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Measuring Inclusive Leadership:

An introduction to a new inclusive behavioural model of leadership development

Introduction

Think of the classic corporate leader. What, or who comes to mind? Maybe Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Richard Branson or perhaps Henry Ford. Let's keep going, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos or perhaps Larry Page.

What do all of these leaders have in common?

They all represent a certain type of leadership; a leadership style that is defined by the traits of command and control and a leader knows best mindset; they represent classic leader / follower models in which the leader tells and follower does. They also represent the classic notion of leadership as the iconic hero – the individual genius. Finally, they represent the notion of leadership as whiteness and leadership as maleness.

In a classic paper on leadership John P. Kotter reminds us that the role of leaders, unlike the role of managers, is to cope with and guide their followers through times of change. And that facilitating change involves creating a vision for the future and actively engaging, motivating and inspiring those who you seek to lead.

Today, change is the new norm. It is, paradoxically, a constant factor on the landscape of 21st Century business leaders. Managing change is, or at least should be, at the top of their 'to do' list'.

As stated by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, professor at Harvard Business School and Chair & Director of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative, *Surprises Are the New Normal.*

Thus, the role of today's leaders has become more critical in navigating these often and unforeseen surprises, the constant turbulence of markets, the changing values and demands of customers and investors alike. The changing landscape - radical breaks with once unquestioned norms – think Brexit and US President Donald Trumps' reframing of established trade agreements.

In addition to surprises, growing uncertainty and complexity, Moss Kanter adds an addition factors of consideration for today's business leaders – diversity. The new social and business landscape is and will continue to be defined by new diversity talent pools and diversity customers.

And yet many business leaders, unconsciously informed by social and cultural biases, continue to operate under the old rules; hiring people like them, turning a blind eye to bad corporate behaviour and remaining fixated by a single model of both what leadership is and what leadership should be.

This report aims to help leaders and others to re-conceptualise the notion of what an effective leader is by providing a framework for a new and inclusive model for thinking and doing leadership in the 21st century.

How inclusive leadership adds to business performance

Our research mapping has identified 5 key ways in which inclusive leadership supports high performing work cultures, business innovation, employee purpose and corporate profit.

Team Composition

When leadership teams are populated by - or dominated by – individuals who look, sound and think the same they are more likely to suffer from Groupthink, which narrows a leaders' decision-making field of vision. This in turn reduces an organisation's ability to tap into the constantly changing global marketplace. Groupthink restricts cross-cultural insights which are essential when developing products and services for culturally diverse customers and clients.

In a 2017 paper by the global consulting firm McKinsey and Co, they identified team composition as the starting point for creating high performing teams, of which diversity is a central element. The paper suggests that small teams of senior people – fewer than six people – may be particularly vulnerable to poorer decision-making, because a lack of diversity leads to a lack of bandwidth in leadership thinking.

This research is supported by work from the cloud-based decision-making platform Cloverpop, which has shown how diversity in teams, together with inclusive decision-making, significantly increases business performance.

Cloverpop's research has shown how teams of individual decision-makers make better business decisions than individuals about 66% of the time. This is perhaps not surprising and aligns to research carried out by James Surowiecki and shared within his influential work on the *Wisdom of Crowds*, in which he argues that groups of individuals make smarter decisions than individuals, and that diversity of

opinion amongst groups of individuals results in better decision-making.

According to Cloverpop, teams of people are better at:

- identifying new and better choices that were not previously considered, resulting in a better decisions;
- bringing more perspectives, experience, and information, which helps to reduce cognitive biases and improves accountability;
- making smarter decisions as the diversity of the team increases.

While many research studies focus solely on the relationship between gender diversity and business outcomes, Cloverpop were able to measure decision-making outcomes using a wider range of diversity characteristics, including age and geographical location.

