

Responsive and responsible leaders for sustainable workplaces

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The theme of the 2017 World Economic Forum was a call for responsive and responsible leadership, emphasising that we are living in a world marked by uncertainty, volatility and deep transformational changes.



Image by 123RF

When we think about leadership, and in particular about the credibility of leadership, one of the first things we look at is a leader's decision-making process, what they do in the heat of the moment and how they choose between two apparent 'rights'. It takes a leader who is mindful and has a heart, spirit and mind to be able to choose the best 'right' at that moment.

The issue around being mindful is also linked to ethical and servant leadership. Great leaders are mindful of what they say, how they say it, and the impact of their words on those that they are talking to. This means that they need to 'think about their thinking' before they verbalise their thoughts.

How does that relate to responsiveness and responsibility?

In old frameworks of leadership, the expectation was that 'if you want to have an opinion, I'll give you one. Now, however, for a business environment to be successful, responsive and responsible leaders know that they need opinions from their

teams, and they need to fully understand the origin and thought processes behind those opinions. Creative solutions to various challenges come from diverse sources and discussing and understanding the various opinions and suggestions brought to the table in an open manner is necessary. It means that a business is likely to be able to respond quickly and effectively to challenges and opportunities, and that the solution is sure to be properly planned and executed.

Thinking about our thinking is more than just working out how a scenario will impact the business – it's about taking bigger picture view. As organisations adopt this mindset, a distinctive winning culture emerges.

The forums at WEF said that the world belongs to and will belong innovation-based economies that are led by responsive and responsive leaders, and the same applies to organisations.

You must be an innovative organisation to reap benefits of modern economies, because without innovation, your business will die. Innovation is only possible when there's collaboration and collaboration is only possible in a high trust environment. High trust is only possible in organisations led by credible, responsive and responsible leaders.

Building a responsive and responsible framework requires a global recognition of interdependency, and a welcoming of the element of being human. We are seeing that those leaders that display more humanitarian qualities, enjoy better results.

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