described as an Impact Leader.

WELCOME

Leadership deals in change, it is the single unifying factor between every leadership model out there. Leaders are there to drive change, respond to change and push through change. Leadership is about providing the point of constancy whenever everything else is in flux.

Even so, there are times when the changes we must respond to seem as though they will overwhelm any leadership practice we have learned. In 2020 we have had to adapt like never before. Ways of working, usual routines and assumptions and, most particularly, our expectations of how we lead have needed to be adjusted.

Collaboration has been replaced by direction; direction has been replaced by autonomy; autonomy has been replaced by collaboration. Every tool that we have as leaders has been redefined and used in ways we have not expected, and the ways in which we individually approach leadership has exposed our fears, shortcomings and strengths.

Leadership is the selection and application of the right tool at the right time. Every leader has an arsenal of skills, knowledge and behaviours which respond to the context they are faced with. The skill of a leader is knowing which tool to apply, and seamlessly move between tools as context develops.

At the Møller Institute we believe in rounded leaders. A skilled leader is one who isn't dogmatic about one style or approach, but who recognises the need to apply a range of leadership abilities to meet organisational, ecosystem or commercial needs. This range of abilities are not innate but grown, and each leader must constantly look to renew their toolkit to keep ahead of the changes in the world around them.

In this issue of Inspire we take a look at leadership tools which each of us can use, learn from and incorporate into our leadership practice – from thinking about the impact we have on the world around us, to how we can effectively create change, to how we can share the narrative of what we seek to achieve, there are new tools for each of us to pick up and use.

CONTRIBUTORS
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> *Those leaders that lean into the possibilities that taking your change processes online present will be the ones that reap the benefits first. Remote innovation will play a central role in the future of any truly competitive and forward thinking business, so making sure those skills are front and centre of your leadership toolkit is key.*

Why REMOTE INNOVATION IS A KEY PART OF YOUR LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

Adam Billing, Associate, Møller Institute

Adam is an experienced practitioner, lecturer and facilitator, specialising in innovation culture, user-centred design, creativity and cross-boundary collaboration.

Innovation has become an integral part of the leadership toolkit; due to current global challenges this has rapidly accelerated to a new skillset which focuses on enabling remote innovation. Møller Institute Associate Adam Billing examines the value you can create, and discovers that rather than it being a 'make do' approach, remote innovation in fact creates new opportunities.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic began, businesses were facing vast levels of unprecedented change. With technological disruption accelerating shifts in consumer expectations, many organisations were struggling to keep up with constantly evolving demands.

And now that we're living through this health crisis - and preparing for the world beyond it - innovation will be the key to staying competitive in a continually changing market.

Based on our experience navigating this crisis ourselves, and helping businesses around the world use virtual design thinking to creatively solve the challenges they have faced, here are four reasons remote innovation is a key part of the leadership toolkit.

1. Virtual working is here to stay

Before the pandemic, organisations were already becoming more networked, with colleagues and partners based around the world, connected through technology.

All signs indicate that the residual impact of Covid-19 is going to be a much more blended mix of in-person and virtual interaction. Virtual working is proving to be a viable and, in many cases, preferable way of conducting business, so lots of organisations will never entirely return to their old ways.

It's vital that, no matter where people are, leaders have the knowledge and skills they need to empower teams to innovate. Not only can the process prove quicker, it can also lead to better results.

In our experience running remote projects and workshops, we have found that outcomes benefit from a blend of synchronous and asynchronous work. Enabling people to work in groups and individually gives everyone time to reflect, and it also makes sure all members of the team have an equal voice, regardless of creative style.

We have also observed in many cases that teams have greater focus when they work in shorter chunks of time (not five-day marathons) and that ideas and prototypes generated with digital tools are more convincing sooner - making sharing, iterating and getting buy-in easier.

2. Your teams will spot opportunities and threats faster

Innovation skills aren't just something teams apply to innovation projects; they influence all their decisions and behaviours. When teams know how to interact with customers and colleagues with empathy, brainstorm new ideas effectively, and quickly prototype and test their best suggestions, innovation becomes a natural part of their day-to-day working process.

When remote, teams can engage with customers quickly and easily - whether through a call, virtual focus group, or survey. This makes everybody more attuned to changing customer needs, and able to spot opportunities - and threats - before they arise.

3. It's time to think differently about who can be involved in the innovation process

The world is waking up to how remote working can fuel an entirely different approach to making innovation happen in organisations.

For example, when you're working remotely, you don't need a specific innovation team. You can bring any colleague from across the organisation - and any stakeholder from outside of the organisation - into a remote innovation project as and when you wish. You don't have to limit ideation to people with 'innovation' in their job description. You can get fast feedback from your customers by sharing prototypes you have developed with them online.