Diversity of thought

Research by Deloitte University Press stresses three key benefits to organizational performance from diversity of thought:

- it helps guard against groupthink and expert overconfidence: Diversity of thought can help organisational leaders make better decisions more successfully because it triggers more careful and creative information processing;

- it helps increase the scale of new insights: Generating a great idea quickly often requires connecting multiple tasks and ideas together in a new way;

- it helps leaders to identify the right employees who can best tackle their most pressing problems: Advances in neuroscience mean that matching people to specific jobs based on more rigorous cognitive analysis is within reach.

Driving innovation through diversity and inclusion

A 2017 study by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) – *The Mix that Matters: Innovation Through Diversity* - found a positive relationship between diversity and business innovation. Measuring outcomes from 171 companies, the study found a statistically significant relationship between management diversity and business innovation, meaning that companies with higher levels of diversity get more revenue from new products and services.

Specifically, the research found:

- the innovation boost isn't limited to a single type of diversity. The presence of managers who are female or from other countries, industries, or companies can cause an increase in innovation;

- management diversity seems to have a particularly positive effect on innovation at complex companies—those that have multiple product lines or that operate in multiple industry segments. Diversity's impact also increases with company size;

- at companies with diverse management teams, openness to contributions from lower-level workers and an environment in which employees feel free to speak their minds are crucial in fostering innovation.

Diversity, inclusion and high performing teams

Following the success of Google's Project Oxygen, where its People Analytics team studied the key dynamics of 'what makes a great manager', Google launched Project Aristotle, a two-year study on team performance. Google wanted to research the key factors which create and sustain high performing teams. The overarching factor of a high performing team is the level of 'psychological safety' that exists between team members. Psychological safety is defined as the extent to which colleagues feel able to take risks in the interest of the business without fear of judgement from teammates and leaders.

Psychological safety, and the positive impact on team performance, is closely aligned to a sense of belonging from diverse individuals within teams. As stressed by Alex Pentand from MIT, the number one predictor of team performance – more than skills and intelligence – is what he calls 'belonging cues'; equal air time in team meetings, eye contact between colleagues and non-hierarchal communication.

Diversity and business profit

A study by the global not-for-profit Catalyst found that companies with the most women board directors outperformed those with the least on return on sales (ROS) by 16% and return on invested capital (ROIC) by 26%.

The Center for Talent Innovation examined 40 business case studies and found that publicly traded companies with two-dimensional diversity were:

- 45 per cent more likely than those without diversity to have expanded market share in the past year;

- 70 per cent more likely to have captured a new market;

- when teams had one or more members who represented a target end-user, the entire team was as much as 158 per cent more likely to understand that target end-user and innovate accordingly.

Research from McKinsey and Co in 2018 found that companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are:

- 21% more likely to outperform their national industry median on EBIT margin and 27% more likely to outperform on EP margin;

- in relation to culturally diverse executive teams, these were 33% more likely to outperform their peers on profitability.

Cognitive biases and leadership decision-making

Behavioural psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman suggests that a leaders' ability to navigate an ever-changing business landscape is hampered by a set of cognitive biases.

Behavioural science tells us that leaders, like all human beings, depend on a dual processing system for thinking and decision-making. System 1 – which Kahneman refers to as fast thinking – is governed by emotion, intuition and impulse. System 2 – referred to as slow thinking – is partly designed to regulate the impulsive nature of System 1 and is governed by logic and deliberation.

The evolution of human decision-making is related to risk and safety. In order to survive human beings often had to make fast decisions within a limited time frame. To help us to do this we have developed a complex process of neuro networks that rely on pattern recognition or *heuristics*. These heuristics or mental short-cuts help executives to make decisions based on previous experience and can be effective when developing new strategic goals.

However, as stressed by Andrew Campbell from Ashridge Strategic Management Centre the heuristics which leaders rely on are prone to a set of cognitive biases which in turn leads to errors in leadership thinking, judgement and decision-making. Here are 5 common biases that impact leadership thinking and decision-making:

- **Affinity bias:** The tendency to like people who are more like us. This impacts who a leader listens to and who they informally mentor and sponsor.

- **Decision fatigue**: This occurs when a leaders' cognitive resources – mental energy and willpower – become depleted due to a succession of decisions and activity. After a series of meetings, for instance, leaders are often running on autopilot and are thus more susceptible to a range of biases.

