Center for Creative Leadership

TRENDS REPORT

# Talent Reimagined

## 7 Emerging Trends for Transformative Leaders

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Center for Creative Leadership®

# Talent Reimagined

## 7 Emerging Trends for Transformative Leaders

## Executive Summary

Leaders at every level are experiencing the squeeze: the proverbial pressure to "do more with less." To thrive in today's highly competitive and resource-strapped marketplace, forward-thinking executives are reimagining their approach to talent development. They're considering how their organizations must continually innovate, operate more nimbly, and maximize the contributions of every individual.

There are new rules of engagement in the new millennium, however, and companies no longer have the luxury of shepherding staff through years-long training programs or following linear paths to leadership. Disruptive forces, including rapid technological innovations and a revolving door of mergers and acquisitions, have ushered in an era of perpetual change. Companies need digitally savvy, future fluent leaders who are agile, strategic, data-driven, and resilient—and they need them now.

To better understand this changing landscape, and what organizations are doing about it, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) tapped our proprietary **Leading Insights** research community. We surveyed hundreds of clients, leaders, and decision-makers in the Learning & Development field, asking them to weigh in on the latest trends, disruptions, and challenges they're facing in leadership development.

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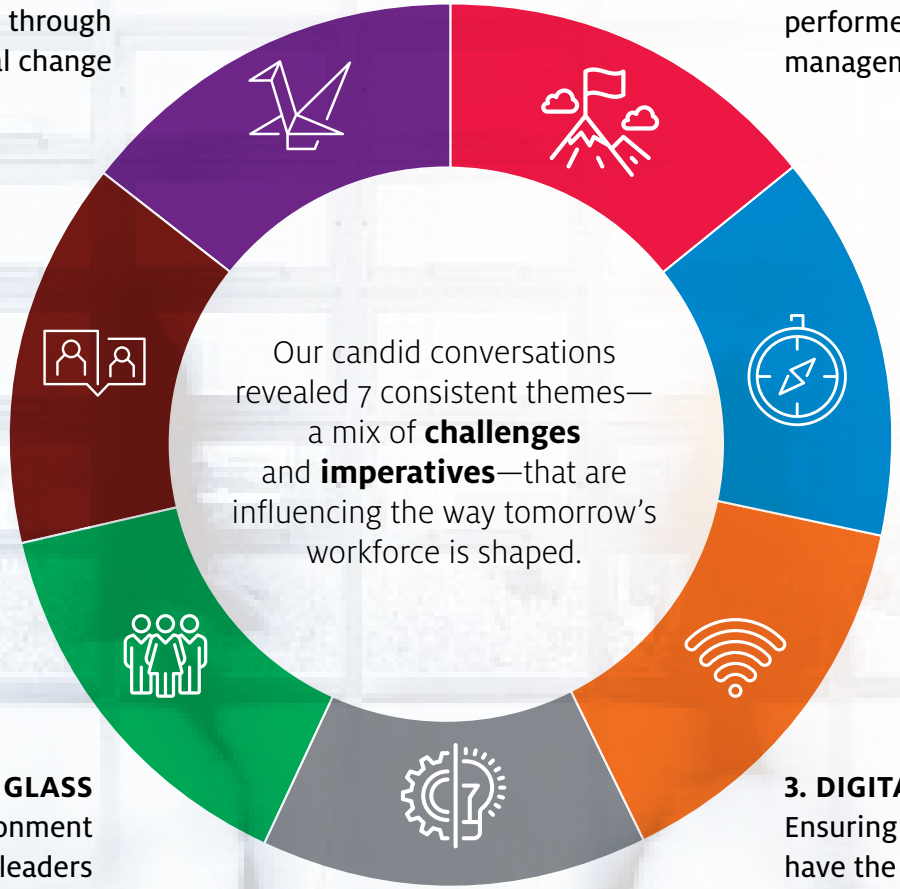
**7. CULTURE REBOOT**
Accelerating organizational transformation through cultural change

**1. ACCIDENTAL LEADERS**
Developing top functional performers thrust into management roles



**6. REIMAGINED REVIEWS**
Improving performance management through feedback and better conversations

Our candid conversations revealed 7 consistent themes—a mix of **challenges** and **imperatives**—that are influencing the way tomorrow's workforce is shaped.

**2. CHANGE ENDURANCE**
Building the resilience to survive and thrive in the face of constant change

**5. KICKING GLASS**
Creating a work environment that advances women leaders

**3. DIGITAL FLUENCY**
Ensuring the leaders of today have the skills and perspective needed for tomorrow

**4. EMBRACING DISRUPTION**
Equipping leaders to welcome innovation and develop their learning agility

*This report focuses on how the most transformative senior executives globally are reimagining talent and leadership development—to bridge the skills gap and respond to these emerging trends.*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**Leading Insights**

CCL's *Leading Insights panel* is an online research community with thousands of leaders and influencers in the leadership development field, drawn from a cross-section of industry, education, and nonprofit sectors, representing over 65 countries. The community's mission is to help shape the future of leadership development and enhance program and product development at CCL. The community was launched in 2009.