When leaders realise how easily they can engage their whole organisation - and their customers - in innovation, it becomes a much more inclusive and powerful process than ever before.

4. It's up to you to empower teams to shift from delivering to innovating

Business as usual 'remote working' and 'remote innovation' aren't the same thing - they follow very different rules.

When you ask someone to stop delivering and start imagining and experimenting, you're asking them to work differently, and to produce outcomes that will have different metrics from their operational work.

It's a leader's role to empower people to throw themselves into innovation work, secure in the knowledge that its purpose and values are truly understood by those in charge.

Because when leaders don't do this, teams don't feel confident to put their innovation skills to work and generate the kind of ideas that could really take your business forward. Half-hearted engagement from leadership leads to half-hearted innovation projects, which are a waste of everybody's time.

Sprintbase is a virtual design thinking platform, used by businesses around the world to find creative solutions to big problems virtually, and build innovation capabilities. To find out more, visit sprintbase.io

How to Ensure
the **success** of Virtual Global Teams

Allyson Stewart-Allen, Associate, Møller Institute

Allyson is an award-winning educator, advisor, author, speaker and non-executive director whose expertise in brand internationalisation is sought by leading businesses globally.

The leader of the future needs to be comfortable with shaping and enabling virtual teams to function. Allyson Stewart-Allen shares some fundamental tips on how to get the foundations right.

H ow much has your world has changed since March? Even before Covid-19, you were probably working virtually with colleagues, bosses or business partners in various parts of the world.

What has changed is the frequency that you – and all of us – are now doing so, while overwhelmed by the options. Zoom? Skype? Google Meet? BlueJeans? HopIn? WebEx?

Compounding the challenge is the virtual nature of the work, making an aligned, happy and high-performing team that much more difficult without being able to see the body language in 3D, or share the informal office gossip in person.

So what are some of the top tips for ensuring your virtual and global team doesn't derail? Here are a few – in no particular order – based on my over 3 decades working with a range of leaders and companies around the world:

Know the predictors of success, and test the team's views on each. Research shows high-performing teams that are physically distributed perform best when there is:

- ◆ A clear team purpose
- ◆ A culture by design
- ◆ Strong relationships/trust
- ◆ Balanced control and autonomy
- ◆ Use of varied media
- ◆ Shared accountability and responsibility
- ◆ Agreed team mandate, roles and rules
- ◆ Regular tracking and celebration of success
- ◆ Flexible structures/design
- ◆ The right skills mix

> *My advice is to ask each member to score the team on each of these 10 predictors on a scale of 1-10 (10 being best) so a rich discussion can follow about how the team operates and what it can do better/differently in the future. Where the scores are between 1-6, see if you can agree how it can get closer to 8, 9 or 10*

Invest the time to help team members build trust within the team. According to author Patrick Lencioni, this fundamental is crucial if the team mandate is to be achieved. With the dimension of trust in place, the team can move on to higher-order functions such as mastering constructive debate, achieving commitment, embracing accountability with the full attainment of commitments and focusing on collective outcomes.

One helpful exercise you can do with the team is the Accelerators/Decelerators activity. Each person on the team writes 2 PostIt notes for each other team member. On one they record "what you do now that moves our team forward" and on the other, "what you can do that would help us go faster." In this way, each member gets helpful feedback in a climate of trust with a focus on collective effort..

Finally, appreciate the range of business cultures in your team and use them as a lever for better decision-making. We know diverse points of view yield more innovative and resilient outcomes, so making the most of these different vantage points will help your team look at a broader range of options, outcomes and strategies than if it was more homogeneous. Examining each person's preference for how they like to relate to others, how they see the use of rules and how they use reason will uncover more about each member. And with these revelations comes more knowledge of each person and therefore more trust and positive feelings.

So next time you have a virtual global team meeting, why not try out one of these activities to help the team reset, relate and recognise that there is strength in its diversity and ways it can be even more high-performing. It's never too late…

LEADERS WITH IMPACT

Leadership is the task of making things different. Because of this every leader can be described as making an impact, but not every leader can be described as an Impact Leader.

Richard Hill, Associate and Client Director, Møller Institute
Richard Hill is an experienced facilitator and Programme Director whose ambition is to support teams, organisations and individuals to realise their potential through developing leadership, purpose and culture.

Think of a great leader. It can be anyone – they could be active now or have been around thousands of years ago. They could be a political leader, a business leader, a social leader, a scientific leader, a military leader; they could even be fictional.

Who have you thought of? Steve Jobs? Cleopatra? Henry VIII? Qin Shi Huang? Winston Churchill? Oprah Winfrey? Jacinda Ardern? Henry Ford? There are plenty out there to choose from.