- **Representative heuristic:** A classic cognitive bias, this occurs when a colleague is representative of (looks like, sounds like) the leadership population they are working with. If an organisation is hiring for a senior manager role in a global manufacturing company that is dominated by white, tall, and middle-class men, the candidate (if they are male, white, tall and middle-class) is likely to benefit from this particular bias.

- **Source bias:** The tendency to add greater weight to information from a source that we are familiar with. For example, a leader may seek a second opinion on a project from a colleague whose opinion they value. The problem is that they are more likely to value the opinion of colleagues who are in their in-group.

- **Double-bind:** The types of attributes we ascribe to the ideal leader in most organisations are closely linked to positive male characteristics: decisiveness, assertiveness and independent. A number of research studies have shown that women who excel in traditional male domains are judged differently. They may be viewed as competent, but when they demonstrate similar leadership traits, they are seen as less likeable. Thus, the types of behaviors that we often value in men such as self-confidence appears as arrogance in women.

In a Harvard Business Review article entitled *Why Good Leaders Make Bad Decisions*, the authors warn us of the dangers of *emotional tagging*, a process by which leaders attach emotional information to their thoughts and views of other people. The risk is that leaders are more likely to add positive emotional weight to people who are 'like them', whereas they are more likely to add negative emotional weight to individuals who are less like them.

Measuring Inclusive leadership

We at VERCIDA Consulting, have for the last two years been researching the topic of inclusive leadership. Our project was governed by two very simply questions:

1. what are the core principles of inclusive leaders? (Competencies)

2. what do inclusive leaders *do*? (Behaviours)

Thus, the focus of our research was to develop a competency and behavioural framework in order to measure the current state of play and to assist leaders to develop their inclusive leadership skills.

Through a mapping of existing research, supported by our global workshops our research has identified seven core traits of the inclusive leader. Under each competency or trait, we have identified a set of inclusive leadership behaviours.

The seven core traits are:

1. Fairness and Respect – competencies include understanding bias and belonging;

2. Collaboration – competencies include teaming, courage, and promoting social bonds;

3. EQ and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) – competencies including empathy, curiosity, and open-mindedness;

4. Empowerment and growth – competencies include stewardship, sponsorship and adaptability;

5. Insight – competencies include awareness of self & others through curiosity and perspective taking;

6. Promoting psychological safety – competencies include humility and courage;

7. Trust building – competencies include honesty, openness transparency and integrity.

Fairness and Respect

"The way you see people is the way you treat them, and the way you treat them is what they become".

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Human beings are social creators. We like to hang out in groups. It makes us *feel* good. But leaders, like all humans see things and people from their own subjective – biased - viewpoint. And the thoughts and feelings that leaders carry in their heads about people who are similar to them and people who are difference from them affects three basics drives:

- A leaders' *attitude* towards diverse groups
- How leaders' *behaviour* towards diverse groups
- How leaders make *decisions* that impact positively on in-group members and yet negatively on out-group members.

Understanding the psychology of difference helps leaders to pause and reflect on the biases that they carry around with them and how these cultural mind-bugs create a set of unconscious behaviour patterns. Being aware of personal biases and the impact these have on organisational fairness and perceived levels of respect is one of the foundation stones of inclusive leadership. Perceptions of workplace fairness and respect are closely associated with perceptions of belonging.

Research by BetterUp defines belonging as being associated with mattering, identification, and social connection. As they state: *The unifying thread across these themes is that they all revolve around the sense of being accepted and included by those around you.*

Their research found the following:

- High belonging was linked to a 56% increase in job performance
- A 50% drop in turnover risk
- A 75% reduction in sick days

Our research on inclusive leadership identified a number of ways in which leaders can promote fairness, respect and a sense of belonging. Here are 5 tips:

- **Value contributions equally:** Ask yourself a question – if you want to share a thought or gather some views on a project you are working on, do you value the responses from colleagues equally, or are you more likely to value the contribution of some team members over others? The inclusive leader puts into place mechanism to mitigate personal biases to ensure all voices are equally valued and respected.

