



LEADING CHANGE IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

Change Leadership Resource Guide

Gyonne Ruke Akpoveta

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Introduction

While change is always happening, the pandemic has brought about a pace that shows no signs of slowing down. The New World of Work describes some of these changes taking place; **how we do our work**, what **tools we work with**, **where we work**, and the **changing types of jobs**, which are being driven by advanced technologies such as AI, Robotics, and ongoing disruptions such as the pandemic.

Our ability to respond successfully to these new influences depends on many things - how agile we are, how empowered we feel, and how open-minded and receptive we are to change. We also know that the new world of work is no longer being served by old methods. While there are some principles that remain, leading change in the new world of work requires a new playbook. One that requires a human-centered approach.

Leaders will not only need to learn new methods, they will also need to be prepared to unlearn and relearn ways of leading change more effectively.

Why do we need to learn new ways to lead change?

Leading change in the new world of work requires an approach that is adaptive, and moves beyond titles and methodologies when we are faced with:

- The rapid pace of change, disruption and uncertainty that requires change leadership skills that are agile and responsive
- Organisational structures that are becoming flatter, creating a need for more change leaders regardless of role or title in the organisation

- The future of work, global mobility and increased automation that has increased the demand for cognitive and leadership skills

In this this resource guide, we will explore key factors shaping the new world of work, and how we can more effectively lead change. These factors include:

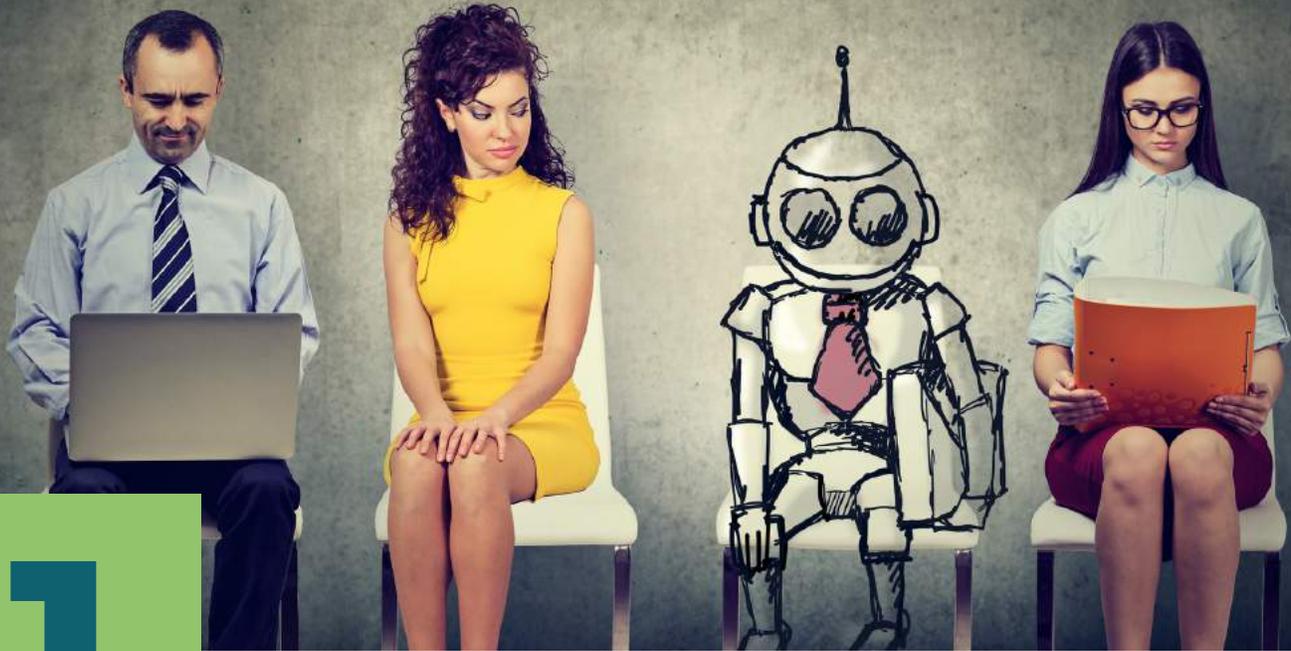
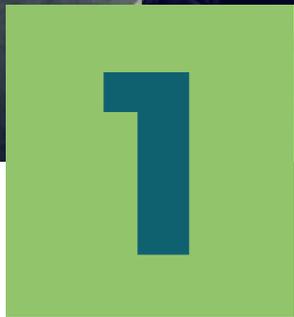
- Technological Disruption
- Mental Health
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Stakeholder Capitalism

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Yvonne Ruke Akpoveta

**Change Management & Leadership
Strategist and Advocate**



Technological Disruption

While technology such as AI, Automation, Digitization, and other 4th & 5th Industrial Revolution technologies were, and continue to be driving forces of change, the pandemic expedited the adoption of future technologies at a rate of change never seen. Some organizations were prepared to act quickly with solutions such as cloud and digital platforms, some had to scramble quickly to adapt, and unfortunately some organisations went under due to their inability to respond technologically or to changing market demands.

