

The Leadership of the Future

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I write about leadership that defies convention.

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There are tried and true leadership principles that have withstood the test of generations, such as putting the customer first, hiring and developing top talent, and being integral with your words and actions. Still, it's natural as humans to project our thoughts into the future, wondering what things might look like, and how they might be at some future date. I asked ten entrepreneurs what they think the leadership of the future would look like. Predicting the future is risky business. No Monday morning quarterbacking here. Let's hear what they have to say.

AI Technology Is The Future

“In the future, AI technology will be the most effective tool utilized by entrepreneurs for leadership development,” says Ryan Blair, founder of AlterCall.

It is no secret that entrepreneurs and businesses are going virtual. Based on Ryan’s tech experience and AlterCall's latest research, the virtual component specifically impacts the idea of mental health and coaching for entrepreneurs and business owners.

“We know there has to be a better way to help coaches with their clients. What really stood out to us was the ability to use AI in giving real-time feedback on unsurfaced emotional states. This improves outcomes while reducing the time and costs associated with coaching,” says Blair, who has assembled a team of experts like Dr. Esma Benssassi and research leader Idin Goli, who are working to integrate advanced bio-sensors into a multi-modal AI platform.

“We believe emotional states are often invisible. Mental health has been at an all-time low, making it harder and harder for people to lead.”

Support Life-Long Learning and Find That Purpose

“Tomorrow’s talents are formed today. That is why I think we should start by looking at what makes current generations tick to define what the future of leadership should look like,” says Marnix Broer, co-founder and CEO of StuDocu. “We should make sure current generations have all the resources they need to be educated. Not only should we focus on improving education as we know it – students digesting knowledge that institutions and professors serve them – but we should also focus on preparing our future colleagues for their working life. We should teach them how to successfully work in a team and train skills that will help them succeed in the workplace.

“Education is not only important before, but throughout their careers. Future leaders should therefore support and invest in the continuous learning and development of their teams. Besides that, future leaders have to think of their team’s life outside of work and support a good work-life balance, for instance by offering wellness support and “a la carte benefits” to retain a happy and healthy team.

“Last but foremost, future leaders have to be dedicated to making a positive impact with their work. Whether it’s on the environment or society, current generations are set to make a difference and so should we. The good thing is, having a good purpose will have a positive impact on your business as well!”

Reconnecting With Purpose and Passion

“More than ever, it is important for us to focus on reconnecting with passion and purpose in our lives.” Kristin Sparks, the founder and CEO of WRAR Inc., as well as a bestselling author, believes that it's crucial that leaders start redefining what success looks like.

“The pandemic showed us that circumstances can change in an instant. Living purposeful lives and elevating careers is crucial to mental, spiritual, and physical wellness.”

As an advocate for women living lives of passion, joy, and purpose, she added, “We want to build safe spaces to remind women that a fulfilling life will lead them to be better leaders, family members, and community representatives.”

Future of Leadership is Youth

“Imagine the potential that is in our youth today. We are literally sitting on untapped resources. As leaders, we need to learn to recognize and mentor, be a pushy angel, to the youth. Help them empower themselves and become future leaders and visionaries,” says Hazel Ortega, founder of High Tide Global.

“As entrepreneurs, and leaders ourselves, we have a responsibility to ensure that there is a future to grow into. With the pandemic and even prior, there has been a change. The younger generation is relying on technology for everything – school, social interaction – and parents have numbed themselves to this change, not being as involved as they used to. While I praise technology and all of its advances, we can't forget the human factor in this as well. So we need to take charge, we need to be positive and powerful mentors.

“I had pushy angels that helped me be where I am today, and I am always encouraging others to become someone else's pushy angel. Keep paying it forward and lead by example. That is the only way we get to change the world for the better.”