- **Treat all team members fairly:** This ranges from decision-making that may include work opportunities to everyday micro-behaviours –Who do leaders spend their time with? Whose voice gets amplified in team meetings?

- **Speaking up to challenge inappropriate behaviour:** Unlike Zombie leaders (see page 9) the inclusive leader lives by their personal values by speaking up when colleagues are being treated badly. They call out exclusionary behaviours in their peer group and in others.

- **Allow people to be authentic:** Inclusive leaders don't judge others for how they live their lives. Instead they create a sense of belonging and respect by not asking colleagues to compromise who they are through conversations about sameness disguised as strategies about 'fit'.

- **Fairness in decision-making:** Inclusive leaders recognise that bias results in organisational patterns. They seek to promote fairness by forensically questioning trends in decision blind-spots, such as hiring, work opportunities and performance reviews.

Collaboration

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much".

Helen Keller

As global businesses move increasingly towards highly networked cultures, linked together by cross-team and cross-border working, collaborative styles of leadership will increasing become an essential part of maintaining competitive advantage and promoting high performance team cultures.

Scott E. Page, Professor of Complexity, Social Science and Management at the University of Michigan, has, through many years of research, demonstrated how the power of collective wisdom leads to more informative and intelligent decision-making. By drawing on the collective wisdom of diverse groups, businesses can learn to mitigate human mind-bugs and the associated business risks, and instead, foster greater creativity innovation, problem-solving.

In a 2016 White Paper from Oxford Leadership, researchers identified a number of key dimensions of collaborative leadership. These include:

- **Leadership from the inside out:** In order for leaders to foster an environment in which they promote collective innovation and accomplishments, they must first, learn to lead themselves.

- **Authentic relationships:** Leaders need to let go of the invisible mind and body armour than many of them carry around as protective shields whenever they enter the corporate world. Inclusive leaders replace in-authenticity with empowerment through open and human relationships.

- **Commitment to the whole:** In many businesses a culture of looking out for and promoting the individual as star performer dominates. These cultures are often defined by their internal competitiveness, which can lead to negative power plays, and some-times overt toxic behaviours. A

commitment to the whole means finding a shared purpose that inspires minority and majority groups. It replaces a focus on individual voices with mutual respect for ideas from all team members.

From our research here are 5 Inclusive leadership behaviours that foster collaboration:

- **Amplification of different voices:** Inclusive leaders foster workplace collaboration and innovation by championing the views of diverse colleagues. They involve different viewpoints at project inception. They ensure these voices have equal weight around the decision-making table.

- **Don't get hung up on organisational hierarchy:** Inclusive leaders seek to promote authentic social bonds by letting go of ego driven leadership which is focused on the collection of grand titles and positions of power. They see these as barriers to business innovation and high performance. They seek to remove these barriers through first name term practices and genuine open-doors policies.

- **Create opportunities for cross-team collaboration:** Leaders who seek to promote true team collaboration do so by actively looking for opportunities that promote cross-team and cross-cultural collaboration. Diverse and inclusive decision-making is central to team dynamics.

- **Involvement in decision-making:** Far too often important decisions that impact employees are made behind closed doors, often supported by superficial consultation processes. Inclusive leaders are not interesting in fake engagement. Instead they have a genuine interest in involving colleagues in important decisions that affect them as employees.

- **Celebrate team success over individual success:** Inclusive leaders seek to move away from an over focus on individual reward. They build reward and recognition policies and practices based on collective team effort and performance. For instance, team-based bonus schemes.

EQ and Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

"Emotions are contagious. We've all known it experientially. You know after you have a really fun coffee with a friend, you feel good. When you have a rude clerk in a store, you walk away feeling bad".

Daniel Goleman

Many of today's leaders have traditionally been taught that showing emotions is a sign of weakness. Instead, so they are taught, we need 'tough guys' (and they are usually guys), who can make tough decisions.