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# Accidental Leaders

## Developing Top Functional Performers Thrust Into Management Roles



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Companies large and small are filling critical management roles with functional experts who, though skilled in their crafts, may lack the skills to lead. Accidental Leaders are often individual contributors with strong domain expertise who have caught the attention of senior management, and who are consequently **thrust into leadership** positions. But their individual successes and function-specific knowledge don't automatically translate to being successful leaders of others. They aren't defined by age, seniority, or level, but they do share the same predicament: *They are ill-prepared for the demands of a managerial role.*

Accidental Leaders may struggle with interpersonal relationships, affecting their ability to build and lead teams, or have difficulty adapting to change—one of the leading causes of career **derailment**. Further, they may lack the broad, strategic vision required to deliver the business results expected of them in their new roles. For many, this is the most difficult transition they have made so far in their careers.

Given that these first-time managers are typically an organization's **largest population of leaders,** companies are rethinking the criteria for success. Organizations must design programs that develop their self-awareness, political savviness, communication skills, and ability to influence others—skills that may not come intuitively for Accidental Leaders, yet are essential to effectively heading a team. These programs should also address new managers' feelings of loneliness and self-doubt, connecting them with colleagues and mentors who can help them build their self-confidence.

Accidental Leaders aren't destined to fail, but they do require a new perspective on what's truly needed to help them succeed. Putting a program into place to support them through the **transition from individual contributor** or technical expert to manager can net huge gains for organizations. It can install leaders who not only possess the functional expertise to innovate, but who also have the people skills needed to rally the troops.

*"Companies are moving so fast that we perpetuate the bad practice of taking an individual contributor and assuming that they will make a great leader. Almost invariably, they won't. They need support and training."*

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## Strategies to Support Accidental Leaders

**Address the unique challenges they face.**
Understand the obstacles first-time managers face and help them overcome them. For example, they struggle with appearing credible to former peers who are now direct reports and getting the work done through others.

**Identify and develop key competencies.**
These include self-awareness, political savviness, communication skills, learning agility, and the ability to influence and motivate others. Assess their skills and then tailor development programs to the unique needs of the individual or role.

**Personalize learning.**
Address the most pressing development needs of new leaders, helping them to meet the role demands they are facing or will soon face. Set goals that are specific, attainable, and can be immediately applied on the job.

**Set them up for success.**
What's critical is that new leaders feel supported. Be honest about their challenges and help them shift their mindset from individual contributor to one of collaboration. Give them a forum for discussion and access to the advice of peers.

**Consider blended training.**
A mix of online and in-person experiences offers the best of both worlds—self-paced, on-the-job learning combined with sessions held live, among peers. Cohorts and learning networks can be in-person or virtual, formal or informal.

**Offer challenging assignments and development opportunities.**
Empower first-time leaders to excel by extending opportunities for them to grow in the job and to pursue training, not only for the responsibilities they have today, but also for the ones they aspire to in the future.

**60%**
of frontline leaders say they have **never received any training for their new role.**[1]

**50%**
of managers in organizations are rated as ineffective.[2]



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/accidental-leaders

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### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*The Core Leadership Skills You Need in Every Role*

*How to Set Your First-Time Leaders Up for Success*

*First-Time Managers Must Conquer These Challenges*

*6 Ways to Become a Leader Everyone Adores*

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### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

Help your first-time managers make the shift from successful individual contributor to effective manager with our **Maximizing Your Leadership Potential** program or **Frontline Leader Impact**, a digital training experience for cohorts of leaders.

Develop the "Fundamental 4" skills of self-awareness, learning agility, influence, and communication that are key for all leaders with our licensed program **Lead 4 Success**.™

Support first-time leaders with **CCL Boost**,™ an on-demand online tool that equips them with 6 tactics they can use to transition effectively into management roles.

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# Change Endurance

## Building the Resilience to Survive and Thrive in the Face of Constant Change



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Constant change can be taxing. It can cause stress and burnout. While employees may be willing to weather episodic (and perhaps massive) change, they are less inclined to embrace it as the new status quo. They tend to view disruptive events as transitory, one-time events "to get through" until they can settle in to another comfortable rhythm.

**Perpetual change,** however, is the new normal. Workers are expected to adapt quickly to the needs of the business, the market, the customer, the boss, and so on. Job pressures lead to emotional upsets, which in turn lead to **rumination,** where the worker becomes more fixated on grievances and less on the productive path forward. The stress of stagnation eventually manifests as declining job performance.

While organizations may not be able to scale back work demands, they can equip employees with tools to better manage stress and become more resilient. Many companies have begun promoting awareness of mental habits that can **combat burnout:** how workers can control their attention, detach from distracting situations, and let go of negative emotions.

*"Any change is difficult. People in general do not like change, and the longer the organization has been operating, the more difficult the change will be."*

Companies are also encouraging employees to make healthy lifestyle choices—including regular exercise, better sleep habits, and limiting alcohol and caffeine intake—that will lead to better decision-making, stronger work performance, and less rumination.

To help employees stay engaged, leaders must shift the culture in ways that will make their organizations more agile and more adaptable to the new competitive environment. They need to build **more resilient** workforces with change endurance that can navigate increasing levels of complexity. Thus, companies are beginning to address the physical, mental, and emotional needs of employees with formalized training and support—to help workers withstand **sustained disruption** and channel a focus on innovation.

