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## Instead of Competencies, Leadership Qualities are a New Direction in Leadership Development

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### Abstract

The last few years have significantly transformed our thinking about leadership. The Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of the increasing VUCA world have a great influence on what makes a leader and thus his/her organization successful. For leaders, the most important thing is to develop the mindset that leadership is their profession, and they need to develop it every day. In this study, I present the basis of a new methodology developed in practice, which no longer focuses on competencies but rather brings leadership qualities to the public consciousness. CRAFT leadership qualities are creativity, resilience, agility, focus, and trust. Transforming challenges require self-aware leaders who are highly trained in the five CRAFT leadership qualities. CRAFT leadership, as a complex system-wide model, can make a significant contribution to this leadership development. These qualities help present and future professionals to become durable and high-quality.

**Keywords:** leadership qualities, leader development, self-improvement

### 1. Introduction

“The only way to improve an organisation is to grow and improve the leaders.” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 44). We live in a VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complex, Ambiguity) world, and we have to learn how to appropriately navigate it. Every day, the VUCA world presents a new challenge to society as a whole. This environment has countless consequences, however, from the point of view of the topic, it primarily prevents the possibility of creating long-term plans; thus generating a need for redesign, hindering decision-making processes, increasing the chance of making bad decisions, changing the corporate culture, and overloading, not only the employee, but the whole organization. This means there is a constant need for decision-making and redesign every day.

According to Franzen-Waschke (2022) experienced and emerging leaders need the right mindset and ability to adapt to different working environments and employee needs.

The development of leadership theory concepts has now allowed a complex approach to leadership to be taken (Uhl-Bien et al, 2007; Rosenhead et al., 2019). According to the new leadership paradigm (Bryman, 1992), leader development is a constructive development process (Kegan, 1994; Joiner & Josephs, 2007), a lifelong construction that begins not at the time of taking the leadership position, but much earlier. Anyone can become an excellent leader; with continuous self-development and awareness gained through his/her experience, the individual develops increasing maturity. Research shows that for leaders to be seen as authentic and garner support, they need to be aware not only of who they are as individuals but also who they are as members of the community they strive to lead (Steffens et al., 2021). Mentoring is one of the commonly applied methods of developing leaders in a work environment (Horváth-Csikós & Cseh Papp, 2021). The leadership qualities presented in this article encompass a set of competencies that will enable the leaders of both the present and the future to become successful, timeless leaders.

## 2. Leadership qualities - CRAFT Leadership

Such a new, practically proven tool and opportunity in leadership development is provided by the CRAFT Leadership model, which is a well-integrated complex approach to leadership, requiring systemic thinking of both the system of the individual and the system of the organization. In practice, it was developed by Beáta Kalamár (2022) who is a Leadership Expert and Executive Coach. The model has been developed over more than 20 years of professional experience, continuously improved over the years, and applied in both the multinational and SME sectors. CRAFT is necessary as high-quality leaders will be required in the coming decades. CRAFT is an acronym for creativity, resilience, agility, focus, and trust, each represents a leader quality. A single quality includes countless competencies, qualities, and personality traits. Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and skill development are important, but the real difference in high-quality leadership is the impact of leaders. What they say or don't say, what they do or don't do, and how it affects results, people, the organization, and key stakeholders. CRAFT Leadership is an integrated model (Figure 1). In practice, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between qualities, as they appear together in real life and influence each other. It all starts with the REAL LEADER, who has a high level of self-awareness and characterizes himself/herself by stepping out of the frames, identity, and value orientation. If the individual is aware of this, they can start to deal with the 5 leadership qualities, where they are in the development process, what they are worth and what they need to improve. CRAFT is an acronym for creativity, resilience, agility, focus, and trust.

FIGURE 1. CRAFT LEADERSHIP MODEL



Source: Kalamár, 2022

C – CREATIVITY: It is not the creativity of the individual, but the creativity of the company and how this can be increased. The leader should be supported so that his/her colleagues can develop their creativity. Its constituent elements are cultivating curiosity, enduring discomfort, and being persistently disciplined this is called creativity cocktail.

R – RESILIENCE: Flexibility and resilience are essential features of the modern leader if he/she wants to thrive and survive. "... resilience is the ability to recognize when you need to stand like a rock, and when you need to swim with the current and act with confidence and ease (Kalamár, 2022, p. 82)."

A – AGILITY: Agility requires quick thinking, proactive behaviour, and a clear vision of the future if the leader is to prepare himself and his company for rapid and forward-looking changes in the future. What is different in this approach is that it is not the teaching of agile methodologies, but the development of agile thinking, the basis of which is explained by neuroagility.

F – FOCUS: Leadership typically focuses on 3 key areas: strategy, development, and operation. Self-awareness is crucial here: conscious efforts must be made to know how to allocate your time and energy. As a leader, the majority of time will have to be devoted to the strategy (a forceful 50%), this will be the priority area. 30% of time will go to the development area and only 20% to the operation. As a leader, his/her job is to facilitate complex problem-solving and for employees to do the work. Organizational problem-solving is the responsibility of the leader, but to do this, he/she needs to recognize organizational patterns and problems. To do this, they need to step back, in order to observe, evaluate and respond to phenomena at an organizational level. They need to be able to focus on the big picture.

T – TRUST: Today, there is a global loss of confidence. The issue of trust is complicated by the complexity of the business environment, the speed of change, and the need to respond quickly to the changing needs of the market. Trust is the glue that holds our lives together, the motivation for teamwork, and the bonding agent in our relationships. Trust is one of the most important things on the agenda of successful leaders. Trust promotes cooperation, loyalty, and ultimately results. We can conclude that trust is needed more than ever in today's fast-changing, dynamic business environment (Covey, 2006). Development of trust quality is taking place in several areas, the two most important of which are self-confidence and trust in others.

### 3. Conclusion

These five qualities are the basis of leadership development, the alpha and omega of which is the basis of the self-identified, self-aware leader. The most important development is the leadership mindset, which is often not what the company implements. Development, self-development, and learning must be implemented in this profession every day. CRAFT leadership, as a complex system-wide model, can make a significant contribution to this leadership development. Qualities help present and future professionals to become durable and high-quality.

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