

DEVELOP

# HYBRID WORK

A practical guide for leaders  
**to rethink human side of business**  
during the second wave.





# *Table of Contents*

3	Introduction: The World Is Still Changing
5	The Five Challenges of Hybrid Work
7	Vision & Strategy
10	Leadership
13	Communication & Collaboration
16	Motivation & Engagement
19	COVID Safety
22	Closing: We hope you find joy in the Hybrid World!

## **FIVE STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION:**

26	Vision & Strategy
27	Leadership
28	Communication & Collaboration
29	Motivation & Engagement
30	COVID Safety



# The World Is **Still** Changing

We are currently living in a period of sharply rising numbers of coronavirus cases and unfortunately, we are entering a new phase of the economics crisis with pandemics.

For a while we were hopeful that everything would return to normal again. However, it appears now that the rest of 2020 holds new challenges for all of us. More and more close acquaintances are catching the coronavirus disease, the danger is becoming more realistic.

At the same time, no one wants quarantine back, which would mean complete confinement. We must take care of the safety of our loved ones, employees and customers, but at the same time continue our work: to produce, to provide, to create economic value.

The typical reaction of companies to environmental changes is the **reintroduction of home office operations, or in most cases a hybrid work schedule**. A mixture of working from home and at the office - in response to the expressed needs of employees and building on past experience.



## The HYBRID WORK phase

This phase holds several challenges for individuals and organizations alike before we would finally reach the “new normal”. The current measures and strategies affect our prospects for life after the pandemic, even our survival.

The customer habits and preferences have been changing rapidly and irreversibly, the needs and expectations of employees alike. Digital transformation, the home office revolution, creation of remote and hybrid teams are only some of those impacts that reshape the playground for decision makers.

### What makes this period difficult from a management perspective?

It is hard to really understand the direction, the speed, the sustainability and the insights of the changes. Digital transformation got a huge boost, online communication, online shopping, online payment became natural even for the digital illiterates. But as the scale and complexity of the current transformation of markets are extreme, it is difficult to see how exactly it will influence your business.

The change is fast, dramatic and comprehensive, therefore your operation, processes, structure, and even your product portfolio and value proposition must be adapted immediately and well.

Just to make it even more difficult, decision-makers need to focus both on the short and the long run. **The tactical reaction is inevitable for survival, but for long-term success in the new normal era you have to work on your customers’ beliefs, needs and interests.** You can design the new way of business in your segment. How to sell, how to communicate with clients, how to serve them, how to manage complaints and so on.



# The Five Challenges

## *For successful adaptation*

We believe that the phase of hybrid operation has five key areas that need to be addressed for future success.

### **1** Vision & Strategy

The scale, speed and complexity of change the organizations of most industries face are as intense as never before. Some tactical steps won't be enough to be prepared for the "new normal world". The corporate vision and strategy have to be revised and aligned to the changing circumstances, the needs of customers and the boosted digital transformation. There is a lot at stake, even the survival, thus conscious and well-structured steps are to be made with the involvement of various stakeholders without delay.

### **2** Leadership

Overnight, VUCA became a painful reality for myriads of managers all over the globe. Vision, Understanding, Clarity, and Agility are skills of VUCA Prime, which must be well understood and implemented on all leadership levels. The changing environment and strategy require new leadership routines and competencies, such as remote management, empowerment, digital mindset. The quality of leaders and implementation of new skills will make the difference bigger than ever. Shall you not prepare your leaders now, it will be difficult to perform well in the new era, where we are heading rapidly.



### **3 Communication & Collaboration**

Most companies shifted their operation to a full or partial home office, and this way of working will stay with us, resulting in a hybrid operation in the mid and long run. Tested and proven communication routines, channels and related skills must be questioned and revised to be able to react to the present situation. Many people are isolated, losing the classical sources of information, and managers don't know how to handle it. The broken communication badly influences not only the work efficiency and collaboration, but also the engagement of staff.

### **4 Motivation & Engagement**

There are people who - by their nature - see changes as opportunities. They adapt easily and see the future positively. However, this is not the case for everyone. The changing work and economic environment, the new behaviour norms, financial and working conditions or the changed expectations may result in uncertainty, mistrust, or dissatisfaction in many. If left unnoticed and untreated, these can result in a decrease in engagement and even the loss of valuable team members. However, with proper attention and specific leadership motivation tools, these situations can be prevented or reversed.

