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Leadership is not a deterministic event.
In today's world, trying to control complexity with magical recipes is delusional, if not outright harmful.

Undoubtedly, there are virtuous models that can be followed, but the **essence of leadership** is so elusive that it cannot be reduced to causal links between skills, behaviours, and results. On the contrary, leadership is a sum of soft skills and attitudes; it is the natural consequence of awareness; it is the result of individual qualities such as humility, curiosity, courage. Leadership is also a process. It is all these features into one.

Should the leader of hundreds or thousands of people master all these characteristics? This is no easy challenge. He/she can nevertheless light the way by **turning the organization's cultural leverages into conscious decisions.** It is about becoming aware of the **building blocks and nerve centres that regulate a system such as an organisation.**

In a system, all parts are intertwined and interdependent with one another; what happens at one level - physical, emotional, mental - is reflected in all other levels. Even the Ancient Greeks used to consider the individual human being as a "little world" (*mikros kosmos*), whose structure reflected that of the universe, or "big world" (*makros kosmos*).

During this COVID crisis, teams in Organizations have been forced to face a drastic change in the structure of their work. This new context underlined the urgency to have more autonomous teams and professionals. If we want to implement a bottom-up organizational culture, it is necessary to accept the paradox of having leaders setting the enablers (in a top-down approach) for success:

- The definition and alignment on a *clear purpose* for the Organization
- The creation of the condition for *trust* within the Organization, such as a clear and pertinent governance with space and acceptance of vulnerability. These aspects are all irreplaceable ways to generate accountability and secure all the processes;
- The collaborative creation of *good communication routines*, to create healthy and effective work environments;
- The definition of *pertinent metrics and indicators,* that allow teams to monitor their own work and be aligned on the activities and priorities according to the different moments.

The implementation of autonomy within the Organizations are clearly shown in examples of the arising **Teal paradigm** applied to Organizations. The paradigm highlights the following: "as an independent force with its own purpose, and not merely as a vehicle for achieving management's objectives. [...]. The hierarchical "predict and control" pyramid [...] is replaced with a decentralized structure consisting of small teams that take responsibility for their own governance and for how they interact with other parts of the organization." (Laloux, 2014).

This paradigm is strictly linked to the **approach towards innovation** that started to rise in the early 2000s, not simply seeing it as the capability to solve a problem or to invent a new product or service, but as the capability of being an **innovative Organization,** setting the stage for continuous innovation to arise. This can only be reached through the cooperation of groups that, when sharing a common purpose, can generate ideas worth discussing. After a complex and to some extent unpleasant process, this cooperation will point the Organization in the right direction for innovation. This challenge needs, as a first step, the presence of leadership able to "create communities that share a sense of purpose, values, and rules of engagement" (Hill et al., 2014).

Leadership Teams, whose **senior members play complementary roles still having a common vision and purpose** that allows facing the challenges **collectively** (Miles &Watkins 2007)**, are the most powerful cultural shapers of an Organization** (Xenikou & Simosi, 2006).

Leadership Teams have to accept their role of **exemplarity** (Melkonian, 2004), to set the pace and tempo for the whole Organization to properly answer to the **innovation challenge.** They always influence the approach of all the other teams inside the Organizations in terms of trust, behaviors, and language.

Think about **silos,** for instance, and how often the departments of an Organization struggle to share information. It is no coincidence that most Organizations are victims of departments competing for territory: **silos are the typical consequence of conflictual Leadership Teams** – if not of shareholders' conflictual interests. Silo power "misaligns goals, dilutes roles and responsibilities, makes for ambiguous authority, leads to resource misallocation, breeds defensive personnel, and fosters a culture whereby the incentive is to maximize the performance of the silo, not that of the organization" (Serrat, 2017).

Many attempt to justify the absence of transversal collaboration by blaming the immaturity or the incompetence of employees, but these are symptoms rather than causes of silos, as the "silo mentality" itself has negative impacts on relationship-forming between individuals and within teams (Ciliers &Greyvenstein, 2012). Silos do not exist because something was intentionally done: they come about because something was left undone, that is, the provision of compelling motives, means, and opportunities for personnel to come together.

