Chapter 10
Leadership, Global Business, and Digitally Connected Environments

ABSTRACT
To adopt a successful global business perspective, leaders must continually enhance their understanding of the social, political, technological, and environmental forces that are shaping our existence, and concurrently, they must develop personal and organizational capabilities to co-evolve with the dynamic complexity of this emerging world. To this end, chapter ten builds on the dynamic leadership models and the complexities impacting leadership practice described in previous chapters. The following sections then significantly expand on this research. Initially the broad underlying spectrum of global leadership-related issues is reviewed; then the current and emerging dynamic drivers of global business are detailed; next, the nature of leadership in connected (networked) environments is explored; finally, the critical characteristics of leadership in digitally connected environments are examined. In addressing these challenges the relevance of the Leadership Learning Process described in chapter two is highlighted. An assessment instrument is included to assist in assessing readiness to lead in digitally-connected environments.

INTRODUCTION
Throughout our book we have been discussing leadership, including how you gain understanding of your organization’s vision, and how you learn to figure out and achieve your role in realizing it. In so doing you will be developing the planned shared culture and set of values that your organization anticipates will enable the attainment of its desired future state. As this chapter illustrates, particularly in regard to digitally connected environments, leadership is crucially concerned with not only understanding but communicating the organization’s vision, including the impact and

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leverage associated with emerging technology. Leaders seek to align people with their broader ideas of what the company should and could be, and with a coherent rationale as to why this vision and mission are better than alternatives. Good leaders not only exhibit a clear focus, and demonstrate the required capability, but have the courage to follow through and persevere in meeting the challenges with their teams. Leaders are concerned with learning, motivating others, building trust, and engaging in the tasks and activities necessary to achieve the strategic global vision of their organization.

Clearly we are asking a lot of a leader operating today under the globalization of the organization’s supply chain and many other such complex organizational operations. The situation facing a leader is further exacerbated by the significantly increasing and important uptake of digitization to connect and enhance the efficacy of all these environments, particularly those related to global business. The emerging skill set and expected capabilities are both wide ranging and continually evolving at an ever-faster pace. Facing forwards whilst drawing any relevant lessons from the past, global leaders need to look at the big picture without losing sight of the local context. Organizations today are facing the future and an evolving set of new relationships, new challenges, and whole new kinds of opportunities that were not available or envisaged even a decade ago. Managers and leaders must demonstrate a much broader set of capabilities, and familiarity with topics covered in the various chapters of our book. In our view, management and executive education has a key role to play in preparing aspiring future leaders, and our book has been developed with this end in mind.

Figure 1 encapsulates the leadership goals set out above, and summarizes the intent of our book, where the emerging skill set and expected capabilities are indeed both wide ranging and free to continuously co-evolve rapidly with the business environment at an ever-faster pace as experimentation and learning dictate. Our approach encourages facing forward in the ‘here and now’ of a leader’s every day world, whilst drawing any relevant lessons from the past, anticipating the future, and trying in a Level 2 ‘Leading-to-learn’ style to act systematically, and co-evolve based on his/her reflection on the big picture and on the local context.

Developing the global business perspective and business strategy for the right-hand phase of Figure 1 means taking a broader longer-term critically-evaluative view of ways in which you can effectively apply your collective experience, knowledge, and learning to what you apprehend or understand of your situation and of your prospects. To adopt a global perspective, one needs

Figure 1. Dynamic leadership models for global business: Enhancing digitally connected environments