### **5 COVID Safety**

The continuing presence of COVID-19 danger rewrites our ideas about safety at work. Beyond the prevention of physical accidents at work, the concept of a safety and health-conscious culture has to be extended by the protection against infectious diseases. In addition to the human factor, also for economic interests. Massive absences due to infection can cause serious problems in the operations. Superficial knowledge or ad hoc adherence to the rules and protocols can be a greater danger than ever before. In addition to knowledge transfer, the development of the right attitude and values based on mutual responsibility is essential

1



# HYBRID VISION & STRATEGY

## WHEN IT WORKS WELL

Vision and strategy are reviewed and aligned to the changing market situation.

Strategy needs are aligned to the changing internal and external factors.

People are informed and aware of the part of the renewed strategy that applies to them.



# Tactics are not Enough

*Keep your eyes on vision and strategy.*

In any given time, vision is an important company guiding post. During a crisis as complex and unprecedented as the current one, it has a special importance and urgency. The inflections you have been expecting in five years in a normal world can now occur in a few months. Trends can now become much steeper, and what we have been anticipating in the long run has become a reality these days.

**VUCA Prime concept** (that we also intensively use in our Future Leadership portfolio) teaches us that a clear vision is required to see through the turbulence of volatility. The clear vision helps you towards your real end-goal amidst the bombardment of changes. Most probably it is hard to imagine a more volatile situation than what we are all experiencing these days.

## **We have to ask specific questions now:**

- How do the fundamental changes of the market, client preferences, and global trends influence the vision that we have created earlier?
- Does it require a complete redesign or just a minor revision?
- Who should be involved in the process and how?
- Do we need external help to do it properly and efficiently?

If we know why we are doing something and what are the main criteria of business success in the current situation, the conditions do not affect us much, and thus we can recover faster and with less damage.





A good strategy provides a clear roadmap. It contains a set of guiding principles, that defines the actions to be taken and the things to prioritize to achieve the desired goals.

**Relevant questions to ask yourself when opening the strategy discussion:**

- 1 How did **CUSTOMERS** preferences, needs & behaviors change?
- 2 What are the main changes in our **OPERATIONS**?
- 3 What are the main changes that affect our **EMPLOYEES**?
- 4 What **THREATS** - external and internal - we have to consider?
- 5 How do we want to **GROW** under the current circumstances?
- 6 What shall we do **MORE** and what **LESS**?
- 7 What shall we **STOP** doing?
- 8 What shall we **START** doing?

A lot of people these days are trying to take tactical steps with their heads down, focusing on short-term goals. **With tactical approach, you can win the battle, but you will lose the war.**

A proper review requires the full involvement of **all relevant stakeholders**, including a sense of urgency and the adjustment that it is time to talk about higher goals. You need to devote **significant time to this tasks**. A 1.5 hour online meeting or a half-day strategy session will not be enough. All aspects must have a satisfactory result.

**i** **Our final advice:** *Never be the facilitator of such a process if you are also a participant with your own opinions and interests.*

# 2



## HYBRID LEADERSHIP

### WHEN IT WORKS WELL

Leaders know their role and responsibility in the changed circumstances.

All management levels are prepared for the leadership challenges of the VUCA world.

There is a new set of leadership routines in place aligned to the situation.



# The Old Leadership is Over

*We must adapt mindsets, skills & routines*

Old command & control type of leadership has been on its way out for some time already. The COVID-19 crisis gave the chance for a swan song and threw EVERY SINGLE LEADER amidst the VUCA reality. The relevance of a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous world have been rejected by many, for a long time. **Now it hit them in the face with no room to dodge it anymore.**



## **CHANGE WILL HURT LESS WITH RIGHT MINDSET**

There is no doubt that we live in a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. The current groundbreaking changes and new business environment presents new challenges and requires new solutions from all of us. Today, more and more leaders are forced to rethink their roles and responsibilities within the organization in order to meet the expectations of the new environment.

During the phase of hybrid operation no leader shall remain in the old mindset. If he does, his countdown to become redundant will start inevitably. World will be changing more rapidly in the upcoming years than we anticipated. COVID-19 accelerated the long-expected effects of megatrends. What is the mindset to adopt? We call it **VUCA MINDSET**, which is the mindset that adopts VUCA Prime as premise. In this mindset, we all must:

- Tackle Volatility by referring to the VISION
- Handle Uncertainty by actively supporting UNDERSTANDING
- Navigate Complexity by communication & expectation CLARITY
- Deal with Ambiguity by using AGILE PRINCIPLES

This is the mindset that not only leaders, but ALL PEOPLE WILL NEED FOR THE SUCCESS.



