RealTalk: Leadership Skills for the Digital Transformation

Training Leaders for the Future of Work
Speakers

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• Author of best-selling book Superbosses
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• Executive Coach & Principal at High Tides Consulting
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• Executive coach who has worked with 120+ executives
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Agenda

1. What is digital transformation?
2. What are the key traits of effective “digital leaders?”
3. How can L&D develop digital leadership traits?
4. Tips for leadership & management training programs
5. Common barriers for leaders in digital transformation
6. Q&A
What is digital transformation?

"Digital transformation is the integration and adoption of new digital technologies like AI, machine learning, the cloud, and automation into all facets of the business to stay competitive."
The challenge of digital transformation

In 2018, more than 50% of digital transformation efforts failed or stalled as the sheer size, complexity, and change of the mandate overwhelmed organizations.

- Forrester
Why have many digital transformation efforts failed?

• Digital transformation is not just about technology

• It’s also about the people and leadership skills to facilitate the adoption of new technologies and navigate change
What are key traits of effective “digital leaders?”
What makes a successful leader in our era of constant digital disruption?

• As Professor at Dartmouth, studied the best and worst leaders over 25 years

• Interviewed 250 people in different countries to distill what makes a successful leader

• Published a “Superbosses” playbook highlighting these successful traits
“Superbosses” have key traits of effective digital leaders

- Fearless and confident
- Sense of healthy risk-taking
- Imaginative, creative and view change as opportunity
- Competitive and collaborative
- Authentically believe in mission
How can L&D develop digital leadership traits?
Train your digital leaders using the Superboss playbook

1. Recruit world class talent
2. Motivate and inspire people
3. Create a master-apprentice relationship
4. Manage teams and build networks
5. Effectively deal with change
Superbosses recruit the right talent to succeed in the era of digital disruption

- Prioritize non-linear career with diverse experiences
- Encourage job rotation
- Look for creativity and people that think differently
- Leverage untapped talent pools
Superbosses are geniuses at motivating and inspiring

- Create performance-driven culture with high expectations
- Inspire team to believe they are special & the chosen one
- Focus on just doing it first and then strive for the absolute best
- Give team sense of meaning and purpose with compelling vision
Superbosses develop amazing talent using the master-apprentice relationship

- Invoke old practice of apprenticeship
- Hands-on delegator
- Opportunity spotters
- Customize management techniques for individual
Superbosses create exceptional teams and cross-functional networks

- Cohort effect of working horizontally and vertically
- Balance collaboration and competition to create great teams
How Superbosses deal with change management to drive digital transformation

- Create team driven toward change
- Transformation is a day to day norm
- Offer employees seat at the table
- Give employees space to innovate
- Encourage different points of view
What are tips for an effective management training program to build digital leaders?
Describe and quantify digital leadership behaviors you want in your workplace

- Describe and quantify digital leadership traits for your workplace

- Use 360 reviews of managers or survey data to identify leadership deficits

- Use this data to design your leadership training program

- Track metrics to see if behaviors change post-training
Create blended learning management training experiences

- Pre-work: Curated articles & online courses like Superboss Playbook for Managers and Essentials Guide for New Managers on Udemy for Business
- Classroom: cohort role-playing sessions, VR practice sessions
- Post-Learning: Manager cohort via social media, one-on-one coaching, chatbot quizzes
Create opportunities to enable managers to apply what they learned

- Create a support structure or cohort that can hold each other accountable, e.g. buddy system
- Develop a system of support for managers to check in on their learning goals
- Tie manager feedback survey data to performance raises and bonuses
Get senior leadership support when rolling out training to shift behavior and culture

- Senior leadership can uphold and support desired manager behaviors post-learning
- Give awards or recognition for managers exhibiting desired behaviors
What are common challenges leaders face in driving the digital transformation?
Barriers to organization-wide digital transformation

People are resistant to change based on:

1. Their current knowledge of the technology
2. How it impacts their personal and team workflow
3. Their perception of the potential value-add
Overcoming Barrier 1:
Educate your workforce on the technology

- It’s not enough to roll out a new technology with a memo, FAQ link and IT lectures
- IT needs to partner with L&D team to roll out effective learning experiences
- Focus on just-in-time learning
- Allow learners to engage with technology through hands-on practice
- Leverage real-world scenarios and role-playing
- Offer bite-sized learning that mirrors phased roll out of technology
Overcoming Barrier 2: Proactively communicate how the technology will impact existing workflow

- Be proactive and pre-empt concerns of how tech will impact processes
- Pre-mortem: Get key team leaders on board
- Listen and accommodate feedback
- Show empathy and build trust with your team
- Help team members adjust to process changes
Overcoming Barrier 3: Communicate vision of what technology is meant to achieve

- Leadership needs to step up and share big picture vision for tech
- People need to see pay off in the long-term
- Show how tech aligns with teams
- Get employees onboard by connecting tech to their individual vision
Q&A

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