Whoever came to mind, one thing is certain – when you considered their 'greatness' you weren't thinking about how they managed a balance sheet, their performance against KPIs or the shareholder value they created. You were thinking about the impact they created.

Impact Leadership is the conscious decision to bring broad horizons into your leadership practice, ensuring that you consider every aspect of the challenges you set for yourself and others. It demands the capacity to understand contexts beyond your own, to be able to empathise with and acknowledge experiences you haven't directly had, and most importantly requires an ability to think holistically based on your own and others' insights.

The purpose of Impact Leadership is to broaden the parameters of your success. It shifts your legacy as a leader from simple functionality to continued value. In the past it might have been the domain of a select few, but in the future, it will be an essential tool for leaders in all domains. Its fundamental task is to ensure positive growth in all affected dimensions, not just the one at hand.

Why Impact Leadership matters now

There are truisms which we regularly hear: that we are in a period of unprecedented change; that the world is more volatile and uncertain than ever before; that complexity is the norm; that technology is accelerating every aspect of the world around us.

These facts are undeniable, but where does it leave us? We are frequently confused as to how we should act and what canvas we must act on. One reason why we lose direction as leaders is that there seem to be too many fronts for us to pursue, with all of these possibilities disorienting us.

But another truth is that these many fronts are not going away and are likely to multiply instead of being reduced. Focusing on leadership as a reductive task where we narrow our attention does not give us a route to success. To be able to create order our attention must be expansive as we work to align the disparate elements which influence our organisations, teams and outcomes.

We are faced with an incredible degree of interconnectedness – products, services, societies, technologies and ecosystems all interrelate at an unprecedented level. Any development in one area requires a shift in understanding, outcome or behaviour in another. The way a mine operates in Australia impacts its social media PR in the US, drives its share price on the Stock Exchange in London, affects access to raw materials for manufacturing in Guangzhou and influences the availability of consumer products in Johannesburg.

No leadership action sits in isolation in our profoundly interconnected world. The context in which we now operate demands that instead of shying away from the many dimensions in which we work we must enlarge our leadership perceptions to include every aspect which we have impact on, however far it may appear to sit from our core endeavours.

What being an Impact Leader means

To be an Impact Leader is to exercise leadership in many dimensions. Taking the above example, it means to be able to understand and make judgements about: the environmental, cultural and socio-economic impact of mining in Australia; the public perception and media platforms of the US; the economics, needs and responsibilities of shareholders in the UK markets; the manufacturing and logistics mechanisms in China; and consumer behaviour and demands in South Africa. It does not require technical knowledge in each area (expertise in particular domains can be sought from technicians) but it does require the ability to think critically and join the dots between seemingly separate aspects. The capacity to discriminate between what is significant and what is irrelevant, and for that judgement to be trusted by others is paramount.

Impact leadership is not a set of knowledge but is a way of approaching the world. At its heart is the capacity to understand the chains which bind each decision we take into a series of reactions which in turn affect additional aspects of what we are trying to achieve.

Being an Impact Leader means that you exercise the capacity to step beyond bias and assumption to objectively consider your decisions and choices. It does not require a particular ideological position, instead it simply demands a process of enquiry and critical thought which shores up the final judgements made. Most leadership decisions do not involve objective 'truths' – leadership is the navigation of distinct possibilities rather than certainties – and Impact Leadership does not create deliver empirical 'rights' and 'wrongs', rather it guarantees that every impact can be accounted for.

Building your capacity as an Impact Leader

To develop your capacity to be an Impact Leader it is important to recognise where you sit. Impact Leaders are positioned at the horizon – they are looking ahead to what is new in equal balance to what has come before. They learn lessons and insights from the landscape leading up to the horizon and shape new possibilities which sit beyond the horizon in the light of this understanding.

To develop yourself as an Impact Leader there are four cardinal skills and behaviours which you must acquire to be able to position yourself at the heart of true impact

- Critical thought – rational judgement which evaluates both self and context is essential to ensure clarity of decision and direction. It does not require the removal of subjectivity, but instead moderates for it, allowing you to step beyond your assumptions and biases towards a greater 'truth'

- Trustworthiness – to respond in a range of domains, those who are expert in these need to be willing to trust your capacity to understand the linkages between worlds. Trustworthiness, or the capacity to act in a way which inspires others to trust in you, is a major component of leading impact.

- Purposefulness – understanding the profound objective that you are working towards creates a springboard for opening yourself up to the many dimensions you must consider as you develop impact. Purpose provides the light and shade under which you can balance the outcomes you create and the effects they have around you.

- Courage – being impactful requires us to step beyond ourselves and let go of the safety net of assumptions which give us comfort. Rather than being an unknowable skill, courage is an ability learned through the combination of capacity, autonomy, belonging and generosity. Impact requires us to be courageous enough to look beyond our needs and acknowledge the experiences of others.

