

## Preface

This book aims to address the interests and concerns relevant to current and aspiring leaders in organization, academics in higher education, and senior students, as well as business consultants and intelligent laypersons with an interest in the subject matter. This book is not aimed at technical or functional specialists or managers specifically, although the broader models, strategic topics, digital technology focus, attitudes, and competencies outlined can be successfully applied by them to leadership roles they have, or roles they aspire to and may acquire. To enhance and improve clarity, each chapter has a list of key terms and definitions. An abstract is provided for each chapter to indicate to the readers the overall range and scope of the topic.

In the previous book, Smith and Cockburn's (2013) *Dynamic Leadership Models for Global Business: Enhancing Digitally Connected Environments*, we outlined a number of areas where leaders have to lift their game so that their organizations can reap the rewards and ultimately benefit our global society in various ways. The metaphorical "elephant in the room" is many current leaders' lack of awareness, skills, or in many cases, a demonstrable lack of interest in new socio-digital technologies. Thus, our objective in this volume is to provide readers with a range of insights and research data as well as cases from a number of authorities in key fields of research and of practice.

In order to set the context of the topics in this book, our first chapter gives a very brief overview of key definitions of leadership in organizations, which we discussed in detail in our first book. As noted elsewhere, organizations, societies, and leaders at all levels today have their work cut out for them as their roles and responsibilities or priorities morph in the slipstream of turbulent social economic and technological changes occurring across the world today (Smith & Cockburn, 2013). Leaders today have to continuously strive to build and maintain a sharp, cutting-edge profile, as well as having to generate loyalty, innovation, and sundry other discretionary behaviors amongst staff and other stakeholders in their organizations and in their markets to facilitate better business in the global context of rapidly accelerating technological change (Pretorius & Roux, 2011). Alongside the above tasks, leaders must frequently re-evaluate their roles and reinvent themselves to address the constantly shifting forms and diverse types of unpredictable opportunities and constraints of operating in the global business environment.

By the same token and without becoming excessively "intoxicated" by technological determinism, academics, consultants, and leaders must search for more effective and more dynamic leadership models in order simply to keep pace intellectually and practically with the complex swirl of new digital technologies, socio-digital media, and trans-disciplinary derivatives and related devices or applications surfacing in our lives each day. The practical drawback here is that many current definitions of leadership continue to be based on stable or constant factors interacting in predictable ways; that is, these sorts of perspectives tend to eschew any dynamically interactive form of complexity in the context or processes

and instead favour an assumption that a slightly more complicated type of “business as usual” scenario will return someday soon. Such theories or models then appear of limited range, duration, or diversity and lacking practical application for many leaders engaged with navigating the stormy seas of global business, so they seem somewhat archaic. The static models are increasingly coming under fire and so are part of a much-contested and often confused area of academic research and practitioner debate as well as the often lagging public perceptions fuelled by the popular media and ignoring impacts such as the recent “heartbleed” virus issue (Kets de Vries, 1993; Higgs, 2003; Ruettimann, 2011; Krohe, 2011; Smith & Cockburn, 2013).

On the other hand, we point the reader towards the gender-neutral, flexible, leadership model presented in our first book, which we believe will be required to successfully address current and future leadership concerns in digitally defined contexts. At the time of writing, the leaders of many nations as well as those in global businesses are under threat and are failing. As many as 40% of all new leaders fail within the first 18 months, according to recent surveys; thus, the leadership crisis continues to grow more threatening, and as leaders’ world of work grows more complex each year, the leaders’ own self-doubt about their skills is magnified (Newhall, 2011; Smith & Cockburn, 2013, p. xii).

In *Dynamic Leadership Models for Global Business: Enhancing Digitally Connected Environments* (Smith & Cockburn, 2013), we proposed a dynamic foundation for understanding and practicing leadership based on proven, practical ways to deal with complexity. For example, one may address complexity very successfully by basing one’s actions on intuitive decisions that in turn are based on extensive tacit and explicit knowledge and experience. When one does not yet possess extensive experience, another way to successfully make progress is by taking small steps in an experimental fashion and continuously learning from what seems to produce the results one wants and what doesn’t. In this vein, we visualize leaders as members of a complex evolving ecosystem, where individually or in groups they are co-evolving with forces and currents of specific markets or wider business complexity and their own systemic organizational contexts using a variety of dynamic leadership models.

To this end, we set out integrated processes that facilitate this co-evolution without prescribing what the specific leadership models, behaviors, competencies, etc. must be. In this manner, based on their learning and experience, each leader may continually tailor their activities and leadership models to address shortfalls perceived between what they are achieving and what they themselves or others expect them to achieve.

Long ago, scholars in organizational behavior established that there were close links between leadership and learning (Schein, 1972, 1992; Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Schon, 1978), and these links continue to be emphasized worldwide today. Grazier (2005) in the USA, emphasizes the connection between leading and learning maintaining that “leaders ... have to have the insight to admit they don’t know everything but are willing to learn. They must be driven to do better tomorrow” (p. 360). The leadership process described in *Dynamic Leadership Models for Global Business: Enhancing Digitally Connected Environment* (2013) is designed to take into account the existing knowledge of an individual and his/her colleagues and their organization, providing a framework to develop this knowledge further, or as appropriate, relinquish previous knowledge and skills that are proving counterproductive. This latter activity is termed “unlearning,” and although it has not received as much attention in the literature as that of workplace learning (Becker, et al., 2006), it is a significant factor in dealing with dynamic complexity.

