
The Connected Future Business Culture: The Great Project Management Accelerator

Purpose Centered Project Leadership Models¹

By Dr. Harold Kerzner
and
Dr. Al Zeitoun

Introduction

Leadership matters. Our world has been changing and evolving and one common thread of what we need most globally has been successful examples of leadership, coupled with the increased appreciation of projects and their role in achieving aspirations of transformation. The success of tomorrow's strategic programs and projects within the context of future business cultures will be linked to the intentionality of leadership that guide us create the true purpose of our societies, organizations, teams, and families.

The next decade is expected to rely on a project leadership to rethink work practices and ways of leading. This is why we need project-centered project leadership models. The goal would be to ensure these models are tailorable to the context of the business culture, adaptable to the world's fast changing and unpredictable dynamics, and still provide the calmness in the middle of the storm that is critical to connecting and motivating project teams. The business and political acumen ingredients will be common across leadership models in order to handle the increasingly complex ecosystem of stakeholders.

In this article, we will discuss several of the attributes of impactful leadership. It is in our view that a strong purpose-centered project leadership will energize the strategic agendas of the future businesses and manages to leave the lasting and right footprint of impact that will effectively move societal change agendas forward.

CENTERED LEADERSHIP MODELS

During the past 20 years, there has been a significant growth in research surrounding effective leadership styles. Most of the research focused on functional rather than project leadership styles with a heavy emphasis on senior and middle-levels of management.

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However, many of these concepts are now being applied to project management leadership.

Almost all of the leadership research studies have a central focus such as:

- Character-centered leadership
- Self-centered leadership
- Awareness-centered leadership
- Action-centered leadership
- Purpose-centered leadership
- Knowledge-centered leadership
- Value-centered leadership
- Ethical-centered leadership
- People-centered leadership
- Customer-centered leadership
- Principle-centered leadership

For each of the centered leadership models, the authors identify between 5 and 12 dimensions or characteristics of the model based upon their work experience as a functional leader, consultant or researcher. Many of the dimensions or characteristics are common to several of the centered leadership models.

BACKGROUND TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP _____

To understand the applicability of centered leadership models to project management, we must first understand the history of project management leadership. In the early years of project management, very little emphasis was placed upon project management leadership. Significant research was placed upon improvements in processes, tools, techniques, forms, guidelines, templates, and checklists rather than people-oriented improvements such as leadership.

Project management leadership was “deliverable” centered. Project managers were expected to produce the deliverables expected and then to move on to another project. Quite frequently, project managers never knew or interfaced with many of the people on the project team. Workers were identified by their employee badge numbers and the goal of the project manager was to get the workers to stop using the project charge numbers as quickly as possible. The workers reported directly to their functional managers. The project managers had no authority over the workers, an inability to hire and fire, and no input into workers wage and salary performance appraisals.

Project leadership was defined in terms of authority and power. The authority identified what decisions the project manager could make, and power identified how the project manager might influence workers such as with the use of legal, reward, penalty, expert, or referent power. Given the fact than many projects were short term, and the project

managers might never work with these people again, there appeared to be little need to focus on types of project management leadership. Project leadership was oriented to what was in the best interest of the project manager rather than the project or the team. By the turn of the century, the importance of project management leadership began to grow. Some of the factors that encouraged more research into project management leadership included:

- Projects were getting longer, and project managers were expected to interface more closely with team members
- The growth of flexible methodologies such as Agile and Scrum focused on a greater need for collaboration between project managers and stakeholders
- More and more projects were being implemented with greater uncertainty and risk that required a leadership style that could alleviate the additional stress placed upon the workers

There were several leadership styles that project management researchers looked at, such as:

- Authoritarian leadership
- Participative leadership
- Laissez-faire leadership
- Task-oriented leadership
- Behavior-oriented leadership
- Situational leadership

There were advantages and disadvantages to each of these leadership styles based upon the type of project and the impact of the enterprise environmental factors. The traditional leadership styles mentioned above did not satisfy this need.

The complexities and accompanying challenges of many of the new types of projects could not be effectively managed with a one-size-fits-all one leadership style. Even when assessing the causes for the failure of a project, emphasis was placed upon changing processes, tools, and techniques rather than changes in leadership. As a result, many project managers continued using the same “dysfunctional” leadership style on all of their projects.

Leadership advocates promoted the concept that project managers needed to assess every new project with an open mind and fresh perspective of what leadership approach would be best. What the project management community wanted was a “map of leadership capabilities” from which they could select the right mix of capabilities for each project they were asked to manage.