Customers dramatically moved to conducting transactions and shopping online, and organisations had to in turn adapt to keeping up with these changes. Organisations were also forced to adjust to remote work, omnichannel commerce, digital content transformation, and automation. Implementing these technologies had to be done quickly!

Leading Change

During the pandemic, adoptions were done at speed. Changes that would normally take two years to implement were being done in two months. To lead change in the new world of work, the change approach and methods that we adopt will need to be agile and lean.

Regardless of role or title, employees will need to be equipped with change leadership skills to align to the speed required for organisations to be quick to market and responsive to changing market and economic demands.

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Mental Health

People are dealing not only with the change fatigue brought on by multiple waves of COVID-19, but also with massive changes in the workplace due to the implementation of new technologies, re-organization of roles and responsibilities, new processes, and new working practices. They are having to take in these changes, while at the same time losing human connection due to lockdowns and social distancing.

The compound effect of all these changes and uncertainty can take its toll on our well-being and mental health.

During the pandemic, as many struggled while working remotely, organisations were forced to pay attention to the mental wellbeing of their employees. Why is this important? Because people matter. The productivity and success of any organization is dependent on the performance of its people.

Leading Change

When leading change, we must acknowledge that even without all of the disruption of the last several years, change in itself is stressful. Effectively leading change in the new world of work will require paying attention to not just our own mental well-being, but also to that of our teams and the people we lead.

This will require change leadership skills such as emotional intelligence and empathy. Leading through change in the new world of work calls for unlearning the old ways that are often focused on models and methodologies, and it will require learning and relearning human-centred approaches to leading change.

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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Diversity goes beyond gender, race, colour, and sexual orientation. It is all encompassing to include accessibility, physical ability, neurodiversity, culture and the broad spectrum of human experience. Organizations are recognising that working with diverse groups leads to diverse ideas and perspectives, which contributes to increased performance. It has been demonstrated by numerous studies that organizations with higher levels of diversity outperform others, in some cases by up to 25%.

The last two years have brought an increased focus to DEI, not because this is a new issue, but because it is a continuing issue, and one that cannot be resolved with superficial approaches. The systemic and root causes must be addressed in workplaces for change to happen.

Leading Change

Leading change in the new world of work will require collaboration with people from diverse backgrounds, in an increasingly globalized world and work culture that is being accelerated by remote working.

Successfully leading change with a DEI lens requires incorporating diverse views and contributions. It's about creating a space and environment that is inclusive, and establishing a sense of belonging for everyone.

When working with stakeholders, there needs to be representation across all stages of assessing, designing, and implementing the change. It requires change leaders to be collaborative in working with diverse groups, to be empathetic in understanding the needs of their stakeholders, and to be emotionally intelligent in their interactions and communication.

Stakeholders must feel included and connected for any DEI initiative, policy, or action to be successful.

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Stakeholder Capitalism

As more organizations strive to maximise profits, leading change can feel profit driven. However, the sustainability of organizations is also tied to the wellbeing of its employees and community at large. In the new world of work, there is a call to focus on a broad range of stakeholders and needs, and not just shareholder value.

"Stakeholder capitalism holds that companies must support a wider array of constituents than just shareholders. The magnitude of current global challenges including the ongoing health crisis, persistent issues of racial and income equality, and an increasingly vulnerable environment have given stakeholder capitalism new meaning and urgency." – Bank of America.

The World Economic Forum which is often credited for the term Stakeholder Capitalism describes it as a *form of capitalism in which companies seek long-term value creation by taking into account the needs of all their stakeholders, and society at large.*

Leading Change

When leading change or contemplating the new world of work, it is not enough to focus on what is profitable. We must also consider how our actions and decisions will affect the people, the planet, and society as a whole. When each part thrives, we all thrive. Stakeholder capitalism is never at the gain of one or the loss of the other. We must also give value to our shareholders while serving all other stakeholders.

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LEADING CHANGE IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

In the new world of work, a number of factors are driving change and shaping what employees want and expect in the workplace. While the pandemic provided the spark, a more values driven workforce is beginning to demand greater autonomy in who they work with, as signalled by the great resignation. While technology (new world of work) shapes the workplace, it also offers greater flexibility and opportunities for employees.