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## Strategies to Build Change Endurance

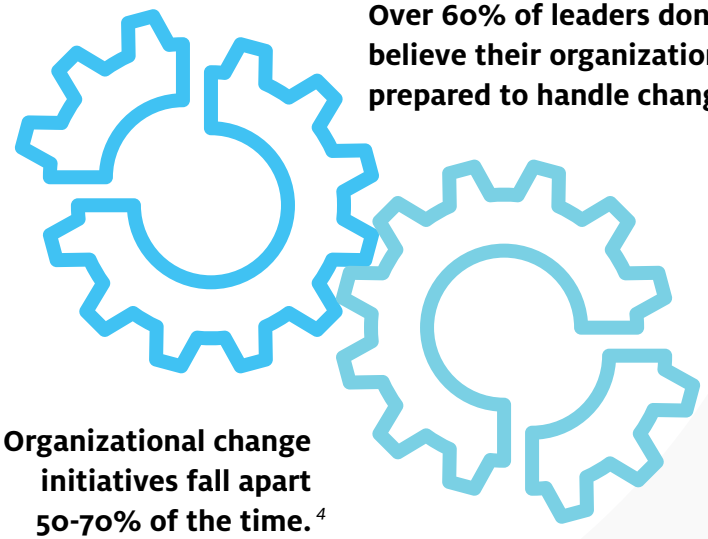
**Recognize that all workplace changes, even positive ones, require employees to use precious resources to adapt.** Applying an integrated change-management approach can help leaders prioritize and sequence changes in ways that mitigate the cumulative effect upon employees.

**Ensure leaders follow the "3 Cs" of change leadership: communicate, collaborate, and commit.** Lack of communication from management and low levels of trust lower the odds of successful change implementation. Clearly articulate the benefits of change and then bring people together to execute collaboratively on that vision.

**Promote ways for employees to regulate stress on the job.** Creative approaches such as "walk-and-talk meetings," mindfulness exercises, and adding some levity to the day can help break people out of rumination patterns and build resilience.

**Empower employees to manage stress outside of the workplace, too.** Consider launching a wellness campaign that regularly shares tips on topics such as sleep, exercise, and nutrition. And remember that role modeling is important; senior executives should set an example of "leaving work at work" by avoiding sending emails late at night and on weekends, which telegraphs a message to employees that they should be "always on."

**Help workers realize that rumination is the enemy of resilience.** Provide employees with tips that can help them break out of destructive thought cycles: Re-focusing on something they can control, putting things in perspective, and applying positive imagery techniques that can transport them mentally to another setting.



**Over 60% of leaders don't believe their organizations are prepared to handle change.**[3]

**Organizational change initiatives fall apart 50-70% of the time.**[4]



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/change-endurance

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### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*The #1 Reason You Are Stressed and How to Change It*

*Work-Life Conflicts Are Hurting Your Business*

*How to Be a Successful Change Leader*

*4 Reasons Why You Fail at Change*

*Change Comes at a Cumulative Cost*

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### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

Give managers and directors the skills they need to lead from the middle and the resilience required to handle complex, rapidly changing conditions with CCL's flagship **Leadership Development Program (LDP)**.®

Create a custom **Navigating Change** program for your organization to help managers guide their teams through organizational change and transform the initial disruptions and anxieties of change into positive potential.

Leverage the power of the "3 Cs" to help your leaders align their team, peers, boss, and organization with their change efforts with our **Leading People Through Change Workshop Kit**.

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# Digital Fluency

## Ensuring the Leaders of Today Have the Skills & Perspective Needed for Tomorrow



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As baby boomers retire and new generations join the ranks, executives are acutely aware of the urgent need to rethink the leadership skills needed for the digital age. On one end of the spectrum are seasoned professionals who possess leadership acumen but may lack proficiency with technology. On the other are **digital natives** who are technically fluent but may lack fundamental management and leadership skills. At the same time, teams are becoming more geographically dispersed and remote work is becoming commonplace.

Technology and data have the power to bring an organization together and propel it forward, but can only do so if leaders at all levels are equipped to harness that power. It's not just about learning the features and widgets of a device or app, but also about the ability to apply critical-thinking skills to the volumes of information they can produce. **Data and analytics** are only as valuable as the collaboration they can enable and the insightful actions they can evoke. And technology is rapidly transforming organizations, which challenges some long-term employees who have not changed how they work in decades. They must be willing and able to increase their skills.

Digital fluency integrates disciplines, practices, and worldviews with technical competencies and skills. It includes mastery of **new leadership literacies** that guide leaders to successfully manage change to the benefit of both the team and the organization. These literacies are as much about leadership style as they are about foresight and strategy.

Companies have an opportunity to leverage the complementary strengths of their seasoned leaders and digital natives. Rising generations can be coached to think more strategically and manage more effectively, and experienced executives can become more comfortable with using technology to make data-driven decisions and bring together **virtual and remote teams.** This top-down, bottom-up reciprocal learning approach not only strengthens the workforce of today, but grooms the leaders of tomorrow.

*"We need to bridge the generational skills gap quickly. We need to develop strategic leaders who are digitally savvy, and digitally savvy workers who are strategic."*

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## Strategies to Foster Digital Fluency

**Establish and communicate the vision.**
Ensure that digital change is managed and understood by all tiers of the organization—start with the top, but also engage digitally fluent professionals at lower levels as well.

