

Alumni

Sustainable Leadership Guide

**Building durable businesses in a
disruptive world**





The case for Sustainable Leadership

In an era defined by constant disruption and rapid change, a new paradigm of leadership has emerged to navigate our dynamic society. This new leadership style, known as sustainable leadership, not only acknowledges the complexities of our times but also offers effective solutions for the multifaceted challenges that businesses encounter. Sustainable leadership embraces a holistic approach that addresses environmental, social, and economic dimensions while fostering collaboration and driving transformation.

Building durable businesses in a disruptive world



The impact on people, profit and the planet

Having sustainable leaders will impact the well-being of employees, tie to long-term prosperity of the company and set visions that have a positive impact on our world.

This is a societal direction that ties to macro-trends such as globalisation, employee prioritisations, and increased end-consumer awareness of environmental issues and demands on organisations to take societal responsibilities. In their highly impactful Agenda 2030, the United Nations formulated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) where many connect directly to organisations in both private and public sector, such as Responsible Consumption and Production, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.

To a growing extent, investors, institutions and banks place focus on ESG* and sustainability metrics when assessing the potential value of organisations and assets, and sustainability also has a positive correlation with share value. Owners and leaders of organisations are subsequently recognising working in sustainable ways as a key priority both for acquiring necessary capital, and for customers to buy what they sell.

This shift is important – sustainable leadership goes beyond the well-being of people, societies and environment, it is a key driver for economic growth.

The societal mindset transformation creates ripple effects for organisations, such as implications for their employee value propositions. If you want to attract and retain top talent, you need to have leaders that care for and develop their people, and who are able to convey a purpose of their work that goes beyond bottom line.

*ESG – Environmental, social and governance

Examples of Environmental issues:

- The natural environment and climate change
- Environmental health and safety for employees
- Ethical investment

Examples of Governance issues:

- Board structure transparency
- Management performance
- Transparency of activities

Examples of Social issues:

- Employee relationships with management
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Community participation





The Sustainable Leader

Sustainable leaders understand the profound impact of our disruptive world and are uniquely equipped to thrive amidst its uncertainties. They possess an ability to navigate complexity, adapting their strategies in response to ever-changing circumstances. Moreover, these leaders exhibit a visionary perspective that extends beyond immediate gains, recognising the intrinsic connection between people, organisations, and the volatile environment they operate within. With unwavering principles they navigate their surroundings and prioritise those decisions with most impact and with far-reaching ramifications on future generations.

Central to the fabric of sustainable leadership is a steadfast commitment to ethical conduct, empathy, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others. Leaders who embody this competency exhibit a profound understanding of the larger perspectives that encompass their organisation, society, the environment, and the long term. Through ethical decision-making and empathetic actions, they build an environment where compassion thrives, fostering collaboration and inclusivity.

Incorporating these distinctive qualities into their leadership methodology empowers sustainable leaders to effectively position their organisations not only for survival but for thriving within our dynamic world. By nurturing collaborative endeavours, embracing forward-looking mindsets, and championing diversity, they cultivate a milieu of innovation and resilience. This environment enables their organisations to proactively confront disruptions and realise sustainable growth, all while upholding ethical standards and nurturing the well-being of all stakeholders.

Alumni Sustainable Leadership

Based on a review of the research on sustainable leadership, Alumni has formulated a model for leadership that encompasses four over-arching key competencies. It is built on a fundament of transformational leadership, with important elements from servant and ethical leadership. While representing separate and unique facets of Sustainable Leadership, each of the four competencies are connected and interact in ways where strengths in one area also adds value to others.



Alumni has developed processes to identify these leaders and tools to assess them

4 competencies beneficial to building durable businesses

Humanity

Core concept: genuine will to do good for others.

Leaders who display this competency act ethically and empathically, have a genuine interest in the well-being of others, and are able to see things in a larger (organisational, societal, environmental, long-term) perspective.

➤ **Key elements**

- Focus on humanitarian values and ethical behaviors
- Empathy, interest, and investment in others' well-being and growth
- Empowerment, prioritising needs of others before self
- Thinking long term, understanding the bigger picture, value implication

Authentic Connection

Core concept: authentically engaging others. Leaders who display this competency are able to formulate and communicate a vision that is clear and connects with people emotionally. They act with authenticity; daring to be vulnerable and show their true selves, matching their words with their actions, and having truthful conversations with others.

