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**Science Reveals the Traits Every Leader Must Cultivate**

Even the top CEOs are hardly flawless. They knew or know how to manage their strengths and weaknesses. It's an approach aspiring leaders can take too.

Professor Deborah Ancona, the Seley Distinguished Professor of Management, is a professor of organization studies and the founder of the MIT Leadership Centre at the MIT Sloan School of Management. She helped create the 4-CAP+ model, which offers four capabilities that every leader must reflect on, while focusing on their strengths and compensating for their flaws.

1. **Making Sense**

Change is inevitable, but successful leaders make sense of the context within which they must operate. In 2014 Satya Nadella became CEO of Microsoft. At the time, the company had many critics who accused it of over-relying on legacy products and risking irrelevancy.

Nadella travelled around the company talking to employees, customers and partners. He also explored how other large, successful organizations were evolving.

These actions allowed him to keep an eye on what was happening, as it happened, and thereby seeing what was different that must be understood so you can lead successfully

"He went...on what we would call a sense-making journey," Ancona says. "Sense-making is keeping your fingers on the pulse of what's going on out there: What's changing in the market with customers, thein terms of competition, in terms of technology; what's different that we need to understand in order to lead."

1. **Visioning**

Achieving a vision is not an easy task, but various techniques can be used to understand what has the highest success rate (such as drawing from previous experiences).

This works in practice too, shown by Nadella’s success within Microsoft, which provided them with a 64% growth rate in its Azure public cloud and a 19% growth rate in its intelligent cloud in the quarter 4 results.

1. **Relating**

Relating to people isn’t just about understand their situation, you should also coach them and consequently help them to grow as employees, which will have a positive impact on the business.

1. **Inventing**

Changing the way things work can have a huge impact on the running of a business, and even the most minor changes can create a butterfly effect that may have previously been thought irrelevant. However, doing this means having the trust of what you have said and understanding what even the most unexpected outcomes may be.

There is no such thing as the complete leader, with even the most-accomplished CEOs having flaws. The difference between these leaders is that the successful ones will understand what these flaws are and hire accordingly.

**Credibility**

The final part of the 4-CAP+ model involves acting with integrity, whereby you do what you say and act for the benefit of the company and others.

There are leaders who are out for themselves who demean others, who blame others when things are not going well and credit themselves when things are going well, who pit other people against each other.

But then there are leaders who lead by doing what they say they're going to do, by building these trusting relationships, by showing leadership with purpose. These people lead with a purpose, rather than their own needs.

It's impossible for a leader to excel in every area of the 4-CAP+ model. Instead, they recognize their weaknesses and hire others who can compensate with strengths, therefore building a team that has a plethora of skills represented.

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Forbes, Sep 2019