**Apply the 5 new leadership literacies for a disruptive age:**
*(1)* Forecast likely futures so you can "look back" and make sure you're prepared now for the changes to come, *(2)* use low-risk gaming spaces to work through your concerns about the future and hone your leadership skills, *(3)* lead shape-shifting organizations where you don't just tell people what to do, you compel action through inspiring hope in the vision, *(4)* be a dynamic presence, able to lead from a distance, even when you're not there in person, and *(5)* keep your personal energy high and work to transmit and sustain it throughout your organization.

**Focus on the digital transformation trifecta.**
For successful organizational digital transformation, focus on developing across 3 areas of excellence: innovation, design, and digital. Pilot programs can offer proof points for success and mitigate the risks associated with disruptive innovation.

**Incorporate mentoring and reverse-mentoring programs.**
Mentoring should work both ways, with experienced supervisors coaching first-time managers on their leadership skills, and with digitally savvy workers training colleagues on emerging technologies.

**Empower your geographically dispersed workers to collaborate effectively.**
For effective virtual teams, equip them with the right tools for the job and ensure they're able to leverage technology to connect with one another. Encourage them to formally articulate norms and to commit to intentional relationship-building with one another, since informal water-cooler conversations don't happen as frequently when team members work remotely.

**Set an example—every leader should exhibit digital agility.**
Digital transformation doesn't happen in a vacuum. It requires everyone, from the most senior executives down to the frontline managers, to be well-versed in the technologies needed to advance their organizations forward, and to be committed to growing their skill, always.

**55%**
of executives believe that their organizations **lack the necessary skills to lead digital transformation.**[5]

**85%**
of global teams **collaborate virtually,** and **over 40% never meet in person.**[6]



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/digital-fluency

### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*Future Fluency Content Series*

*Playing the Digital Transformation Game*

*How European Leaders Are Adapting in the Digital Age*

*The Global Asian Leader: From Local Star to Global CXO*

### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

Does your organization react to marketplace change rather than proactively lead it? Go beyond change management by partnering with CCL to develop customized **Organizational Change Leadership**.

Cross-functional and geographically dispersed teams are becoming the norm, and knowing how to overcome group challenges and maximize team performance is easier with our **Leading Teams for Impact** program.

Request our **Driving Results Through Innovation Leadership** program to equip your people to drive innovation from the idea stage to successful implementation.

Give leaders at all levels (and of every generation) a digital, collaborative learning tool that develops their skills at leading virtual and remote teams with **The Leadership Conversation**.

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# Embracing Disruption

## Equipping Leaders to Welcome Innovation and Develop Their Learning Agility



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Organizations today need to work faster, more collaboratively, and recognize that a good idea can come from anywhere. They need new ways of thinking and new ways of doing—and they need leaders who can embrace and help *create* the new normal, not just resist or tolerate it.

Many executives have come to view cyclical VUCA exercises *(Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity)* as a distraction from the inevitable hard work of charting the path forward. But building more **learning-agile**, strategic, and emotionally intelligent leadership—leaders who can inspire others to leverage change as an opportunity for innovation—is a critical investment. Sometimes experienced leaders will unintentionally fall back on outdated management practices and need help to break out of this rut.

In fact, we developed an alternative acronym for VUCA, "**RUPT,**" which stands for *Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical, and Tangled*, to connect the experience of dis*rupt*ion and **turbulence** with the leadership mindset, skillset, and toolset necessary to navigate it.

Leadership training often focuses on horizontal development—the adding of more knowledge, skills, and competencies. While important, that doesn't necessarily instill the mindset required for embracing change in RUPT environments. **Vertical development,** however, advances a leader's thinking capability. It increases the ability to think in more systemic, strategic, and interdependent ways. It expands the capacity to cope with, and innovate in, overwhelming and complex situations and environments.

**"Heat experiences"**—complex situations which disrupt habitual ways of thinking—present leaders with opportunities to expand their problem-solving capabilities. Challenging existing mental models increases the number of new perspectives through which leaders can see the world. It exposes them to people with different worldviews, opinions, and backgrounds, while elevating their ability to embrace disruption.

*"Organizations doing things the way they always have been done will not be very innovative...It must be clear that mistakes are tolerated, otherwise entrepreneurial employees will ultimately leave for greener pastures."*

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## Strategies to Embrace Disruption

**Support, don't sabotage, innovation by encouraging risk-taking. Apply the POINt technique to new ideas.**
*P*raise the idea and consider its benefits. Picture the *o*pportunities that might be realized if you implemented the idea. Weigh the potential *i*ssues without killing new ideas outright. Use *n*ew *t*hinking to develop solutions for the issues you've raised about the new idea.