## SKILL SETS OF LEADERS MUST REFLECT THE CONSTANT CHANGE

Everyone talks about the new normal coming. The new normal will only be the adaptation to the last change. This time it is COVID-19. Next it will be the impact of the aging population on business reality. The time after that we will need to adapt to the new inclusion levels with growing migration and rise of women in the workforce.

***We will never have the chance to enjoy the new normal, because it will always change.***

To reflect this, leadership development must focus on four areas of skills. The leaders need to own the ability to:

1

**Set direction**, ensure understanding and maintaining clarity

2

**Develop** people - mindset and skills

3

**Create conditions** for collaboration & performance

4

**Achieve agility** through empowerment

Adaptive leadership includes agile methods and empowerment to be able to lead well in a wide range of circumstances, especially in new, changing and ambiguous situations. The adaptive leaders are able to react in a number of different ways to the external changes. Throughout our adaptive leadership program we teach leaders the attitudes and skills to tackle the unpredicted challenges of the VUCA world.



***Our final advice:*** *Changing mindset and skills is a complex process. Utilise partners that are skilled to get your people up to speed.*

# 3



## HYBRID COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

### THE BEST PRACTICE SOLUTION:

The top management communicates frequently, clearly and timely to the staff.

We have well-set communication channels and related routines for fully remote or hybrid operation.

Our colleagues are prepared to communicate and collaborate remotely.



# The Future of Work is Hybrid

## *Ready for neither On-site nor Remote*

While in the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis one of the biggest challenges was to manage and work in remote teams, in the restart period, this will be replaced by the formation of hybrid teams.

As employees begin returning to work, many companies are limiting capacity or having employees come into the office on specific days or shifts. This results in a hybrid team structure.

Ideally, this flexibility has a positive effect on productivity and employee engagement, but some important rules should still be kept in mind.

### **TRANSPARENCY**

1

make the conditions for remote work opportunities clear and transparent for everyone. Team members need to know how, when and under what conditions they can take advantage of remote work.

2

### **EQUALITY**

Pay attention to equality. If you allow some employees to work remotely for specific reasons, allow it to everyone. The purpose of hybrid teams is to increase employee autonomy for all workers, no matter their personal or professional situation.

3

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Hybrid teams cannot function without proper technology. Make sure you equip your team with the technology they need for a smooth operation and collaboration



## 4 ENCOURAGEMENT

At many companies, even though remote work is technically allowed, it is not encouraged by the management. Thus employees don't feel comfortable going remote. If you offer remote options, encourage employees to use their remote days or flexible schedule. Lead by example and start working remotely from time to time yourself.

## 5 LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

Members of hybrid teams may have different challenges due to the place of work. Remote employees may feel isolated, forgotten or left out, while those in the office can be overwhelmed by extra work due to being more visible. Managers of hybrid teams have great responsibility in creating a level playing field and ensure strong team collaboration.

## 6 CONSISTENT INFORMATION SHARING

One of the dangers to the operation of hybrid teams is if the local and remote members receive different amounts or quality of information. Make sure you are consistent with your information sharing and allow information to reach everyone concerned. A meeting memo, the recording of (online) meetings or a follow-up email are a must do!

## 7 VARIED AND REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Hybrid, alike any other team, requires regular, predictable, and varied communication, both in terms of participants and communication channel. Routine with frequent all-team check-ins, longer deep-dive meetings and brief 1-on-1 supports a stronger team. Hybrid teams also require in-person meetings when everyone is present, ideally quarterly.

**i** ***Our final advice:*** *Do a conscious review of communication and collaboration routines. Don't count that "things will sort out."*

# 4



## HYBRID MOTIVATION & ENGAGEMENT

### THE BEST PRACTICE SOLUTION:

The management takes the emotional burdens of staff members seriously and handles it properly.

Our company reacted well from motivation perspective to the new, uncertain situation.

The engagement of staff is at a good level in spite of the current challenges.





# People are Afraid

## *Motivation & Engagement Needs Help*

Many top managers share the feeling that during the last three months engagement of staff improved. Let's look behind the curtains to see if this is the right conclusion.