Leadership has always been equated with authority and “power over,” but in this book we equate leadership with planning, performance-related learning, and “power to.” However, we recognize the lingering nostalgia for the “heroic” paradigm in the minds of many leaders of organizations. Thus, despite some reservations about his alleged autocratic manner, Steve Jobs’s death has prompted many hagiographic reviews crediting him with having merged and changed industries – or at the least initiated new products such as the combination of music and mobile telephony, the iPod, and now the iPad, catering to the “wired” generation. For every Steve Jobs there are thousands of leaders who must tackle their complex environments without the experience and personal attributes that allow individuals such as Jobs to make successful intuitive decisions – *Dynamic Leadership Models for Global Business: Enhancing Digitally Connected Environments* is for them.

## **CHAPTER 1: LEADERSHIP CONTEXT**

Chapter 1 covers in significant detail much the same ground as has been overviewed in this preface. We briefly outline the historical development of leadership theory and practice as foundational for our readers’ understanding of leadership and to contextualize the subsequent chapters.

## **CHAPTER 2: DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP PROCESS**

In chapter 2, a systemic on-the-job integrated learning approach to leadership is described that provides the foundation for adopting a dynamic leadership model appropriate to your situation. Very briefly, this involves following a four-step incremental leadership process:

1. The first step is to understand your leadership role is knowing what you are expected to achieve.
2. The second step involves analyzing how to successfully perform your role. This is accomplished using a performance system model where your performance is viewed as dependent on three elements or fields that help you structure your activity. These three elements form a dynamic system, and your personal performance level depends on the interactions and interdependencies of these three elements.
3. The third step involves your very frequent cycling through a succession of activities in an experiential leadership learning cycle (Smith, 2000) based on the work of Schewhart (2012), Kolb (1984), Honey and Mumford (1989), and Deming (2012).
4. The fourth step is concerned with operationalizing steps 1 – 3 to obtain the maximum value. Steps 1 – 3 are termed single-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974), and step 4 moves to a higher order, “double loop learning” (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

## **CHAPTERS 3 – 15**

The remaining chapters (3 – 15) detail significant current and emerging issues and complex systems, scenarios, problems, and social or demographic aspects relevant to technologically driven business landscapes with which leaders must increasingly engage in order to deliver for their organizations.

These chapters are intended only to acquaint you with the general properties of such conditions. These environmental factors are all systemically linked, and the results of their interactions will be dynamic and unique to your particular situation. The environments themselves will also typically be digitally connected, adding a further level of complexity. The first two chapters in this set, chapters 3 and 4, lay out for the readers the authors' sense of the changing spirit of leadership in an age of digital abundance. These two chapters consider how the emerging world has already begun to shape the agenda of future leaders in diverse ways. Current projections by McKinsey have suggested that almost half of the fortune 500 companies in the future will be based in emerging nations. The global panoramas opening up to the eyes of perceptive leaders today have much for them to be excited about as well as some new challenges for much traditional thinking on leadership, strategy, and organizational behavior. The chapter authors look at how leadership development must be reformed to begin to address the shifting directions in leaders' strategic thinking, their revised priorities, and emerging challenges, as well as some of the potential rewards of the new age. These two chapters are followed by chapter 5, which discusses the authors' research using illustrative case material from the field studies to demonstrate the practical, on-the-ground impact of the new digital technologies and how these have begun to shape the socio-cultural arenas in which both for-profit and not-for-profit leaders act in some emerging countries.

Chapters 6 – 14 begin to look into particular human and technological facets and interfaces of the new global business world leaders are now entering. In chapter 6, the implications and features of the expectations of the generation of digital natives who have grown up and are now in the workplace is explored with particular focus on their desire to bring their own devices to use at work. The “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) phenomenon is discussed and debated with respect to the sorts of potential costs and benefits envisaged and how these might be embedded in organizations.

Chapter 15 rounds out the book with an outline exploration of the vista that is emerging and how the significant currents and flows driving business change and the evolution of leadership in digitally connected environments will challenge our ideas about business efficiency, sustainability, and the nature of leadership. We will be entering an area of mainstreaming of concepts such as substitution, reusability, circular production systems, and optimization, virtualization, and waste elimination (Heck & Rogers, 2014).

As noted above and in greater detail in the individual chapters, the focus of the book is to alert the readers to these matters and raise awareness of the scope, pace, and diversity of the applications of socio-digital technologies in the emerging global business environment as we move towards the second decade of the present century and the need for leadership to be developed for moving beyond the current state of semi literacy in terms of such technologies. The book addresses the impact of the emerging technologies on leadership across many disciplines and in diverse fields. Collectively, the editors and authors of the chapters look beyond the focus of the immediate technologies to engage with wider scientific and social changes, new norms of behaviour, and sensemaking cognitions on or about our “lifeworld” and potential “workworlds.” Such impacts are often reflected or presaged to varying extents by the applications and devices we construct for our pleasure, easing the strains of living and working, and opening the doors to future possibilities for development. As such, these continue to drive culture change, reprioritisation, moral as well as business change, and as suggested by a number of the chapter authors, they are beginning to shape our strategic leadership thinking, alter agendas, and present new vistas for change and positive improvements in the lives of people, as well as some potential threats for leaders and the public to attend to.

These chapters have been written with an eye on not only gaining the intelligent reader's attention but also gaining their interest. There is a wealth of food for thought, discussion, debate, and reflection, as well as stimulation and satisfaction of readers' tastes for new concepts alongside the practical ideas gleaned from the case studies provided. The chapter authors have figuratively "set the table" for an intellectual feast and collectively contributed a diverse menu with items to appeal to those with a thirst for deeper understanding of these matters. Bon appétit!

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