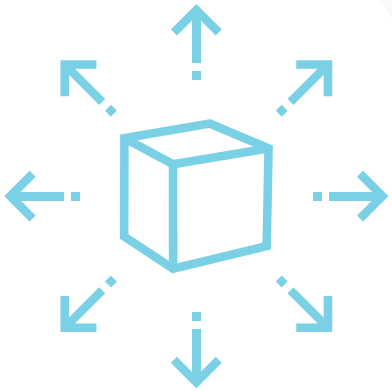
**Help leaders adopt new roles, craft new identities, and find new meaning for themselves and those they lead.**
Leading through complexity and turbulence requires learning agility. Learning-agile leaders are willing to learn from experience and apply that learning in new and challenging situations. When facing disruption, leaders should consider adopting new identities: thinking like a consumer, acting like a catalyst, or creating like a mad scientist.

**Recognize that innovation varies by role.**
Consider the sphere of influence that each position wields: leading oneself, leading others, leading managers, leading functions, or leading the organization. Set realistic expectations and goals appropriate for innovation at every level.

**Take a fresh look at your talent.**
Your talent portfolio should be diversified, just like your financial portfolio. Strike the right balance of full-time, part-time, and "gig economy" workers. Determine what role each can play, and take a long-term perspective on your short-term talent. Freelancers can cover brief talent gaps, of course, but may also be used to augment efforts, provide strategic expertise, or serve as cultural catalysts.

**Discern the difference between "high potential" and "high professional" candidates and develop them accordingly.**
Your high professionals offer narrow but deep domain expertise and longevity with the organization; your high potentials are the learning-agile change makers, flexible problem solvers, and leaders of tomorrow. Provide them with vertical development and heat experiences and watch them flourish.

**Map your leadership strategy to the company's business strategy.**
The business strategy sets the direction of the organizational journey and the leadership strategy acts as the human enabler to reach the organization's full performance potential. Both must be in lock-step if leaders are to effect change and further the company's mission.



**94%**

of senior executives believe innovation is important, but **just 14% think that their organizations are effective at it.** [7]



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/embracing-disruption

### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*How to Lead Effectively in a Disruptive World*
*Navigating Disruption: A VUCA Alternative*
*Your Role in Innovation Depends on Where You Sit*
*5 Tips to Help You Protect and Grow New Ideas*
*Redefining Talent with Talent Portfolio Agility*
*Developing Talent? You're Probably Missing Vertical Development*

### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

We can assist with customized **Experience-Driven Talent Development** solutions, so that experience—carefully designed and executed—becomes the core driver of learning in your organization and is aligned with the business strategy.

Senior leaders of departments, business units, and divisions learn to see the bigger picture and align the organization in our **Leading Strategically** program or to balance short- and long-term perspectives through CCL's signature "Looking Glass Experience" in the **Leading for Organizational Impact** program.

Teach your teams how to extract the essential lessons from their own experiences and apply them to future situations with the **Learning Agility Workshop Kit**.

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# Kicking Glass

## Creating a Work Environment that Advances Women Leaders



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More women than ever are moving into management, but the proportion of women in senior organizational roles has stagnated. Recent events like the *#MeToo* movement have brought greater attention to the glass ceiling and decades-long practices that have hampered equality. Yet women leaders are critical for organizational success, and companies that intentionally prioritize and plan for women's leadership development gain significant advantages.

The business case for advancing women leaders is compelling. In addition to doubling a company's talent pool, recruiting women **increases financial performance**. Fortune 500 companies with the highest representation of women on boards financially outperform those with the fewest female board members. [8] And a recent Gallup study found that gender-diverse business units have higher average revenue than less diverse business units. [9] Having larger percentages of women in an organization also predicts greater job satisfaction, higher levels of employee engagement, and decreased rates of burnout—for all workers, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or leadership level. In short, having more women in the workplace is associated with **positive outcomes** for both women *and* men. [10]

In recent years, "leaning in" has become a shorthand way of referencing women's self-empowerment at work, popularized by Sheryl Sandberg's 2013 book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Leaning in encourages female leaders to take ownership for finding solutions to the challenges they face, and it is important.

Yet it is not enough just for women to "**lean in**." Relic policies, practices, and perceptions continue to undermine the advancement of women and contribute to a persistent **glass ceiling** in the workplace. Consider, for example, this unconscious bias: An assertive male leader may be labeled "strong," whereas his female counterpart might be branded "bossy." Conversely, women in leadership roles may fall victim to the "Queen Bee Syndrome," where they feel less inclined to sponsor or promote other women for fear of being viewed as less competent than men who promote diversity.

Fortunately, more and more leaders are reexamining company policies for inherent biases and are deliberately adopting new practices to cultivate a **climate of equality** and growth. Organizations recognize that they can avoid losing critical talent and face costly recruitment challenges by taking steps such as reinventing mentoring and executive sponsorship programs, revamping diversity training, and recasting human resource policies to promote greater awareness, flexibility, and work-life balance for all employees, not just women.

*"We need to hire experienced women executives without asking them to come in 2-3 levels down."*

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## Strategies to Help Kick Some Glass

**Address women's leadership challenges and needed competencies.**
Retain critical talent, avoid high turnover costs, and strengthen your leadership pipeline by ensuring female leaders have the experiences and resources they need most. This could include giving guidance for on-the-job learning, as well as coaching, mentoring, and workshops or programs.

