Leadership in the Digital Age

ADAPTABILITY

VISIONARY

HUMILITY

ENGAGEMENT

IMD
REAL LEARNING. REAL IMPACT

GLOBAL CENTER FOR DIGITAL
BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION
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personality matters.

The Actions of an Agile Leader

Agile Leaders HAVE the mindset to successfully navigate digital business transformation.
They are hyperaware of their environments; they use this knowledge to make informed decisions; and they execute those decisions at speed.

Agile Leaders HAVE the mindset to succeed

HUMILITY
An ability to accept feedback and acknowledge that others know more than you.
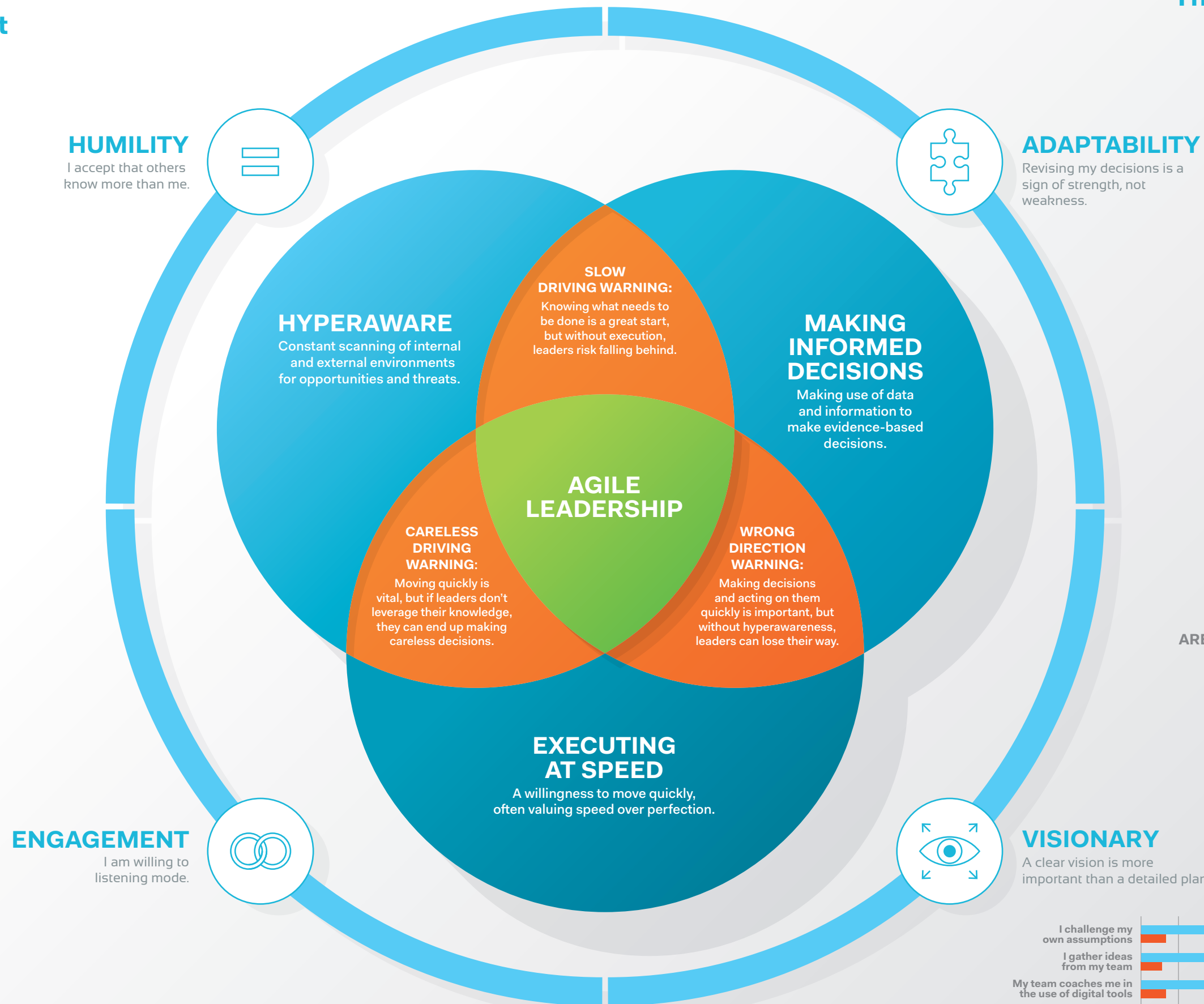
ADAPTABILITY
An acceptance that change is constant and that changing your mind based on new information is a strength rather than a weakness.

VISIONARY
A clear sense of long-term direction, even in the face of short-term uncertainty.
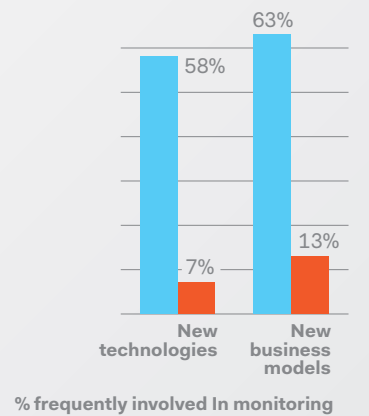
ENGAGEMENT
A willingness to listen, interact, and communicate with internal and external stakeholders combined with a strong sense of interest and curiosity in emerging trends.
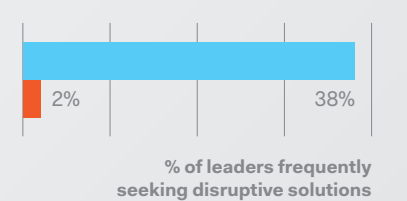
HUMILITY
I accept that others know more than me.