To be impactful requires conscious action – it is not an accidental outcome but the sum of intent, action, and awareness. It requires a perspective on the world which makes you see the potential for positive development in multiple areas and to have a desire to see growth occur in each of these.

Our customers, employees and stakeholders demand that we recognise the broad scope of what we do; in return we must step up as leaders to place impact, not simply success, at the heart of our leadership practice.

Making your
DIGITALISATION
PROJECT SUCCEED

Mark Greenhouse, Contributor, Møller Institute

Mark is been involved with improvement of organisations be that through productivity improvement, lean, efficiency improvement or process improvement programmes - all with the aim of leaving behind sustained improved performance.

According to Forbes, digitalisation projects fail to deliver 84% of the time. Mark Greenhouse explores what is required of your leadership to ensure that this doesn't happen to you.

Digitise. Automation. Digitalisation, these words are used interchangeably but they each have distinct meanings and implications. How do the leadership skills your organisations need in 2020 and beyond allow you to leverage them to create value?

Let's start with what the terms mean.

- Digitise, the conversion of "analogue" information into data.

These might be your holiday snaps which now sit in the cloud rather than a paper, your new motor insurance contract which is sent as an email attachment rather than a paper document, or the film downloaded in lockdown, no longer a VHS from the rental shop - all items provided in a digital, data format.

- Automation, the implementation of technology, using data, to complete consistent processes, quickly, with limited human interference. It can include decision making processes.

As a result of automation we now book seats on flights, set-up Direct Debits, produce sales reports, have machines which monitor patient temperatures and blood pressure without human interaction.

- Digitalisation, the term for the social implications of increased computer assistance (from digitised and automated processes) for the economy, society and (organisational) culture.

Digitalisation determines how you, your customers and your suppliers could behave and benefit when faced with this increasingly digitised and automated world.

Digitalisation comes from adopting the technology and adapting the value chain and behaviours. This is what most of us are trying to achieve when we embark on digital transformation projects.

Consider a couple of examples.

- Through the adoption of online ordering digitised and automated processes enable the customer to check reviews, see stock levels, make payments, and track deliveries in real time. The customer is now part of the value chain, not just the final single transaction. The business has outsourced activities (and costs) to you whilst simultaneously driving your engagement in the transaction.

- In a healthcare setting the digitised and automated machines which take blood pressure and temperature release nurses to deliver other value activities with their time. This ensures that these highly skilled and extensively trained team members are able to focus on more critical issues beyond data collection.

This coordination of adoption and adaption requires leadership in two key areas: visibility and vision.

With visibility of its' total value chain and the underlying processes, an organisation can begin to understand how it delivers and how to do so effectively and efficiently. 'Visibility' means sharing data, information and Insights across the whole value chain regardless of whether these are positive or not. This ultimately highlights issues, areas of concern, potential failure and risk – but also opens the door to new opportunities.

Vision is required to challenge the roles, assumptions and activities or processes of an organisation in order to be able to remodel the value chains to produce better outcomes, all along the chain.

To be able to do this, what does this demand of our leadership skills post-2020?

Leaders will recognise that improvements and the benefits of Digitalisation will not come to a single person or organisation, they will come across the whole value chain.

This therefore requires 4 main areas of critical skills:

- Collaboration & Engagement

Leaders will lead across multiple boundaries, where they have little or no authority. Engagement and feedback from customers, suppliers, and the wider community (including social media) will be encouraged and utilised. Digitised and automated processes provide opportunities for improvement. Leaders will need the ability to manage the conflict and uncertainty these opportunities create and to support collaboration.

- Systems Understanding

The collaboration skill will need to be underpinned with shared knowledge of the total value chain and its processes. Insights will be needed on changes that increase or reduce the performance of the total value chain and the value it delivers. The human interaction with changes will be a crucial component in this knowledge.

- Enablement and Empowerment

The breadth of a value chain from suppliers to customers means that leaders should allow for increases in innovative and local decision making. Those carrying out processes should be empowered to communicate and enable improvements, through agile feedback and evaluation techniques.

- Continuous Learning

Digitisation allows technology, customer and suppliers to be involved in the value chain, decision making and improvements, in ways we have only just begun to discover. Tasks may be automated or completed by others, taking tasks away from existing staff. We need to focus on continuous learning to ensure this happens, ensuring we adapt and adopt new technologies and that staff can develop new value adding skills and experiences.

Can you create the visibility and vision to let the leadership skills flourish to get you into the 16% of digitalisation projects which succeed? We ignore the role of leadership in delivering technical projects at our peril – it can be the factor to tip the balance of failure and success.