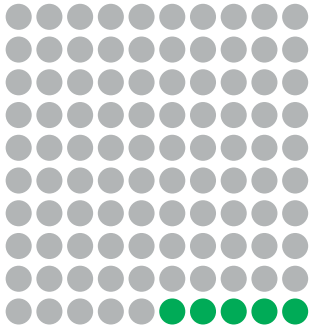
**Leverage the power of choosing.**
Women need to be intentional about their careers and development as leaders. The power to choose is often overlooked by women. Encourage female leaders in the organization to exert greater influence over the choices they make, take the lead in shaping conversations about their careers, and take greater ownership over their career choices.

**Create the right networks.**
The right relationships and ties are assets in getting access to information, earning promotions, and gaining opportunities. Effective leaders rely on networks to influence others and to get results. Organizations can help by establishing a culture where both women and men are afforded access to the networks that open doors for them and by providing sponsors and advocates who will challenge and support them.

**Rethink systems and challenge assumptions.**
Look for ways that unconscious bias in the organization affects opportunities and motivation for women. Scheduling, opportunities for networking and mentoring, social norms, and talent management processes are some potential areas for rethinking and improvement.

**Attract and retain a diverse workforce.**
Implement gender-neutral hiring processes, parental leave policies, flexible work arrangements, and succession planning. Know that professional development opportunities rank high among the list of qualities that candidates look for in an employer, too. Women, people of color, and individuals with differing abilities contribute diverse perspectives that can help propel a company forward—ensure that there are clear learning and development opportunities to attract and retain them.

**Consider a women-only leadership development experience.**
A female-only program or initiative doesn't reflect the everyday world of work—and that's a good thing. Novel contexts can shed light on experiences and provide new ways to think about future possibilities.



**Women currently hold only 5% of CEO positions at S&P 500 companies.**[11]

**There are currently fewer S&P 1500 companies led by women than by men named John.**[12]



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/kicking-glass

### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*5 Proven Ways to Attract and Retain Women Leaders*

*What Women Want from Work*

*Queen Bee Syndrome: Why Women Don't Promote Women*

*Bossy: What's Gender Got to Do with It?*

*Why Companies Struggle to Tap the Power of Women's Leadership*

### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

The **Women's Leadership Experience** is a program that equips women with upper-management and leadership experience with the knowledge and skills they need to have an even greater impact and broader influence within the organization.

Develop and retain high-potential women in STEM roles: the **Advancing Technical Women** program helps them break through mid-career barriers and rise to leadership roles or senior management.

Get a powerful guide for motivated working women who want to stop following someone else's rules, take charge of their own success, and break through the glass ceiling: ***Kick Some Glass***.

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# Reimagined Reviews

## Improving Performance Management Through Feedback and Better Conversations



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Increasingly, leaders report a lack of confidence in their performance management systems. Rooted more in habit than on impact, current methods of evaluation like the annual performance review often fall short of progressing desired behaviors. Nor do they adequately assess the new skills needed to help companies thrive, including change endurance, digital fluency, and disruption-proof mindsets.

Organizations are now rethinking formal and informal performance improvement programs to meet the needs of the new normal. For example, rising generations of professionals (millennials, in particular) prefer to receive **frequent ongoing feedback** instead of retroactive reviews just once per year. And in fact, all employees can benefit from real-time input, because it empowers them to adjust course quickly. Some of the most valuable feedback is given in the moment and on routine, day-to-day behaviors.

Delivering constructive feedback in a way that motivates performance versus deflates morale is key. Applying the **Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) model** for delivering feedback can both reduce anxiety in the leader who's providing it and defensiveness in the employee who's receiving it.

How well individual leaders give feedback to their direct reports directly affects talent development and retention across the organization. When given consistently and well, feedback from managers can establish and strengthen trust. The more trust and rapport managers can build, the more readily subordinates will accept and act on future feedback, creating a pattern of learning and growth. Leaders who are empowered to hold **talent conversations** are better able to influence others toward improved performance, boosting employee engagement and motivation.

Organizations that emphasize the importance of active listening and asking powerful questions can **create a coaching culture** and reap even more benefits. In essence, promoting candid, constructive conversations with leaders at all levels develops a workforce of adaptable employees who are more open to change and committed to their organizations.

*"By the time an annual review takes place, we've missed a year's worth of opportunities to improve performance. To remain competitive, we must provide employees with real-time feedback that both helps them grow and helps the business achieve its mission."*

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## Strategies to Reimagine Performance Reviews

**Help create a coaching culture by applying the LACE approach to difficult conversations.**
*L*isten to understand. *A*sk powerful questions. *C*hallenge and support with feedback. *E*stablish next steps and accountability.

**Hold candid, ongoing conversations with talent—don't save it all for the performance review.**
Whether coaching top talent to greater heights or underperformers to meet expectations, frequent talent conversations allow managers to influence others toward the positive outcomes that the business requires.

**Prep managers to hold different types of talent conversations depending on how their employees are doing.**
With top talent, discuss future investment; with solid performers, focus on building or maintaining value; with new or potential performers, emphasize short-term success; and for underperformers, focus on improving performance now.

**Deliver feedback in a way that won't hurt morale.**
Be specific, fact-based, and offer prescriptive advice. CCL's SBI approach recommends describing the situation, behavior, and the consequent impact in a way that optimizes employee receptiveness to the feedback. Usually, this creates an opportunity to realize that the impact of the problem behavior was not at all what was intended.