ADAPTABILITY
Revising my decisions is a sign of strength, not weakness.

ENGAGEMENT
I am willing to listening mode.

VISIONARY
A clear vision is more important than a detailed plan.

HYPERAWARE
Constant scanning of internal and external environments for opportunities and threats.

MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS
Making use of data and information to make evidence-based decisions.

EXECUTING AT SPEED
A willingness to move quickly, often valuing speed over perfection.

AGILE LEADERSHIP

SLOW DRIVING WARNING:
Knowing what needs to be done is a great start, but without execution, leaders risk falling behind.

CARELESS DRIVING WARNING:
Moving quickly is vital, but if leaders don't leverage their knowledge, they can end up making careless decisions.

WRONG DIRECTION WARNING:
Making decisions and acting on them quickly is important, but without hyperawareness, leaders can lose their way.

The Agile Difference

- Agile Leaders
- Non-Agile Leaders

AGILE LEADERS: LOOK TO THE FUTURE

- New technologies: 58% / 7%
- New business models: 63% / 13%

% frequently involved In monitoring

SEEK DISRUPTIVE SOLUTIONS

- 38% / 2%

% of leaders frequently seeking disruptive solutions

ARE 15X MORE LIKELY TO ENGAGE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

- 94%
- 6%

ARE ACTIVE LEARNERS

- I challenge my own assumptions
- I gather ideas from my team
- My team coaches me in the use of digital tools
- I encourage my team to challenge my opinions

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%
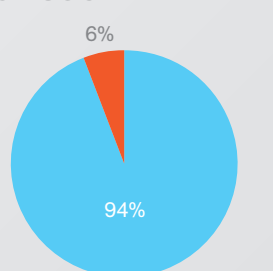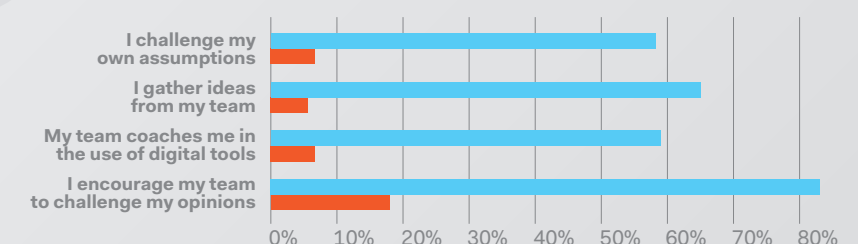
Redefining Leadership for a Digital World

To lead successfully at any point in history has required a specific set of capabilities that fit with the demands of the time. In an effort to understand what is required to lead organizations in an increasingly digital world, we surveyed over a thousand executives and interviewed nineteen leaders from seventeen industries across the globe. We identified a number of key competencies and business behaviors that together form **The Agile Leader**, one who is capable of navigating disrupted digital waters.

What defines The Agile Leader?

Agile leaders HAVE 4 core competencies: they are *humble*, they are *adaptable*, they are *visionary*, and they are *engaged*. They use these attributes to steer organizations through the volatility and complexity of digital disruption. Agile leaders are hyperaware of emerging opportunities and threats, they use data and analytics to support informed decisions and they move quickly, even when they are not sure of the outcome, to execute at speed. As one European CEO from our survey told us: *"You need to do the planning, otherwise you won't get anywhere, but at the same time, you need to be prepared to re-assess and re-evaluate and not love your own scenarios or plans too much. You need to be open to external impulses at all times."*

It is clear that traditional organizations can compete and win in this new digitally-disrupted world if their leaders are able to adapt to it. One only needs to look at leadership success stories of large incumbents such as GE, Axel Springer, and BBVA to know that all is not lost; indeed the prognosis for incumbents is excellent, provided they are managed and led in an agile manner.

AGILE LEADERS DRIVE TRANSFORMATION

HUMILITY
Mathias Dopfner – CEO Axel Springer
Mathias Dopfner realized that his team needed to know more about U.S. tech culture. Consequently, he immersed himself and his top team in Silicon Valley for almost a year. His aim was to deliberately force them out of their comfort zone. "I wanted people to be in student mode". Having the humility to pause and learn has paid huge dividends for the organization, now a digital publishing power-house.

ADAPTABILITY
Carlos Torres Vila – CEO BBVA
Carlos Torres Vila has transformed BBVA from a traditional 'bricks and mortar' bank into one of the World's most advanced, digitally-enabled financial service companies.

VISIONARY
Jeff Immelt – CEO GE
Jeff Immelt had the vision to see what GE needed to become, not just what it was, even though it was a successful company. His vision has reshaped GE into a global leader in the industrial internet.

ENGAGEMENT
Jeff Bezos – CEO Amazon
Jeff Bezos set out Amazon's vision early, aiming to be the 'Earth's most customer-centric company'. He was subsequently quoted as defining 'customer-centric' as "Listening to the customer and inventing for the customer". Customer centricity has been central Amazon's phenomenal success.

GLOBAL CENTER FOR DIGITAL BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION
An IMD and Cisco Initiative

The Global Center for Digital Business Transformation, an IMD and Cisco initiative provides world-leading research and analysis on digital disruption.

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IMD is a top-ranked business school, recognized as the expert in developing global leaders through high-impact executive education.

CISCO

Cisco is the worldwide leader in networking that transforms how people connect, communicate, and collaborate.

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