NEWS

A round-up of news and updates from the Møller Institute

The people and place for your leadership and professional development

"**THE CARE I RECEIVED AT MØLLER INSTITUTE MADE ME FEEL WELL LOOKED AFTER AND ALL OF THE STAFF WERE FRIENDLY AND JUST FABULOUS.**"

NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR JOINS MØLLER INSTITUTE

In June 2020 the Møller Institute Board were delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Richard Leather as the new Managing Director of Møller Institute from September. Richard joins the Institute with a wealth of experience in international business development. He has held a broad range of posts in New York, Frankfurt and Sydney as an adviser to governments, corporations, investors and industry groups focusing on corporate strategy development, international trade and investment. He is a former Australian Chief Trade and Investment Commissioner to the

European Union and to the USA and former Consul General in Frankfurt and New York. He is currently based in Copenhagen and will be relocating to Cambridge later this year.

Richard said "I am proud to have the opportunity to work with the team as we guide the Møller Institute through the next stage in its development. The Møller Institute has built a unique position at the intersection of academia and industry. This will prove invaluable at this time of unprecedented uncertainty and disruption and I look forward

to working with our clients and our partners as we position for recovery and growth."

This is a challenging time for Møller Institute, like so many institutions, but Master Professor Dame Athene Donald said "The impact of the pandemic coupled with new leadership gives the Møller Institute a moment to reconsider its place within Cambridge and to grasp new challenges as the global economy starts to recover. There are exciting days ahead and I look forward to working with Mr Richard Leather."

NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MØLLER INSTITUTE AND WITH CHEUNG KONG GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

We are delighted to share news that here at Møller Institute at Churchill College, in the University of Cambridge, we have partnered with Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business (CKGSB) and have jointly designed a new online programme called *Igniting Innovation for Impact*. The programme draws together the different strands of impact innovation and brings a leadership lens which supports participants to understand how they can create long-lasting and genuine impact through their roles and organisations.

MØLLER INSTITUTE ILLUMINATE TOWER BLUE FOR THE NHS

During the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Møller Institute was temporarily closed for on-site executive education, conferences and events, however, the on-site bedrooms were being used to provide much needed accommodation to key workers from the NHS. In total Møller Institute provided over 4,500 bed nights.

The entire Møller Institute team are immensely proud to have supported these NHS heroes at such a challenging time, and it was a moving moment when on Thursday 30 April we illuminated the iconic Møller Institute Tower with blue lights and the NHS logo to thank and acknowledge the incredible work of the NHS and all key workers.

We were delighted to work on this project with our audio visual partners, Venue Audio Visual, who along with their partner Solitech donated their time and resources to light up the Tower, thank you.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A STORY-TELLER TO TELL STORIES…

Steve Weiner, Associate, Møller Institute
Steve is an experienced coach and facilitator, Steve works with individuals and organisations around the world at all levels focusing on real-time practice of effective communication.

What is the best way of getting your message across? Steve Weiner argues that storytelling is a critical part of the leader's toolkit, and suggests ways you can bring it into your leadership practice.

Whilst working as a commercial litigator in London, I started moonlighting as a standup comic (mainly because my mum said I was funny). I repeatedly humiliated myself above pubs around England for next to no money honing my craft until, in 2008, whilst working as a performance coach for a global law firm, I won a prestigious national comedy competition. Despite my mum's support, the victory was a shock.

Signed by one of the largest comedy agents in the UK, over a number of years I ended up performing around 1500 live performance comedy shows around the UK plus lots of TV and radio work on the side. Ah….live comedy. Remember that?!

Anyway, that's interesting information for me but it's not particularly useful for you. The important question is what did I actually learn from the experience and how might it be useful for business leaders – in a real, grounded way?

If you've ever watched live or recorded comedy, you'll know that some of the best comics make you laugh because they make you recognise something that is universal. In other words, they provoke laughter because they highlight something amusing or strange you already know but hadn't quite connected with. It might be how ridiculous people appear when

they try to stifle a yawn in the middle of a conversation, how difficult it is to renegotiate a mobile phone contract or how most cats are just out of emotional reach. Whatever it is, it's something that makes you realise (or visualise) that, as human beings, we share basic experiences.

It's this 'connectivity' and narrative thread that helps observational comics build trust, chemistry and rapport with an audience. Theoretically, it's simple - the more they paint a picture of shared experience, the more chance there is of more people laughing out of recognition. Of course it's more complicated than that but this hypothesis serves to illustrate a relevant point. In the leadership development context we are not interested in the funny. This isn't the point or a legitimate goal. The transferable lesson from comedy it that a key skill for leaders needing to capture the attention of and motivate those that they lead is being able to connect with what we will call the 'story of us'. How

can we, as leaders, help our people and teams feel like they are in the same boat as us using narrative and story to build trust?