Overcoming silos means having "a clear and consistent corporate vision and to define expectations; work to expand individual perspectives to co-opt ambitions, energies, and skills into the broader organizational agenda; increase congruence with corporate values through training that reinforces desired attitudes and behaviours; evaluate personnel for work across functions; and help build relationships" (Serrat, 2017).

This system that will be implemented needs to create *alignment.* This is undoubtedly necessary within the Leadership Team (Drath et al., 2008) and it starts with the presence of a clear sense of purpose (Grant et al., 2019). As the Leadership Team creates the reality and the shared language within the Organization, its alignment expands throughout the whole Organization, impacting strategy and performance (O'Reilly et al., 2010; Kaliappen & Hillman, 2013; Dubey et al., 2015).

In order to enable extraordinary and purposeful performances through the whole Organization the Leadership Team needs to align on three main elements: *Vision, Frame, and Flow.*

The Vision is the natural vocation and the visualization of the future. Vision allows an Organization to clearly define goals and priorities and guides every choice made by all individuals belonging to the Organization. The Vision defines meaningful culture based on the underlying **values, behaviors, strategies, and goals** (Edmonds, 2017) and facilitate a culture of **learning from failures**, enhancing organizational capabilities for adaptation to environmental turbulence (Carmeli & Sheaffer, 2008). This fundamental can also foster the identification of **cultural diversity** as an organizational value, understanding its potential as a resource of actions and points of view to face the challenge of innovation (Koch et al., 2016).

The *Frame* is the necessary condition to achieve the Vision. It is the "price to pay" for pursuing a vocation. Frame is about building trust and regulating key settings such as governance, decision-making processes, and routines. This includes fostering **collaboration** within the Leadership Team, sharing leadership, and increasing team effectiveness (Mehta & Sharma, 2019), thus influencing the rise of **collaboration on decision-making** in every team throughout the Organization (Huang et al., 2010). Leaders facilitate the creation of identity and knowledge-based trust, as a precursor of ethical based behaviors (Tuan, 2012). To gain trust and build the Frame, leaders should demonstrate **key characteristics** (CIPD, 2012) allowing the rest of the team to be a "trustor", as ability, benevolence, integrity (Mayer et al 1995), and predictability (Sanders et al., 2006). Moreover, trust will be **actively built** within the team through situational security, similarities, aligned interests, benevolent concerns, and communication (Hurley, 2011).

Last comes the *Flow*, as the ability of mastering time, rhythm, and having a mental state of full involvement with an activity in which a person achieves the highest degrees of happiness, weightlessness, focus, and learning. For leaders, managers, and employees too, finding the right flow can contribute to their happiness but also to a just and evolving society. This could cultivate the following within the Organization: trust, the commitment to fostering the personal growth of employees, and the dedication to creating a product that helps mankind (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004).

All the above-mentioned characteristics can sustain the creation of **effective leadership teams,** which are crucial for the success of any Organization (Feldman, 2018). The highest creative, performative, and transformative power is reached when *Vision, Frame,* and *Flow* are consistent and aligned during the same dynamic and never-ending process. A leadership activity that encompasses exemplarity, self-awareness, personal or professional support,

community spirit, shared work commitment and positive attitude towards individuals and situations, can lead the whole Organization to meaningful work and a **purposeful performance** (Frémeaux & Pavageau, 2020).

The relationship between Vision and Frame is quite straightforward: there is no creation without any constraint, no freedom without any rule, no power without any limitation. The reverse is also true: constraints, rules, and limitations are useless and suffocating if there is no vital spark, no act of imagination, or no vision. Flow comes when Vision and Frame are aligned but, simultaneously, from an inductive point of view, the experience of Flow can illuminate about a vocation and how to make it happen.

The digital, sociological, and ecological transition of our contemporary society requires leaders not only to lead, but also to foster the abovementioned culture of trust, collaboration, and accountability.

We suggest therefore a new definition of Leadership: **the conscious mastering of the enablers of people's talents.**
Because only the fulfilment of people's talent can bring an Organization to extraordinary and purposeful performances.

In whatever Organization, setting these enablers is a key responsibility of the Leadership Team.

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