PERSONAL VERSUS TEAM-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

Most of the centered leadership styles discussed previously were personal rather than team-centered leadership. The focus was on senior and middle levels of management, and how they could improve their leadership capabilities. One important factor to be considered was that they were providing governance to mostly the same people each day rather than facing the challenges of a project manager in dealing with many new faces continuously, some of whom were on a part-time assignment. Personal leadership emphasizes such factors as:²

- Influencing yourself towards the achievement of goals
- Lifting your vision to higher heights
- Raising your performance to a higher standard
- Building your personality beyond its normal limits

While focusing on personal leadership factors is a good idea, we must still consider the link between personal leadership and project team performance. Personal leadership analysis helps you do many of the things you do not want to do or need to do. Team-centered leadership helps address the things you want the team to do to reach higher levels of performance.

There must be an effective link between the two approaches. As an example, many of the centered leadership models have a dimension or characteristic that deals with stress. All leaders must deal with stress. Personal leadership models discuss how an effective leader should deal with stress given the fact that stress cannot be eliminated. Team-centered leadership focuses on how to deal with the stress that the workers feel. Therefore, there must be a bridge between centered leadership models that includes project teams.

All of the centered leadership models contain characteristics that can be applied to project teams. In the future, it is expected that, as project leadership research continues, we will eventually end up with a “map of project leadership capabilities” from which project managers can select the best mix of characteristics that bridge the gap between personal and team-centered leadership.

THE NEED FOR TEAM MUSCLES

Whether we look at past or current example of inspiring leaders, the team-centered elements are a clear indicator for what contributed to the superb impacts these leaders make. Henry Ford had superb creativity in kicking off the business model for Ford with creative suppliers’ relationships. Warren Buffett’s unique leadership approach centered

² Jackson, Art. Mastering personal leadership can move employees and the organization to greatness, *Employee Relations Today* (Wiley), Spring 2007, Volume 34, Issue 1, pp.8-9.

around the closeness to the executives where he invests. Nelson Mandela's resilience empowered him to widely inspire groups of dedicated teams to the change legacy he created. All these leaders have a distinct team-centered connection.

We see that in shining leaders' examples today across the globe, like in the United Arab Emirates and leaders like Sheikh Mohammed of Dubai and his collaborative and inclusive style that inspires others to unprecedented levels of action. We also see leaders who continue to be shaped by unimaginable and highly disastrous world crises we have been witnessing in the last few years, fully realizing the importance of the coalitions they must create. Integrating across an ecosystem is where the future leadership is dependent on.

Translating that to the world of projects shows what the threads of the future will closely depend on our ability to create a superb level of integration around purpose. Projects are finally reaching a clear state of the essential need of seamless horizontal operation. Room for business or industry silos, denial cultural behaviors, or unaddressed accountabilities has diminished to zero. Knowing and connecting every member of program and project teams to a clear why will open doors to multipliers of success, assuming we have taken the time to define what that looks like.

In the next decade, and as we continue to build our business cultures, we have begun to address a number of skills that will shape this purpose-driven and team-centered leadership factors skills³. Every one of the skills we addressed have a driver centered on bringing teams to clear purpose as they discover, plan, execute, deliver, and create value.

Taking a few examples from our work on the experience culture skills, the servant leadership component of future leadership models is a strong shift that turns the table and puts massive responsibility on program leaders and executive teams to understand where their true impact lies. Sensing and responding strengthening are highly focused on how the leaders co-create value by balancing both customer and business experiences and get the leaders closest to the true needs of external and internal customers. Agile mindset and the associated collaboration behaviors are the creators of the most tightly connected teams' approaches to value, experimentation, and to building adaptability muscles required of future leaders.

³ Kerzner, H. and Zeitoun, A. (2022). The Continual Innovation Culture; Connected Future Business Culture: The Great Project Management Accelerator series, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XI, Issue III, March.

THE PURPOSE-CENTERED MODELS

As we highlighted in the highly team-centered elements of future models, the goal of tomorrow's leadership models will hinge on our ability to move from vagueness both in the organization and in the external environment towards purpose and focus. As shown in Figure 1, project and program leaders will have to create an environment where horizontal fluidity will thrive. This is our ability to operate in an effective matrix setting where we are aligned around fully clear strategy and direction. This is our chance to dismantle the business and operational silos once and for all as we shift to the world of projects and programs.

Mastering transparency is the second ingredient that leaders will have to find the secret sauce for achieving. This will tightly link to the trust levels, the comfort with experimentation, and the encouragement of learning. This component will be highly linked to the 3rd ingredient of ownership creation. True ownership is created when the safety of sharing diverse opinions, the willingness to be vulnerable, and the safety that the environment provides enable teams to follow and love the mission the leaders are taking their teams on.