***„The war for talent is over and the talent won” is not true anymore.***

If we look at engagement from a wider perspective it is easy to state that the labor market totally lost its balance in the past 3-5 years. Josh Bersin described the situation very well: „The war for talent is over and the talent won.” It was not the candidates who were forced to convince the employers, but the other way around. The employers were fighting for the talent. The lack of a skilled labor force limited growth, and the constantly and rapidly increasing wages harmed profitability.

### **The pandemic shifted the game to the opposite overnight.**

The sudden lockdown, the suspension of operations, the closure of shops and hotels have led to a historically large number of people losing their jobs. Unemployment is through the roof. And a short-term positive outlook doesn't exist.

People - even those who can still keep their jobs - are uncertain and afraid of future dismissal. Employees cling to every straw because the stakes are high now. Excessive activity of team members can easily be perceived as high engagement. In reality, however, it is neither engagement, nor satisfaction. It is fear.



## Engagement is an emotional bond to the company and discretionary effort by the employee.

Huge budgets had been spent on recruitment marketing and external employer branding to get people on board. Now the focus should move to engaging people. Fear doesn't create engagement. The conscious leadership behavior and proper reaction to the circumstances does.

The lockdown and uncertainty pushed people down on the pyramid of needs. Physiological, safety and belonging needs became threatened. Many feel and think this: "I have to survive somehow in the current crisis. I need some certainty and safety both in terms of my health and my future. I feel isolated." Leaders should notice this change (it might be different person by person) and act accordingly.



### **INTRODUCE THE ENGAGEMENT INTERVIEW INTO THE DAILY ROUTINE!**

Listen to your people, show empathy and demonstrate your willingness to help. Your subordinates will appreciate it better than before. Online team meetings won't replace the one-on-one discussions. Dedicate some quality time to your direct reports. Doesn't matter if it is online or in person, the point is that your colleagues require your focus and the feeling that they are important to you. Use this time not only and mainly for controlling and managing performance, but also for assessing the well-being of your colleagues and to provide them with the opportunity to talk freely about their feelings and personal problems.

You don't need to be a psychologist or a life-coach, just a leader who listens and cares.



***Our final advice:*** *Implement pulse checks and double down on the engagement skills of leaders.*

# 5



## HYBRID COVID SAFETY

### THE BEST PRACTICE SOLUTION:

We have measures, principles and protocols designed to maintain a fully safe environment.

All team members have internalized the safety protocols and behave accordingly consistently

Team members warn violators of safety measures confidentially.



# We are NOT beyond, YET

## *COVID safety shifted to our hands*

The lockdown was extremely tiring and painful; this is why now everybody feels so relieved about finally being able to meet friends and colleagues, dine out and go on excursions and enjoy freedom. It is difficult to hear and understand that Covid-19 is still around us, it means a high risk and we may expect a second wave of pandemic as it is the case now in China, South Korea or in Singapore. We all want to be a bit carefree for a while.

The burden of responsibility lies on Business Executives, Team Leaders and HR professionals. They have an extremely challenging job to convince colleagues to follow strict safety standards when they return to the workplaces. Despite their wish to behave carefree.



### **CLEAR RULES AND UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION**

To minimize Covid-19 infection it is paramount to set clear expectations toward colleagues when they commute to work, they use public places in the office building, within the office or when they interact with visitors or customers. It is obvious that we have to do utmost to avoid infection while we also need to be effective at work.

The safety rules have to be short and concise. If the list of norms is long like an encyclopedia, nobody will care to read it, nobody will remember them and nobody will follow these norms. Also, even though norms should cover all aspects of work and potential interactions, they also need to be realistic to apply.



## SPACE TO ADDRESS THE TOPIC

There are all kinds of myths and misconceptions about Covid-19 that are circling around among people! It is a good idea to discuss the safety norms in a team meeting and also clear some of the misbeliefs about the pandemic.

Make sure to support safety messages with visual descriptions, reminders and checklists in the office to keep the safety rules alive!



## ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING!

Customized safety rules are essential, but what will ensure that people will follow these norms? Well, it is a difficult question. The proper launch of norms, engaging employees and discussing safety expectations with them, feedback from leaders at all levels of the organizational hierarchy, HR and safety professionals, visual reminders in the office, mini training courses embedded into regular meetings - all of them have their role to create and maintain a safety culture. One thing is for sure: without conscious change management and interventions to create a positive work safety attitude, employees will be reluctant to comply with all norms.