I'd argue that the use of story as a leader isn't a soft and fluffy performance skill for big set-piece events behind lecterns. It's a way of thinking; of auditing your communication style to help others to connect with the real you, to breathe life into potentially dry information and to ground theory in real, gritty and emotionally loaded experiences.

There's a problem though. The word 'story' is loaded. I hear leaders telling me all the time that they are not 'story-tellers'. "I'm not paid to tell stories, I'm paid to lead a team and manage the business…", they say. I don't think that's true. We all tell stories. And we do it well. We just don't necessarily know we're doing it. Some work suggests 85% of the time parents spend with their kids is in story-telling mode. It fires their and our imagination, building trust and passing on knowledge. Something happens, though, when we come through the revolving doors of the office (or appear awkwardly on

Zoom). I call it the 'reverse Superman effect'. We lose the ability to tell stories because our 'shadow voice' (the DVD commentary on our life – that little voice that undermines your confidence or questions your ability) tells us it's not appropriate to tell stories. It's unprofessional. It's not 'needed'. The reverse is true. If a leader is able to relay his or her experience of a set of events, a threat or a development they are more likely to put their team or team member into neuroscientific 'reward' as opposed to 'threat'. Stories provoke a biochemical reaction – they build trust, create warmth and make dry facts sticky. Using (as opposed to 'telling') stories also doesn't need to involve humour, shock or wackiness. Stories just need to relate to and connect with the information the leader is trying to impart.

It's here where we need to understand the difference between 'being' a story-teller and using the skill of telling stories.

It's also about recognising that stories aren't always appropriate. It's about having the awareness to spot situations where the use of story might add value. And avoid telling them where it would have the opposite effect undermining

rapport and trust. After all, from the world of comedy and joke writing, if it doesn't add it subtracts…

When should leaders 'use' story?

As Harvard Professor Marshall Ganz tells us, "Leadership is accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty". To this end, he continues, "like a poem, a story moves by evoking the emotional content of a particular moment through which we can grasp insight into the values at stake".

So, how can leaders think about using story in a real, practical way to capture both the hearts ('emotional mapping') and the minds ('cognitive mapping') of their people and/or teams to bring clarity to a situation or challenge?

I'd argue that it's all about mindset and not performance. Yes, leaders can work on their presentation 'style' and 'personal impact' but I think it goes much deeper than that. It's about planning and mental preparation in the first instance.

Stories, I often suggest, are a bit like the wrapping around a gift. They make the gift attractive, they 'hook' your communication recipient's interest and they make your recipient feel like they've connected with you. Most importantly, they want to see what's inside. Ever been given a gift

in a plastic bag because the giver couldn't be bothered to wrap it nicely? It's a curious feeling – I'm grateful for the gift but I don't feel like you really – emotionally – wanted to give it to me.

What, therefore, should leaders think about before crafting a specific story?

So, before wrapping the gift, it's all about purpose. Stories start with purpose. You've got a meeting with your team. Something has happened/ is about to happen and you need to deliver a message. Is there a story you could tell that would breathe life into your purpose?

To un-earth the purpose and your link to it, try thinking about the following questions:

1. Why are you communicating this message?

2. Why to this group, now/today?

3. What do you want them to think, feel or do as a result?

4. What is your personal experience of this topic, situation or challenge?

5. Why are you communicating this message?

It's in answering number 5 where the 'rubber hits the road'. The answer isn't just 'because I'm charge of the team' or 'because I'm the most senior person'. It's about why they should listen to and respect you in this specific context. What is your

personal connection with this subject-matter? How does that help your team members 'get' you and how does it help them understand why they need to connect with your purpose? How can you tell it in a way that places an emotional picture-frame around facts?

As with any new skill, it's about practice. It's about finding your own, authentic way to navigate through a new behaviour. And it's also about giving it a go, making mistakes and then having the humility to learn from the experience. When a presentation, conversation, meeting or situation goes badly, are you taking the time to analyse what went wrong and to make changes in time for the next opportunity?

In comedy we talk about the fact that you learn nothing from a good gig. I would argue that the same applies to leadership.

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

Lorraine Warne and Kate Kirk, Contributors, Møller Institute

Lorraine is a leadership coach and trainer with 20 years' experience, working with leaders of small start-ups to executives in global companies. Kate is a writer and speaker, and an expert on entrepreneurship in the Cambridge technology cluster.

If you are engaging with others, it is not just the practice of communication which is important. The individual words you use are critical to the success of your message. Kate Kirk and Lorraine Warne look at how being a 'word detective' can help you pitch your message perfectly.