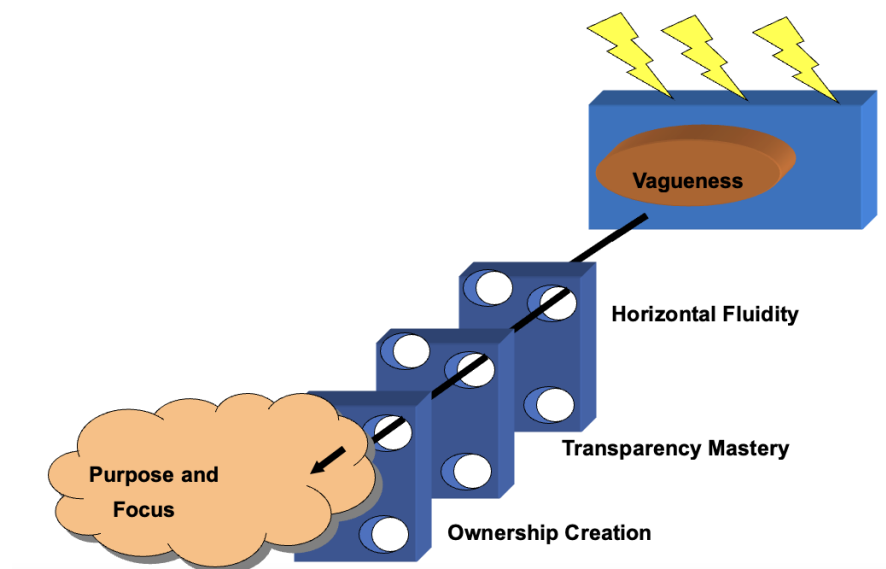


Figure 1 – Goals of Future Purpose-Centered Leadership Models

Tackling these ingredients will shape the agenda of future leaders. The models of future leadership will build on the past learnings yet will have to adapt closely to the unfolding realities of the world's future state. Change management will not be talked about as a separate topic in projects and programs. It will be what projects and programs are all about making happen.

Figure 2, highlights a set of the building blocks that we anticipate to see common across most future purpose-centered leadership models. They are balancing personal and team centered qualities tightly while incorporating project and program principles that bring focus.

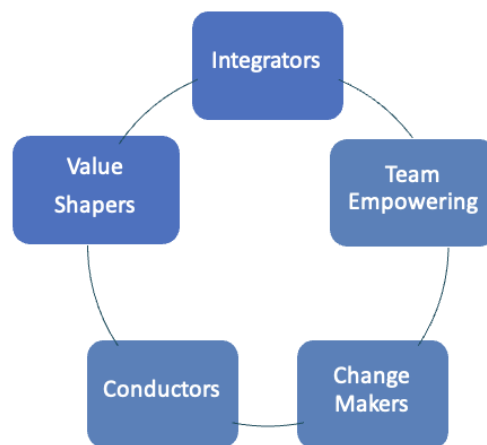


Figure 2 – A Purpose-Centered Leadership Model Example

Future leaders will take us into integration halls both physically and virtually. They will use both the power of data and emotional intelligence to drive integration of systems, process, and people. The leader's ability to create extreme levels of empowerment is key to enabling the necessary changes in the future of work and balancing the changing dynamics witnessed today that will affect the future generational mix and growing expectations in the future organization.

Change making has become a clear evident outcome of the strategic role projects and programs play. Tomorrow's leaders will have a bias for action and will build all the necessary change making muscle, learn, and practice change management fully, and understand the nuances of how making change has to be tailored to the specific nature of a given program and its associated teams. The conductor building block is a wonderful illustration of how we can better connect to purpose. The work there is expected to multiply as initiatives' complexity and stakeholders' diversity continues to multiply.

Keeping a line of sight to purpose will help the leader conductor align, break barriers, and turn back to focus.

The last and most critical building block around shaping value is one of the most critical ones in the future. Not only is the strength in investing time and energy for defining what the true value expected of investments, it is about effective decision-making balanced with the right degree of risk taking and developed risk appetite. This also requires a very strong level of alignment creation across layers and groups of decision-makers. This is an investment that is meaningful to the impact of the leader.

The future leaders have a great opportunity to incorporate diverse stakeholders' views, empowering eco-system partners, visualizing data with the right digital mix, and shaping the most connected project and program teams.

THE PATH FORWARD

One-size-fits-all leadership models will not exist in the future. The ingredients and building blocks we highlighted illustrate the need for the leaders to do their homework as they select their own map of leadership capabilities. This growth mindset map requires a backbone of asking all the right questions timely and maintaining focus on what matters. Leading with alignment should be a major priority for future leaders.