This style of leadership leads to what we call Zombie leaders. That is, leaders who lack authenticity, compassion and empathy as well as curiosity and openness to difference. These Zombie leaders cover their emotions for fear of being seen as too human, which in many corporate environments is seen as a sign of weakness and vulnerability. These Zombie Leaders:

- Are influenced by dead ideas on what motivates employees;

- Hire for diversity but have a real preference for sameness;

- Have zero-limited insight of how out-group members experience work;

- Put pressure on diverse colleagues to conform to Zombie norms;

- Turn a blind eye to, or collude with behaviours that don't align to stated values.

Zombie leadership results in a decline in employee motivation, engagement and performance. Feelings of dis-empowerment from diverse colleagues together with the need to cover key aspects of who they are for fear of being seen as different and therefore, not one of the team grows. Innovation and creativity decline.

Here are 5 ways in which Inclusive leaders reject these Zombie norms through behaviours that promote EQ and CQ:

- Practice empathy: Inclusive leaders recognise that they experience and *feel* the world from their own frames of reference. They seek to move beyond their own feelings by recognising the moods and emotions of those around them. These emotions are embraced through active listening practices.

- Share with others: Inclusive leaders don't hide behind an invisible body armour like traditional leaders. They view sharing, not as vulnerability, but as a practice of fostering human connectivity. They share stories about their private life as well as business successes and challenges.

- Adapt their work style: Inclusive leaders flex their style depending on the setting they are in. They find it easy to switch from the formality of the Boardroom to the informality of team drinks with frontline employees. They are comfortable in difference cultural settings.

- Practice authenticity: Inclusive leaders are simply authentic. They are broadly the same person at work as they are outside of work. They also encourage all team members to be themselves at work.

- Practice curiosity: Inclusive leaders have a natural curiosity for difference. They are open-minded with leads to behaviours that promoting inter-cultural connectivity. They go out of their way to talk to diversity colleagues at team meetings and in Town-hall events. They attend events that are designed to promote awareness of diversity, such as LGBT+ History Month and International Women's day.

Empowerment and Growth

"An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skills, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success".

Stephen Covey

Why do so many of today's workers feel dis-empowered? What is it that leaders do to their people that drains their energy and passion? What are the consequences of dis-empowered employees to business innovation and performance?

These are just a few of the questions that any leader interested in high performance and inclusion might want to reflect on. To help, here are a few responses.

Leaders disempower their people by:

- Not listening to everyone's ideas with the same levels of respect: Leaders have their favourites, which plays out in micro-behaviours – inviting some colleagues to the meeting and not others; selecting the same old corporate clones to share their ideas and to speak first; or simply ignoring viewpoints that don't align with the leaders' own ideas and thoughts.

- Giving the wrong type of feedback: Feedback is important as a growth tool, but too many leaders offer little constructive feedback. Instead they constantly nit-pick which leads to dis-engagement.

- It's my way or the highway: Many leaders are governed by a fixed mind-set. They have their approach to work and expect their 'followers' (they don't see others as co-workers) to step in-line with their current mode of working. This inflexibility creates little room for difference to shine and as a result dis-empowers colleagues.

From our research here are 5 Inclusive leadership behaviours that foster empowerment and employee growth:

- Praise for motivation: Getting into a habit of offering praise for a well performed task or when an employee offers a new insight into a particular company challenge is something that leads to higher levels of motivation and stakeholder engagement in business decision-making and ideas formation.

- Investing time in all team members, not just the stars: Inclusive leaders see the value of collective development to business outcomes. Investing in the collective employee population promotes a group identity which leads to collective empowerment, which in turn leads to a narrowing of bias thinking.

- Provide work opportunities fairly: Inclusive leader who seek to empower and grow their colleagues do so through conscious work allocation. They are mindful of which colleagues are assigned the high value projects and work with conscious intent to ensure over the performance cycle work opportunities are allocated fairly.

- Manage personal relationship professionally: In many work settings the boundaries between professional relationships and personal bonds can become blurred. Inclusive leaders manage these boundaries by not letting personal relationship influence professional decision-making.

