

Do you have 20/20 sight over your Leadership? Here's how to get it.

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If only we could have seen this coming. The world in which we currently live has caught us by surprise and I expect we will look back from sometime in the future and see where we went wrong, what our successes and failures were, and potentially how we could have avoided it all. When William Blake, an English poet said, “Hindsight is a wonderful thing but foresight is better, especially when it comes to saving life, or some pain”, he certainly nailed it.

Some may say that we could not have foreseen this coming, and you may be right, however there are many aspects of what we are experiencing that we could have prepared for, particularly our leadership. In my view it all comes down to our sight.

1. **Insight**

Understanding what insight you already have is the first place to start. Through understanding what you already know about your leadership style, your people and your current circumstances you create insight that will help you to lead. For example, you know that your people are more stable and engaged when they have clear expectations so you will need to ensure that you keep your communication clear and everyone knows what you need them to do. Or you may know that you are a better leader when you have time to focus on specific issues so ensuring you have time in your diary with no distractions is important.

You can gain great insight into your leadership through daily reflection. By building reflection into your routine creates a habit built around understanding what you do and what you can learn from it. Evidence suggests that the habit of reflection can lead to increases in wellbeing, productivity and meaning in our lives. Also, research conducted for the Harvard Business School found that daily reflection of just 15 minutes can increase performance by up to 23 per cent.

2. **Plain sight**

Next is understanding what is in plain sight that you can use and leverage. When you use what is within your control, you become self-sufficient, resilient and empowered. As a leader one of the few things you can control are your words, actions and behaviours and once you start to focus on that, instead of on what you can't control, your world becomes larger. For example, asking your people how they would solve an issue or problem gets them involved in the solution. People are more like to do what they say, rather than what you say and asking them is within your control and utilises what's in plain sight, i.e. your people.

In Stephen Covey's best-selling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he talks about your circle of influence and circle of concern and how, if you focus on the things you have influence on – for example, your own self – you find that your circle of influence grows. Additionally, having a proactive focus leads to positive energy, which also enlarges your circle of influence. So, by changing the way we respond to situations we are utilising what's within our control, namely our words, actions and behaviours.

3. Foresight

And finally having the *foresight* to plan for the future by understanding the true purpose of the work we do, and helping our people to understand and connect to it. Research completed by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2016 found that almost 80 per cent of leaders believe that their purpose is fundamental to their success. Additional research also found that consumers are more loyal to brands that are purpose driven and believe them to be more caring.

When your people are connected to your purpose, they understand how the work they do connects to the organisation and trust in leadership increases. According to 'The Neuroscience of Trust' by Paul Zak (published in the *Harvard Business Review*), when we have strong foundations of trust in our teams and organisations, we see increases to productivity, energy and engagement, and during times of uncertainty they trust that leaders have their best interests at heart.

Through developing your 20/20 sight with insight, plain sight and foresight, you are able to prepare for the unexpected, develop and adapt to what needs to be done, and lead your people through times of uncertainty. And more importantly, avoiding the pain of hindsight. That's a vision we should all aspire to.