**Identify and manage problem employees before they impact the organization.**
Be aware of some of the tell-tale signs: can't work well with others, doesn't respond to coaching, arrogance, lack of accountability, and skills that don't match the job.

**Aim for at least a 4:1 ratio of positive feedback to negative feedback.**



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/reimagined-reviews

### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*The Key to Immediately Improve Your Talent Development*

*Truth and Courage: Implementing a Coaching Culture*

*Coaching Others: Use Active Listening Skills*

*Busting Myths about Feedback: What Leaders Should Know*

*Problem Employees: Identifying and Managing Them*

### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

Improve performance management by infusing a coaching culture throughout your organization—from the front desk to the corner office. Equip your people to give more frequent and effective feedback with **Better Conversations Every Day**,™ available in CCL-delivered versions or a scalable, licensed train-the-trainer model.

Exclusively for HR leaders: learn to develop your coaching skills and build an effective coaching culture in your organization with our **Coaching for Human Resource Professionals** program.

An essential coaching tool, ***Compass*** is the go-to reference book to help you—and the people you develop—gauge mastery of more than 50 different leadership competencies and view concrete steps to improve them.

Help your people ask the right questions, become better listeners, and deliver more effective feedback with our **Workshop Kits on Talent Conversations**, **Listening to Understand**, and **Feedback that Works**.

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# Culture Reboot

## Accelerating Organizational Transformation through Cultural Change

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Mergers and acquisitions, repositioning and reinvention: Whatever the impetus, changing the culture of an organization is often met with resistance or resentment by workers attached to familiar ways of doing business. They may fear what the future holds and either become entrenched or distracted by the process of change.

*"Organizations that are superior performers over time develop the capability to invent, reinvent, and transform their business models according to the dynamic nature of the ecosystems in which they operate."*

These kinds of transitions bring not only new policies, procedures, and technologies, but also new ways of thinking and doing. It can be delicate work, balancing the desire of the organization to move quickly with employees' needs to fully buy into the new path. Culture is often **deeply embedded** and therefore difficult to change. Executives must realize that rolling out a new vision requires more than hanging posters on walls. They must find innovative ways to instill core values and create a **shared sense of ownership** in the new direction.

Leadership development is inherently disruptive in an organization (changing its people); and also preps organizations to *be* disruptive in their industries (to innovate). For substantive organizational cultural change, leadership development as a system-wide change must be carefully planned. And it takes more than a top-down mandate; it requires a critical mass, **alignment across senior teams**, and embedding a network of influencers throughout the company. This can happen through formalized training experiences (online, in-person, or hybrid approaches), but **learning transfer** is also a social process. Learning—and the desired performance that comes from it—doesn't take place in isolation. The work context (including the level of support from role models, mentors, peers, coaches, and bosses) has a powerful impact on turning lessons learned into leadership in action.

Silos with different norms and ways of working need to be folded into a centralized culture so that the organization can be more productive and better serve its clients. It involves a thoughtful, phased approach to successfully promote not just adoption, but wholehearted endorsement of a new culture.

Organizations that grow from dependent to independent to **interdependent leadership cultures** become increasingly capable of creative action in the face of complexity.

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## Strategies to Reboot Your Culture

**Envision a "future perfect" state.**
Ask yourself these questions: What would your leadership culture be like if the business were running at peak efficiency and meeting all of its targets? What leader behaviors would you observe? What shared beliefs would leaders have that reinforce these behaviors?

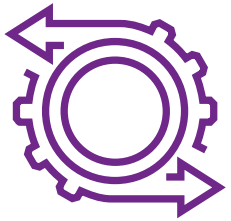
**Determine the 3-5 business drivers that will determine your success over the long term.**
These might include the quantity of leaders needed, the qualities desired, skills and behaviors, collective capabilities, and leadership culture.

**Identify the gaps between your current and required leadership culture.**
Use data from a variety of sources, including focus groups, HR reports on retention and turnover, employee engagement surveys, and competency assessments, to better quantify these gaps. Data can guide you to make sure you have and keep the people you need (with the right mix of skillsets and mindsets) for the strategy you've set.

**Get buy-in by preparing for the 4 phases—not steps—for successfully shifting the needle.**
These phases involve determining willingness, developing understanding, framing the change process, and building capability. This will bring your organization closer to an interdependent leadership culture based upon the collaboration of otherwise independent leaders and groups.

**Scale leadership development.** Shared leadership vision, language, and behaviors linked directly to a critical business need will create greater impact. Scaling leadership development is the optimal way to create new capabilities and transform an entire organization in a short amount of time.

**Engage leaders at all levels.**
Move beyond one-size-fits-all leadership development by evolving your talent development approach to reach lower levels of the organization. Use a mix of online, blended, and face-to-face learning solutions to deliver the right messages, the right way, and at the right time.



**62%**

of organizations said that culture change is the most difficult type of organizational change to manage.[13]



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**FIND THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND MORE AT:**

## ccl.org/culture-reboot

### FURTHER READING ON CCL.ORG:

*Linking Leadership Effectiveness to Your Business Strategy*

*Changing Culture: 5 Principles for Interdependent Leadership*

*Transforming Your Organization*

*How to Create a Strong Leadership Strategy*

*Scaling Leadership Development for Maximum Impact*

### HOW CCL CAN HELP:

The challenges of leadership at the top are far-reaching, complex, and essential to get right. **Leadership at the Peak** is an exclusive leadership training course that gives senior executives highly personalized development in the context of advancing the entire business.