- Role modelling: Inclusive leaders role model corporate values. For instance, they practice work / life balance behaviours that signal to the workforce that policy and intention are aligned. These behaviours signal, "*it's OK to be different in your work style and work patterns. We love you for it'. I as a leader am also different.*

Insight

"I think self-awareness is probably the most important thing towards being a champion".

Billie Jean King

"Awareness of others is a beautiful thing. Learning how to support and encourage, and stopping long enough to pay attention to someone other than yourself, is a truly beautiful quality. There are a thousand beautiful things we can find about ourselves".

India de Beaufort

Having true insight into one's own motivators, drives and ways of working is a key inclusive leadership competency. However, insight into one-self alone is not enough to create meaningful and inclusive insight. It is simply one side of a two-sided coin. Inclusive leaders are also required to gain insight into difference – that is, the thoughts, feelings, life experiences and ambitions of individuals and groups who are unlike them.

It is only through this level of dual perspective taking can a leader truly lead inclusively.

As stressed by Gillian Ku, Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour at London Business School (LBS): perspective-taking is "*the active cognitive process of imagining the world from another's vantage point*".

Perspective-taking, stresses Dr Ku, should not be confused with empathy. Whereas empathy is about connecting with another person's feels and moods, perspective taking is a cognitive – *thinking* – process.

From our research here are 5 behaviours that build inclusive leadership through insight.

- **Awareness of personal biases:** Inclusive leaders dig deep into their neuro-networks. They investigate unconscious pattern matching process that lead to social and cultural biases. They build awareness by using insight tools, such as the implicit association test to investigative their own mind-bugs and blind-spots.

- **Seek feedback:** Inclusive leaders actively seek feedback on their own behaviours and inter-actions with others. They use technical such as 360 degree loops, reverse mentoring and coaching.

- **Curious about difference:** Inclusive leaders often have a natural curiosity for things that sit outside of their immediate cultural hemisphere. They take a genuine interest in other people's personal circumstances and seek to get to know colleagues on a personal level through informal conversations over coffee and lunch and at networking events.

- **Notice and call out unwritten rules:** Inclusive leaders have a natural antenna which enables them to tune into the unspoken and unwritten rules of corporate life. Critically, inclusive leaders often name these unspoken rules in leadership meetings to raise awareness of advantage and disadvantage amongst peers.

- **Ask questions and act:** Inclusive leaders are questioning leaders. They attend employee network group meetings and diverse events in order to connect with diverse colleagues. They ask questions about respect, belonging and psychological safety with conscious intent. Their curiously is not idle. They use this knowledge to build inclusive workplace practices and policies.

Psychological Safety

"Low levels of psychological safety can create a culture of silence. They can also create a Cassandra culture – an environment in which speaking up is belittled and warnings go unheeded."

Amy C Edmondson

Understanding psychological safety

As stated by Amy C Edmondson - Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management at the Harvard Business School - *psychological safety is the belief that the environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking. People feel able to speak up when needed — with relevant ideas, questions, or concerns — without being shut down in a gratuitous way. Psychological safety is present when colleagues trust and respect each other and feel able, even obligated, to be candid.*

As the global economy shifts ever more towards a VUCA environment, the need for employees to speak up and speak out, to challenge and question existing world views will grow.

And yet, so many employees, even when they feel the need to speak up, stay silent. Why is this? In one word: Fear.

Reviewing the results from employee engagement surveys from numerous global companies, together with focus group data, we have spotted a repetitive trend:

- Many groups of employees – particularly minority ethnic communities and disabled groups - often don't feel that their voice is heard or respected;

- Employees don't challenge leadership decisions for fear of career limiting repercussions;

- Employees don't trust their leaders to hear all voices equally. There is a perceived bias towards certain populations of employees.

In short, many employees don't experience psychological safety or feel psychological safe. In this context, the *psychological contract* as defined by Denise Rousseau from Carnegie Mellon University is broken. This is one of the biggest leadership challenges of the modern era.