➤ **Key elements**

- Formulating an engaging vision
- Setting direction and communicating clearly
- Building true collaboration
- Emotional presence and ability to navigate own and others' emotional states
- Honesty, walking the talk

Agile Mind

Core concept: understanding and adapting. Leaders who display this competency have the capacity to analyse complex information, identifying key priorities and making good decisions in ambiguous and volatile circumstances. They possess the emotional and cognitive ability to be open to new ways of doing things.

➤ Key elements

- Navigating complexity/ambiguity,
- Being adaptable and open
- Analytical capacity
- Strategy, systems-thinking
- Understanding synergies and scalability

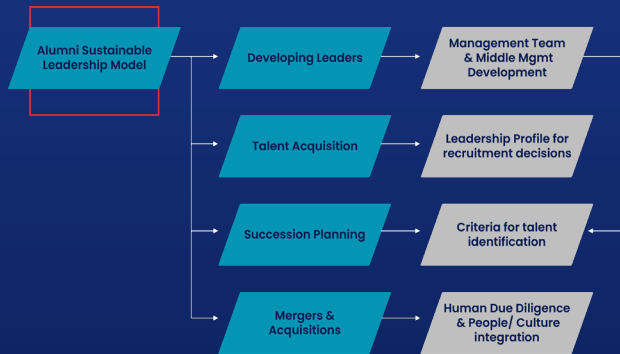
Drive for Growth

Core concept: embracing growth of both people and business, daring to fail. Leaders who display this competency prioritise the development of people, themselves as well as others. They challenge, encourage action and an experimental mindset to drive the business forward dynamically.

➤ Key elements

- Development of self & others: strategies for self-care and recovery, growing self-awareness, driving continuous development, seeking feedback
- Driving Innovation & change: challenging and seeking opportunities for growth, displaying growth mindset, maintaining energy & commitment over time

Leadership Ecosystem Impact



Alumni Sustainable Leadership

Making the shift towards a sustainable form of leadership connects in its very nature to the whole organisation and leadership ecosystem.

The Alumni Sustainable Leadership solution provides a foundation that covers key areas that enable a successful holistic transformation:

- **Implement with Impact** – Alumni provides advice on how to integrate the Alumni Sustainable Leadership model into your organisation's Talent Management processes, to ensure operational efficiency and optimising the benefits for the wider organisation.
- **Leadership Assessment** – providing evidence-based assessments of leaders, ensuring a systematic and precise approach to talent acquisition, succession planning, management audits and Human Due Diligence processes as part of M&A:s. Alumni's unique combination of functional and psychological expertise related to different roles, business areas and markets allow for an in-depth evaluation which directly connects to the needs of your business.
- **Leadership Development** – Alumni offers a powerful and flexible Sustainable Leadership development suite that includes a Sustainable Leadership 360 for evaluating and developing your current leaders, Management Team Development workshops, and Sustainable Leadership Development Programs.

About Alumni

Alumni is a leading executive search and leadership services firm. Founded in 1990, we have always worked in partnership with a range of progressive and established organisations in finding and developing the highly skilled competence they need in this increasingly competitive world. We assess people for key positions and advise executive teams. Through identifying and developing the right leaders, key competence and skills, we pave the way for our clients' success.

With locations across the Nordics, Asia-Pacific, Europe and the UK we have the resources of a global enterprise, whilst fostering a culture of innovation and agility that empowers our people across the world to respond to constantly changing needs. We utilise specialists in every local market and tailor our offer to the unique requirements of our clients.

Our vision: Unleash the potential of talent and leadership to make a sustainable impact on business and society.

We hope to be in touch!

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Why partner with us at Alumni?

➤ Full-service portfolio

- Comprehensive service portfolio that helps our clients bring their strategies to life through people
- Broad industry and functional knowledge
- Global reach

➤ Solid experience and leadership expertise

- 30+ years of proprietary candidate data and relations
- Expertise in what characterises Sustainable Leaders, a processes to identify them and the tools to assess and develop them

➤ Client-centric collaboration

- Client-centric mindset combining tailor-made processes and evidence-based tools
- One-firm approach where our collective experience and expertise is used in the best interest of every client and candidate

➤ Values that unite

- A company united by strong core values: collaborative, caring and courageous
- A pursuit to ensure diverse and inclusive practices in our assignments and in how we advise our clients

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