The path forward requires a strong commitment to transparency and to relentlessly disrupting norms and learning and doing new things. Leaders who will invest in creating that magic in our future places of work will not only thrive, they will tremendously enjoy the lasting positive impacts they create on our societies. Ideally a continuous learning-based approach will keep future leaders sensitive and capable of creating and thriving under tomorrow's disruptions. These leaders' strengthened lines of sight will keep their strategic radars focused on achieving societal and business value that matters.

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About the Authors



Harold Kerzner, Ph.D., MS, M.B.A

Senior Executive Director for Project Management
International Institute of Learning
New York & Florida, USA



Dr. Harold Kerzner is Senior Executive Director for Project Management for the International Institute for Learning (IIL). He has an MS and Ph.D. in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering from the University of Illinois and an MBA from Utah State University. He is a prior Air Force Officer and spent several years at Morton-Thiokol in project management. He taught engineering at the University of Illinois and business administration at Utah State University, and for 38 years taught project management at Baldwin-Wallace University. He has published or presented numerous engineering and business papers and has had published more than 60 college textbooks/workbooks on project management, including later editions. Some of his books are (1) Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling; (2) Project Management Metrics, KPIs and Dashboards, (3) Project Management Case Studies, (4) Project Management Best Practices: Achieving Global Excellence, (5) PM 2.0: The Future of Project Management, (6) Using the Project Management Maturity Model, and (7) Innovation Project Management.

He is a charter member of the Northeast Ohio PMI Chapter.

Dr. Kerzner has traveled around the world conducting project management lectures for PMI Chapters and companies in Japan, China, Russia, Brazil, Singapore, Korea, South

Africa, Canada, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Croatia, Mexico, Trinidad, Barbados, The Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Venezuela, Columbia, United Arab Emirates, France, Italy, England, and Switzerland. He delivered a keynote speech at a PMI Global Congress on the future of project management.

His recognitions include:

- The University of Illinois granted Dr. Kerzner a Distinguished Recent Alumni Award in 1981 for his contributions to the field of project management.
- Utah State University provided Dr. Kerzner with the 1998 Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to the field of project management.
- The Northeast Ohio Chapter of the Project Management Institute gives out the Kerzner Award once a year to one project manager in Northeast Ohio that has demonstrated excellence in project management. They also give out a second Kerzner Award for project of the year in Northeast Ohio.
- The Project Management Institute (National Organization) in cooperation with IIL has initiated the Kerzner International Project Manager of the Year Award given to one project manager yearly anywhere in the world that demonstrated excellence in project management.
- The Project Management Institute also gives out four scholarships each year in Dr. Kerzner's name for graduate studies in project management.
- Baldwin-Wallace University has instituted the Kerzner Distinguished Lecturer Series in project management.
- The Italian Institute of Project Management presented Dr. Kerzner with the 2019 International ISIPM Award for his contributions to the field of project management.

Dr. Harold Kerzner can be contacted at hkerzner@hotmail.com



Dr. Al Zeitoun, PgMP, PMI Fellow

Global Future of Work Executive
Siemens DISW
Ohio & Maryland USA



Dr. Al Zeitoun is a Future of Work, business optimization, and operational performance excellence thought leader with global experiences in strategy execution. His experiences encompass leading organizations; delivering their Enterprise Digital and Business Transformation; guiding fitting frameworks implementations; and using his empathy, engineering insights, and collaboration strengths to successfully envision new business models and execute complex missions across diverse cultures globally.

In his current role with Siemens, he is a Senior Director of Strategy responsible for driving the global program management practices, Master Plan governance, and enabling the Strategy Transformation priorities.

In his position, as the Executive Director for Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation, Abu Dhabi, UAE, he was responsible for creating the strategy execution framework, achieving transformation benefits, governance excellence, and creating the data analytics discipline necessary for delivering on the \$40B complex country energy mission roadmap.

At the McLean, USA HQ of Booz Allen Hamilton, Dr. Zeitoun strategically envisioned and customized digitally enabled EPMO advisory, mapped playbooks, and capability development for clients' Billions of Dollars strategic initiatives. Furthermore, he led the firm's Middle East North Africa Portfolio Management and Agile Governance Solutions.

With the International Institute of Learning, Dr. Zeitoun played a senior leader and global trainer and coach. He was instrumental in driving its global expansion, thought leadership, and operational excellence methodology to sense and shape dynamic ways of working across organizations worldwide. He speaks English, Arabic, and German and enjoys good food, travel, and volunteering. Dr. Al Zeitoun can be contacted at zeitounstrategy@gmail.com