Helpfully in her research Any C Edmondson offers a tool kit for leaders to build psychological safety. This includes 3 key steps:

1. **Setting the stage:** Here the leadership tasks include setting expectations about failure, uncertainty, and interdependence to clarify the need for voice;

2. **Inviting Participation:** Here the leadership tasks include acknowledging skills gaps, asking insightful questions and practicing intense listening. They also create forums for input and provide guidelines for discussion

3. **Responding productivity:** Here the leadership tasks includes listen, acknowledge and thanking colleagues, as well as offering help to others.

From our research we have identify a number of Inclusive leadership behaviours that build and strengthen psychological safety:

- Owns and admits mistake to others;

- Never deliberately acting in a way that undermines the efforts of colleagues;

- Encouraging all team members to offer alterative perspectives to a leaders' own views;

- Forgiving of others making mistakes;

- Responding professionally when team members bring up problems and tough issues.

Trust building

"Over time, I have come to this simple definition of leadership: Leadership is getting results in a way that inspires trust".

Stephen M.R. Covery

Think of a leader that you fundamentally mis-trust. What is it about his or her behaviours that have led to your perceptions of such a leader? My guess – based on research, would be something like this: The say one thing and yet they something contrary, they lie, they talk down to people or have little respect for people who are less like them.

Now think of a leader that you trust. What values do they hold? What behaviours do they demonstrate?

According to David M. Long, assistant professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Mason School of Business at the College of William & Mary, there are three pillars that create bonds of trust between leaders and followers – one of them is integrity.

Other research studies have identified integrity as a key leadership competency. In our own research integrity was seen as a trust generator, which in turn facilitates strong emotional bonds between diverse colleagues and their leaders.

As stressed by Paul J. Zak, Professor of Economic Sciences, Psychology & Management at the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies and author of *Trust Factor: The Science of Creating High Performance Companies*, employees in high-trust organisations are more productive, have more energy at work, collaborate better, and stay with their employers longer than people working at low-trust companies.

However as stated in a HBR article (January–February 2017 Issue), in its 2016 global CEO survey, PwC reported that 55% of CEOs think that a lack of trust is a threat to their organisation's growth.

The stakes for leaders have never been higher.

5 Inclusive leadership behaviours that build trust include:

- **Speaking up:** Inclusive leaders who build trust are driven by a sense of fairness. They don't stand by or turn a blind eye to bias or inappropriate behaviour. Instead, they speak up loudly and challenge individual and organisational bias.

- **Align Values with behaviours:** Inclusive leaders work with the principle of congruence. They understand the power of role modelling everyday macro and micro behaviours that align with stated organisational values – even under times of stress. This alignment generates trust building through integrity.

- **Don't bad talk others:** Leaders who inspire trust don't play office politics. They don't bad talk others or disrespect them either when they are out of earshot or in front of others. Instead, leaders who seek to inspire trust in others challenge this kind of bad talk as they know without doing so it can spiral towards toxicity and also send a message of acceptability.

- **Admit mistakes:** Inclusive leaders don't hide behind the classic 'tough guy' macho image. Instead they show their humanness and perceived vulnerability by admitting mistakes when they happen and thus signally to others that mistake are OK, it's part of the learning process. This also aligns to the principle of building *psychological safety.*

- **Always tell the truth:** The corporate world, globally, is full of deceit and cover-up. This includes industry wide bad practice from the UK's banking PPI scandal to cross industry cover ups on issues such as sexual harassment. Bad leaders facilitate this practice through either overt participation in these practices or through turning a blind eye – a form of collusion. Inclusive leaders on the other hand always tell the trust; they are radically open and transparent in their communications to all employees.

Author

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Dan has a particular expertise in the science and application of unconscious bias, leadership decision-making and behavioural economics. He spends his days supporting executives to turn diversity theory into meaningful actions.

He is acknowledged as an inspirational conference speaker and an expert facilitator working across a wide range of global business sectors.

In 2019 Hive Learning named Dan as one of the top 50 Most influential D&I leaders globally.

Dan is Chair of the Lord Mayor of London's Power of Inclusion programme (London) and an advisor to ICEDR's QUEST programme: Supporting early career woman (Boston, USA).

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