Up to 90% of a leader's job involves communication, whether they are sharing a vision, trying to motivate teams or deal with a crisis. In our post-Covid world, it is more important than ever that leaders have the communication skills they need to get their messages across.

There are plenty of communication channels for leaders to use, but now that we're all much more familiar with operating online, it's clear that good verbal communication is absolutely critical. Virtual meetings make it much harder to read the physical clues that normally help us to understand each other, so the words we use are more important than ever. Here's an example of what we mean:

There's clearly something going wrong here, and if you can put your finger on it (that's a clue), you can learn how to create a picture (that's another clue) and get your messages across.

We all have innate neurosensory preferences. They impact how we see and interact with the world, and how we interact with other people. There are four categories, visual, auditory, kinesthetic and auditory/digital. We'd love to go into a lot of detail on the neuroscience behind these preferences, but in this article, we're more keen to give you a couple of tips to help you understand your own neurosensory preferences, and how to spot those of others. Why? Because if you only ever communicate in the style you prefer, those with different neurosensory preferences won't hear or identify with what you say.

Here are a couple of the questions from our forthcoming book, Leadership after Lockdown, that are part of a test to help you identify your own neurosensory preferences:

1. When I am on holiday and at the beach; the first thing that makes me happy to be there is:

a) The feel of the cool sand, the warm sun or the fresh breeze on my face.

b) The roar of the waves, the whistling wind or the sound of birds in the distance.

c) This is the type of vacation that makes sense, or the cost is reasonable.

d) The scenery, the bright sun, and the blue water.

2. When I feel overwhelmed, I find it helps if:

a) I can see the big picture.

b) I can talk or listen to another person.

c) I can get in touch with what is happening.

d) I make sense of things in my head.

Which of those descriptions most appeal to you? If you liked (a) for question 1 and (c) for question 2, you may well tend towards the kinesthetic. If you preferred (d) for question 1 and (a) for question 2, you may be a visual person. You need to score the full set of questions to get a clearer result, but you can also listen to yourself in day-to-day life, and spot what kinds of words and phrases you use most often.

So in the example, the clues are there. One of the speakers is visual – they use the word 'see', because they like to think in images, pictures and patterns. The other is kinesthetic, they use the word 'feel' because that's the sense their brain is wired to respond to, they like to 'grasp' things rather than 'see' them. How do you respond if you spot this difference? Reframe your message to match the other person's preference.

By noticing the verbal clue in the first exchange, the first speaker has been able to reframe their message and create a stronger connection.

So try being a word detective. Listen to how other people talk and see if you can spot the words that identify their neurosensory preferences. It takes practise, but you'll not only end up with better verbal communication skills, but also better listening skills. A win-win.

6 STEPS TO REMOVE COGNITIVE BIAS FROM MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

Tobias Baer, Contributor, Møller Institute
Tobias is a pioneer in data science and the application of analytics and psychology to risk management.

The ways in which we perceive the world around us have been challenged by the BLM movement, and an increasing acceptance across society that structural inequities need to be confronted. Leaders need to be aware of how their own biases can be managed and understood so that they can make better judgements about their actions. Tobias Baer examines ways in which we can all counter our personal biases every day.

Thinking of our colleagues, we see cognitive biases every day – the overconfidence of project managers promising IT migrations faster and cheaper than anyone before, the interest bias of colleagues resisting change, the anchoring of this year's budget in last year's, the overoptimism leading to disastrous mergers, and so on. Luckily, we ourselves tend to have the experience, self-awareness, and mental strength to avoid such cognitive biases.

Think again – do we really? Actually, cognitive biases are no character flaw – quite to the contrary, they are hardwired into the human brain and as necessary as the oxygen in the air for our brains to make the tens of thousands decisions small and large we face every day. Each of us has them – but because one of them is overconfidence, we just tend to not be aware. Issues arise only if our brain takes these shortcuts for important decisions where these biases hurt us, our company, or other stakeholders.

Here are six simple techniques I use myself to counter typical biases when making important decisions:

1. Pre-mortem. This powerful bias-buster is a simple question: "If my decision turned out to be wrong, what would be the most likely reason?" Or if I am about to reject a candidate: "What hidden strengths am I most likely to overlook?" The answer very often informs the next two steps.

2. Smash overconfidence with data. If I have a strong hypothesis (maybe even think something is a done deal), I try to find some data that contradicts my hypothesis with a quick, often dirty analysis. For example, if I believe "everyone likes to read my blog," then it's helpful to find out what percent of my connections actually read it.

3. Bust the confirmation bias. If the data conveniently supports my hypothesis, then I ask myself whether there could be an alternative explanation. We usually look at aggregated data but often the underlying distribution of that tells a very different story. For example, if the statistics show that your customers, on average, hold 1.7 credit cards then it's easy to conclude that practically everybody has a credit card, which may influence your product design. A closer inspection of the data might reveal, however, that 40 percent of customers have no credit card at all and that the average was heavily skewed by prepaid gift cards or fuel cards for a huge corporate fleet.