Build a culture that makes strategy happen: start cultural transformation with customized **Executive Team Development** and then socialize it throughout the organization.

Increase collaboration, tear down silos, and mitigate turf wars with our **Boundary Spanning Leadership Workshop Kit**.

The book ***Leading Continuous Change*** offers detailed guidance, practical tools, and real-world examples needed to navigate change the way it happens now—continuously.

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# Conclusion

Disruption has become the status quo. Leading an organization in this new normal requires more than just managerial and people skills, it also requires the ability to pivot in an increasingly elastic environment. For companies to achieve their goals, the old ways of doing business and of grooming leaders no longer apply.

Senior executives are now tailoring programs to support accidental leaders in the unique challenges they face and developing accelerated paths for leaders who are ready today. To compete in the future, they know they must build a resilient, learning-agile workforce with change endurance, digital fluency, and the ability to embrace disruption.

They're also recognizing that a more inclusive work environment is an imperative. They're working to attract and retain more women leaders, and are reinventing performance management. Empowering their workers to have better conversations and give feedback more consistently (and well) requires an organizational culture shift. Those companies in a state of transition—be it in the form of rapid growth or massive disruption—face additional complexities and increasingly competitive marketplaces.

Transformative leaders are responding to these emerging trends shaping tomorrow's workforce by reimagining talent development. They're equipping their people—regardless of job title or responsibility—to be more agile, future fluent, and proactive in transforming their organizations. And they are putting programs in place to develop their leaders at all levels, positioning them to address today's challenges, while planning for tomorrow's.



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# How Can CCL Help?

## If you need to reimagine your talent development, we can help.

### DISCOVER

**CCL can help you understand how these 7 emerging trends and imperatives will affect you and your business in the future.**

- ❑ Should you shift your organization toward a coaching culture?
- ❑ Should you rethink your talent portfolio mix, given the emerging gig economy?
- ❑ Is your organization ready to play the digital transformation game?
- ❑ Are you losing top talent because your workplace policies aren't inclusive enough?
- ❑ Do you have the talent you need for the business strategy you've set?

### ADVISE

**CCL can help you determine what investments your organization needs to make in its people for maximum return on leadership investment.**

- ❑ What do your high-potentials need in terms of horizontal and vertical development to flourish?
- ❑ How can you shape your leadership culture to drive sustained, profitable growth in years to come?
- ❑ What people investments will yield the greatest impact on customer satisfaction and business performance?
- ❑ What will equip your leaders to think more strategically and become more innovative?

### DEVELOP

**CCL can help you craft a development plan that's right for your leaders at all levels. We can help you:**

- ❑ Support your accidental leaders to prevent their derailment.
- ❑ Empower your managers to collaborate more effectively, even if their teams are virtual.
- ❑ Grow specific skills like giving feedback, increasing influence, embracing change, etc.
- ❑ Prepare the executive team to work together to drive optimal business results.
- ❑ Reboot your culture through organizational transformation.



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The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) is a top-ranked, global provider of leadership development. By leveraging the power of leadership to drive results that matter most to clients, CCL transforms individual leaders, teams, organizations, and society. Our array of cutting-edge solutions is steeped in extensive research and experience gained from working with thousands of diverse organizations in more than 160 countries, helping more than a million leaders at all levels. Ranked among the world's top providers of executive education by the *Financial Times* and *Bloomberg Businessweek*, CCL has offices in Greensboro, NC; Colorado Springs, CO; San Diego, CA; Brussels, Belgium; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Johannesburg, South Africa; London, United Kingdom; Moscow, Russia; Singapore; Gurgaon, India; and Shanghai, China.

## CCL—Americas

www.ccl.org

+1 800 780 1031
(US or Canada)
+1 336 545 2810 (Worldwide)
info@ccl.org

**Greensboro, North Carolina**
+1 336 545 2810

**Colorado Springs, Colorado**
+1 719 633 3891

**San Diego, California**
+1 858 638 8000

## CCL—Europe, Middle East, Africa

www.ccl.org/emea

**Brussels, Belgium**
+32 (0) 2 679 09 10
ccl.emea@ccl.org

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**
+251 118 957086
ccl.ethiopia@ccl.org

**Johannesburg, South Africa**
+27 (11) 783 4963
southafrica.office@ccl.org

**London, United Kingdom**
+44 7554 613169
ccl.uk@ccl.org

**Moscow, Russia**
+7 495 662 31 39
ccl.cis@ccl.org

## CCL—Asia Pacific

www.ccl.org/apac

**Singapore**
+65 6854 6000
ccl.apac@ccl.org

**Gurgaon, India**
+91 124 676 9200
cclindia@ccl.org

**Shanghai, China**
+86 21 6881 6683
ccl.china@ccl.org

## Affiliate Locations:

*Seattle, Washington*
*Seoul, Korea*
*College Park, Maryland*
*Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*
*Ft. Belvoir, Virginia*
*Kettering, Ohio*
*Huntsville, Alabama*
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