

# Build Resilience in Your Workforce: Develop Their Ability to Lead and Respond to Challenges

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A couple of weeks ago while emptying out a house we were getting ready to sell, I found an old copy of the Cincinnati Business Journal that had my picture on the front cover. My daughter had kept a copy in her “box of treasures.” It was very interesting to read the accompanying article written nearly 25 years ago that focused on the need and value of investing in the training and development of employees. One of my favorite quotes from that article emphasized that organizations can’t afford not to invest in their employees.

## 25 YEARS OF DISRUPTIVE CHANGE

It almost takes your breath away when you realize how much has changed since that article was written. Even more astounding is the unprecedented speed at which the economy, health system, and social norms have been challenged by COVID-19. Many businesses were unprepared and have either already failed or are in the process of failing. Other companies were able to respond in creative and innovative ways by being agile and responding to the new business opportunities that arose.

## INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

What has not changed, however, is the need to invest in your leaders to develop the skills and competencies needed to survive and thrive in the volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) world in which they operate. It’s more important than ever. Leaders and employees must learn to adapt (be agile) and be resilient in order to succeed.

This takes leaders who are themselves adaptable and willing to learn new skills, tools and perspectives – in other words, to become agile and resilient. For years the need for effective leaders has been a major concern for organizations around the world. In fact, The Conference Board’s CEO Challenge has for years highlighted the need to attract, retain, and develop talent for the next generation of leaders. Their “hot-button issues” lists from 2016 and 2018 demonstrate this.

### CEO Top 5 “Hot-Button Issues”

1. Failure to attract and/or retain top talent
2. Need to develop next-generation leaders
3. Slowing growth in emerging economies
4. New global competitors
5. Volatility in cash flow

### CEO Top 5 “Hot-Button Issues”

1. Failure to attract and/or retain top talent
2. Creating new business models
3. Building organizations that are agile and can adapt
4. Desire for culture of innovation
5. Raise employee engagement

## THE NEED IS EVEN GREATER NOW!

The current business environment provides even greater challenges for leaders to be agile and resilient. This capacity has to be developed in people across entire organizations. [Deloitte Insight's recent article](#) "Returning to work in the future of work: Embracing purpose, potential, perspective, and possibility during COVID-19," discusses the new critical need to develop employees:

**The COVID-19 shift:** COVID-19 reinforced that it is more important to understand what workers are capable of doing than understanding what they have done before. Through this crisis, the world has had the opportunity to see the resilience and adaptability of the workforce as workers quickly assumed new roles and even contributed to opportunities in different fields and industries.

**New possibilities:** As they stage the return to work, organizations should consider how to encourage and offer opportunities for workers to continue to grow and adapt based on their potential, rather than solely on their existing skills or certifications. Now is not the time to pull back on workforce development efforts, but instead to double down on commitments to building a resilient workforce that can adapt in the face of constant change.

## Build Resilience in Your Workforce - It's Not a Luxury, It's Critical to Your Business Success

As we face the deepest recession since the Great Depression, with health, business, and societal disruption and uncertainty caused by COVID-19, providing the budget and time for employees to learn new skills, tools, techniques, and competencies in leadership, agility and resilience is critical to the success of every organization. Your competitors may already be enabling employees to become knowledgeable in such areas as Sigma Six, digital marketing, analytics and big data, corporate ethics, the internet of things and digital business. Failure to provide the proper opportunities for investing in your leaders to develop organizational agility and resilience will be done at great peril to the performance and success of your business. My original comments from over 25 years ago take on even more importance today—you cannot afford NOT to invest in the training and development of your leaders and employees.

You can develop the agility and resilience needed to deal with disruption, uncertainty and ambiguity. Inspirational Leadership at Kylemore, a unique leadership program for experienced leaders who want to become more effective by developing the capability to be agile and resilient, is currently accepting registrations. [Please visit our web site for more information.](#)



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