4. Be your own devil's advocate. Other people have this wonderful ability to see problems where you see only opportunity. If you don't have a critical person on hand to challenge you, then try to think of a slightly obnoxious person that tends to disagree with you and ask yourself "What would this person say now?" (Note: if such a person doesn't exist in your life, you may be at the receiving end of the sunflower effect where everyone follows the leader, in which case extra care is advised!)

5. Use the wisdom of the crowd. Following the masses is a double-edged sword as you could fall victim to the herd effect – but I do usually look at what others are doing and ask myself how likely it is that so many people got it wrong if their actions contradict my hypothesis. For example, if I am smitten by a new gadget, online reviews can provide a healthy dose of skepticism. If, however, all the people writing 1-star reviews used the gadget in a different way to my own intended use, then I can make a much better informed decision to buy it anyway.

6. Run a trial. We've covered many, though by no means all of the most common biases so far, but if I still think I'm at risk then I have one last golden rule: whenever possible, run a trial first. In a business context, it may be faster to trial something in a mock setup than to spend weeks or months on analysis and debate in an attempt to find the "perfect" answer. It also works in your private life: if you fear that embarking on a two-week cruise could trigger marital strife, why not tag a 1.5-day cruise onto your next traditional holiday trip as a trial?

These are my six simple, DIY-style steps to bust the bias. Do a pre-mortem and a quick data analysis; then challenge your data's distribution and let both the devil's advocate and the crowd speak up. And a trial closes the deal.

NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH:
LEADERSHIP FOR A THRIVING WORKPLACE

Dr Olivia Remes

Olivia is a mental health researcher at the University of Cambridge. She regularly appears on BBC Cambridgeshire radio with tips on mental health and wellbeing.

Conversations about mental health have become more visible and acceptable in society, but there is one place where it is still invisible: the workplace. Dr. Olivia Remes shares why leaders need to actively engage with the mental health of their teams.

Depression and anxiety affect one in six people in the UK, and if left unattended, can lead to lowered immunity, disability, and suicide. These conditions have been linked to millions of pounds in profit loss and high health care use.

Although we're all talking about the importance of mental wellbeing when it comes to our private lives, not much is said about mental health in the workplace. If you're struggling with anxiety or depression on the job and are finding it hard to concentrate, or your chronic insomnia and gastrointestinal symptoms are making it difficult for you to sit in front of the computer for 8 hours, it often feels like it's a one-person battle. You're fighting it alone and it seems like no one understands or is willing to help. This is because mental illness doesn't leave marks or scars on your body, so people assume you're all right. But did you know that a common condition among adults - which is smiling

depression - can be a silent killer without leaving any traces? If you have smiling depression, you tend to put on a façade or 'happy face' to the outside world: you interact with your co-workers and fulfil your obligations both in your professional and private life, and no one would ever suspect anything is amiss. But deep down, you feel empty and hopeless. People affected by this condition might be especially prone to suicide. But employers and employees don't know that. And this is because it's not talked about.

The pandemic has put an even greater dent in our mental health. In March, anxiety and hopelessness shot up, and in the last few months, we've been seeing OCD flare-ups. Our lives have changed in ways that we wouldn't have anticipated a year ago and this has caused us much stress and overwhelm - which affects us on the job. Not to mention the transition of working from home and dealing with delays in medical care.

These sudden changes have resulted in a dire situation which can no longer be ignored. This is why it's time to change the workplace culture and increase the visibility of mental health. This is why it's time to take charge and make supports known and available to employees who are struggling even though they may not be showing any signs. This is why it's time to make people's wellbeing priority. Because companies who do this

show they care. Because a mentally healthy workforce translates into happier people, greater productivity and a better economy. When people experience wellbeing on the job, they are better workers, better partners, and better parents. They're more engaged with their communities and contribute to resilient societies.

Leaders need to consider mental health and wellbeing as top priority areas. Their leadership toolkit should better prepare those in management positions for unanticipated mental health consequences as this pandemic unfolds, in addition to dealing with the already widespread burden of mental illness in the workforce.

Those in leadership positions should act fully informed about key issues they need to think about when it comes to the wellbeing of their staff and evidence-based strategies that can tackle those issues. The knowledge they have should provide insight as to how employees can be better supported in their role, with particular attention given to those who are new or leaving organisations. There are many things to think about when it comes to developing this leadership capacity, but one thing is for sure: there's no health without mental health. If companies and organisations want to create a thriving workplace community and a culture of resilience and productivity, employee wellbeing needs to be at the top of the list.

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