The Future is Now

“The future of leadership is now. It is incredible the momentum Gen Z is establishing. I feel lucky to be a part of that generation. Great leadership starts and ends with belief in yourself. No one can make you believe in yourself if you don't do the work to develop your self-confidence first,” says Lexi Kaz, CEO and founder of AK Infinite. “How your leader treats themselves will then reflect on you. When I left college after one year to start my own company, the belief that I would be successful, no matter what was thrown my way, is what kept me going.

“If you believe in your infinite potential, then you will thrive as a leader. Putting others before yourself will come naturally. You are only successful if you surround yourself with incredible people. I believe that seeing your team members thrive is the best gift one can receive. My goal, being a part of the future generation of leaders, is to inspire others to take action now. Tomorrow isn’t guaranteed, even though we all like to think it is, and investing in yourself is the best place to start.”

Communication is Key

“Leadership and corporate culture are now more important than ever,” says Ryan Niddel, CEO of Ryan Niddel Strategies. “In a world that is becoming increasingly distanced due to the shift to remote working opportunities, a leader must learn to communicate and set the example for their team. The ability to clearly articulate expectations, and then to live up to them personally is paramount in today's remote culture.

“Making myself available for real-time communication through tools like Microsoft teams and Voxer has proven to pay healthy dividends while growing my company, MIT45, from \$24 million in revenue to \$75 million over the past two years.”

Empathy is Needed

“More than ever, leaders must provide resources and strategies to support overall wellness, mentally, physically, and emotionally,” says Robert Morgan, CEO of Pivotal Moments Media, who has over 25 years of experience in building teams and effective organizations, most notably as co-founder of the \$200 million dollar consulting company Morgan Franklin. He adds that “strong leadership is critical to strengthen the culture and maintain the values and integrity of the organization in an increasingly digital and remote world.”

Leading with empathy is hard, but the reward is great. “I know this requires an increased level of patience, and listening to team members through all forms of communication, but the rewards are endless.”

Inspiration Through Adversity

“Your current situation is not your final destination.” Bernadette Gomez, founder and CEO of Limitless Elite, is responsible for building a global business that serves its clients' life insurance and financial needs. “Having nearly 20 years of experience in entrepreneurship and team building, leading business teams in every phase, the main component of thriving teams is inspiration. After, all rising above adversity can be the catalyst to change your life.

“As a leader I make sure to always encourage those that I lead to be inspired and to inspire others. No matter what the future holds, adversity is never too far away. It is not so much about the adversity but more so how one handles it. In my two decades of experience, I have gone through many trials and tribulations in my business and personal life. I share that with my team to let them know that anything is possible if they keep going.”

Self-Awareness Is A Must

“An effective leader is identified by a high level of self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, ethics, principles, morals, values, integrity and social skills.”

Ryan Rodney is the founder of Riverbound Custom Storage, a unique, one-of-a-kind RV Park/Storage facility in Lake Havasu, Arizona. As the 35-year-old’s real estate developments are propelling him to prominence, he admits pain is part of the process. “A real leader seeks pain and pressure and finds a way to actually thrive in it. And they’re not afraid to fail.”

“When self-aware, a leader learns to focus on those they lead. A master leader uses their success, spotlight, wealth, and influence to put those around him in the best position to succeed and realize their potential and purpose.”

Personalization and Transparency are Essential

In our ever-evolving consumer-centric society, the leaders of healthcare will need to bridge the gap and realize that patients view healthcare, as we view all services, as a commodity,” says **Dr. Mark Stein**, President of New York Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

“We need to provide patients with a platform that combines evolving technologies, such as AI, helping to replace workforce shortages, while maintaining the personalized and transparent doctor-patient relationship that is central to fostering trust and care.”

Leadership historically and necessarily has been top-down. When leading a platoon into battle, or preparing a workforce for the Industrial Age, the leader is responsible for the safety, stability, and allegiance of their contingents. Today, leadership is less about dictating orders to an obedient following. Rather, the future of leadership is about winning others’ allegiance through inspiring passion and purpose, good communication, and an empathic heart.