

# Leading the Conversation



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**On the critical leadership issues facing organisations today:**

Global organisations are struggling with leadership capacity – of having enough leaders who can work well in multiple cultures. Some leaders' roles cross geographies and others' remain within one. I believe true leadership today requires the ability to work well across geographies, which means across cultures, without assuming that the US-centric view should prevail.

There will definitely be talents vulnerabilities, and these will vary by industry and company, which are dependent on the individual cultures. Companies need to know their vulnerabilities by conducting assessments or workforce planning, and be proactive about them. The answer sounds simple, but it still often doesn't get done.

And starting early is important. By which I mean sharing the leadership models with the recruiting team and thinking about potential leaders during the hiring process.

**On the most critical skill demanded of leaders today:**

Cultural IQ. This is a relatively new and exciting concept. I have long been a proponent of Emotional Intelligence and believe this is a tremendously powerful value-added element for businesses.

**On the role of HR in developing leadership competencies:**

Leadership competencies and company values need to be aligned. And HR has a huge consultative role to play in helping organisations define these values and leadership competencies. They should facilitate teams of line executives, including middle management, to discuss and agree on this. Then can they create processes or methodologies for finding and developing such leaders. The role HR is playing is a very consultative one, with line executives

sharing the work and ultimate responsibility. It is not HR's job to develop leaders – it is everyone's job.

**On metrics for assessing leadership qualities:**

The 360 and customer feedback can be very powerful tools in determining the leadership behaviours that are evident. What needs to be assessed is behaviour, not business results.

**On the essence of "best-practice" leadership development:**

Good leadership development practices include a mix of experiences – not just training programmes – that take place on the job with teams. Those are the most powerful.

**On diversity and leadership development:**

Organisations have made good strides recruiting the more diverse workforce, but not necessarily in retaining those people or moving them up in the organisation. Therefore, this requires full programmes – mentoring/coaching, assessment, specialised development. From what I've seen, leadership development does not take diversity into account, in terms of programme content, just yet.

**On change management and leadership development:**

Leadership entails change mastery and resilience. Therefore, there is a close link between change management and leadership development. Skills of resilience, comfort with ambiguity, emotional intelligence and outstanding communications – all of which are key to managing change – must be built in leaders.

**On integrated talent management and leadership development:**

Leadership development is one of the components of integrated talent management. For talent management to be integrated, the various functional areas need to be closely connected. Therefore, leadership development needs to link to recruitment, retention, workforce planning and all aspects of professional development. The more connections are made, the more integrative the approach and effectiveness. Talent management is meant to be holistic. 