Leading change in the new world of work will require a more human-centred, adaptive and agile approach. Here is a simple checklist to help us along:

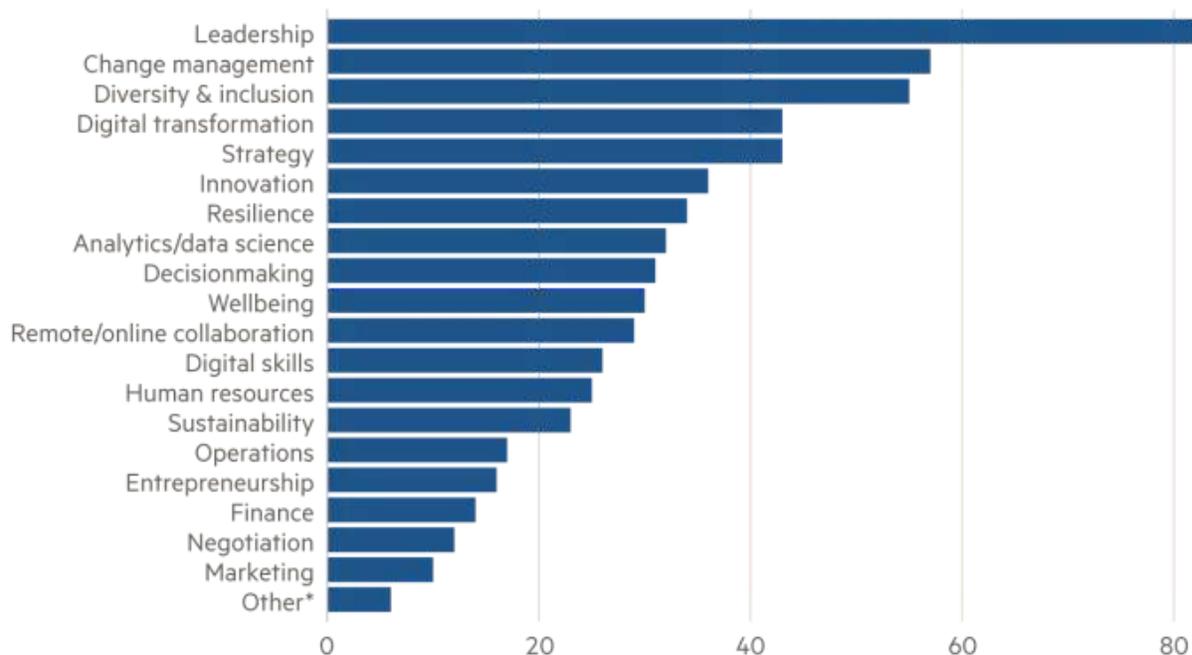
- ✓ Are we unlearning old ways of leading change, focused on models and methods, and learning and relearning human-centred approaches to leading change?
- ✓ Are we agile and responsive to change? Are we open-minded to explore new ways of working?
- ✓ Are we applying EQ skills such as emotional intelligence and empathy to leading change?
- ✓ Are we collaborating with stakeholders? Are stakeholders representative of those impacted by the change?
- ✓ Are we creating a psychologically safe and inclusive work space or work environment?
- ✓ Are we reskilling and upskilling by updating our skills and learning new ones that are more relevant for the new world of work?

ARE YOU FOCUSING ON THE RIGHT SKILLS?

In a 2021 Financial Times Survey, Chief Learning Officers (CLOs) identified the top three learning priorities to emerge from the pandemic as Leadership, Change Management, and Diversity & Inclusion. These skills will be critical for organizations to embrace, to successfully navigate and lead in the new world of work moving forward.

Key learning themes for 2021

Percentage of CLOs who said these subjects would be important



*Business agility, experimentation and the future of work are three other themes highlighted

Source: FT research

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CONCLUSION

Developing your change leadership skills and competencies will help you to - develop your influence, communicate effectively and engage others, lead with empathy, be responsive to change, motivate others to act - and invariably more effectively lead change in the new world of work!



Get More on Being Prepared

Learn about our online [Change Leadership Accelerator Course](#).

The need for Change Leadership in these times we face has never been more important, and having the competencies and skills to adjust to the demands and ever-changing landscape of the “New Normal” are an absolute must. Many are failing, and many new leaders will rise!

This course is designed for professionals, managers, change and project management professionals, business analysts and those that are responsible for leading and implementing change and projects in their organizations.

This is a practical program to provide and equip you with the skills, knowledge and tools to turnaround tough situations; and get buy-in from your leaders, peers and teams in order to successfully implement new ideas, processes and policies, and projects.

This course will leverage proven and established tools, frameworks, and materials from renowned thought leaders in the areas of Change Leadership and Management, as well as my practical experience leading and managing change for the last 20 years.

Click here for more info: [Change Leadership Accelerator Course](#)

ABOUT AUTHOR

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She has over 20 years of experience helping executives, professionals and organizations to navigate and transition through change, most especially in today's disruptive environment

She is genuinely passionate about positive change, and has worked with a broad range of organizations globally including RBC, TD, Deloitte, Loblaw, Ontario Public Service, and JP Morgan Chase to lead and manage their Strategic, Technology and Regulatory Change Initiatives.

The invaluable experience she has gained from leading and managing change with these organizations, also coupled with her exposure to global and diverse business environments have equipped her with the knowledge and tools to consistently drive desired results for her students and clients.

She holds a BSc honours in Business Information Technology & Marketing from London Guildhall University, an MBA from Warwick Business School, England, and a Change Leadership Certificate from Cornell University.

She works closely with executives and professionals to provide coaching and advisory to help them more effectively lead and drive change in their organizations. She is a published author, an Inspirational speaker and change catalyst.