**Our final advice:** *Better safe than sorry - run workshops for staff and leaders to form the mindset and train skills for safety.*



# We hope you find joy in the Hybrid World!

Many experience difficulties in dealing with the constant change of the VUCA world. COVID was is the latest change we have to deal with, but it is not the last.

At DEVELOP we help individuals, teams and organizations on the journey of maximising potential and finding the new way of work amidst the change.

**We change people's mindsets, behaviors and routines,** online and offline.



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*DEVELOR is a multinational training and consulting company with 25 years on the market and presence in 16 countries. **We change people's mindset, behaviors and routines.***

DEVELOP







# FIVE TIMES FIVE STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION

- 26 Vision & Strategy
- 27 Leadership
- 28 Communication & Collaboration
- 29 Motivation & Engagement
- 30 COVID Safety



# Vision & Strategy

*Five Steps for Successful Adaptation*

- 1 SUMMARISE EFFECTS** THE CHANGES HAVE ON YOUR MARKET
- 2 REVIEW YOUR IDENTITY** - WHO ARE YOU & HOW ARE YOU RELEVANT
- 3 ASK CRUCIAL QUESTIONS** WITHIN THE RANKS NOT ONLY MANAGEMENT
- 4 HAVE A STRATEGIC REVIEW** WITH TOP DECISION MAKERS
- 5 DEFINE** THE DIRECTION AND COMMUNICATE IT



We help companies lead the conversations about strategy and vision. Find out more at at [www.develor.com](http://www.develor.com)



# Leadership

## *Five Steps for Successful Adaptation*

- 1 INSTILL VUCA MINDSET - ORGANIZE**  
WORKSHOPS FOR LEADERS AND STAFF
- 2 STRENGTHEN ADAPTIVE LEADERS - HIRE**  
THEM AND/OR TRAIN THEIR SKILLS
- 3 UPDATE LEADERSHIP OPERATING MODEL**  
– ORGANIZE REVIEW WORKSHOPS
- 4 TAKE EFFORTS TO EMPOWER PEOPLE -**  
TEACH LEADERS TO DO IT
- 5 IMPLEMENT AGILE ROUTINES VIA**  
CLASSROOM AND ON-JOB TRAINING



We setup and implement VUCA ready leadership mindset, skills & routines. Find out more at [www.develor.com](http://www.develor.com)



# Communication & Collaboration

## *Five Steps for Successful Adaptation*

- 1 SET, COMMUNICATE AND ENCOURAGE HYBRID **WORK RULES**
- 2 CHOSE, LAUNCH AND TEACH PEOPLE TO USE **SUITABLE TECH TOOLS**
- 3 ESTABLISH GOOD **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION** PLATFORMS
- 4 HAVE A CHANNEL OR TOOL FOR **CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE** WITH STAFF
- 5 **ASK FOR FEEDBACK** ON QUALITY OF YOUR COMMUNICATION



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# Motivation & Engagement

*Five Steps for Successful Adaptation*

- 1 IMPLEMENT **PULSE CHECKS** WITH FOLLOW-THROUGH
- 2 PREPARE LEADERS & RUN **ENGAGEMENT INTERVIEWS**
- 3 HAVE AN **OPEN FORUM** TO ADDRESS FEARS AND UNCERTAINTIES
- 4 ESTABLISH **EMPLOYEE COACHING** AND STRESS RELIEF ACTIONS
- 5 FOCUS ON THE **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING** OF COLLEAGUES MORE



We help organizations to assess, design & implement for engagement & motivation solutions. Find out more at [www.develor.com](http://www.develor.com)



# COVID Safety

## *Five Steps for Successful Adaptation*

- 1** WITH EXPERT HELP **DEFINE THE WAYS OF WORK** IN COVID WORLD
- 2** DEFINE **NORMS OF BEHAVIOR**, COMMUNICATE THEM & GET ALIGNMENT
- 3** FORM **COVID-19 SAFETY MINDSET** AMONG ALL STAFF VIA WORKSHOPS
- 4** **TRAIN LEADERS** HOW TO BEHAVE IN CASE OF VIOLATION OF RULES AND NORMS
- 5** **ALIGN THE RULES FREQUENTLY** WITH THE SITUATION



We are leaders in developing safety awareness mindset in staff and leaders. Find out more at [www.develor.com](http://www.develor.com)