



6 CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES TO GET YOUR ORGANISATION FROM HERE TO THERE



The defining trait of organisations that successfully grow and navigate critical change is the practice of regularly revising their form of leadership, thinking and operations. Simply put, these great organisations understand that what got them to where they are today, is unlikely to get them to where they want to go next.

WHY CAPACITIES?

Great and really effective leadership has a depth of quality more than know-how and behaviour. Particularly when having to navigate *strategic inflection points*, the inner nature of leadership becomes more critical than the outer action aspects alone.

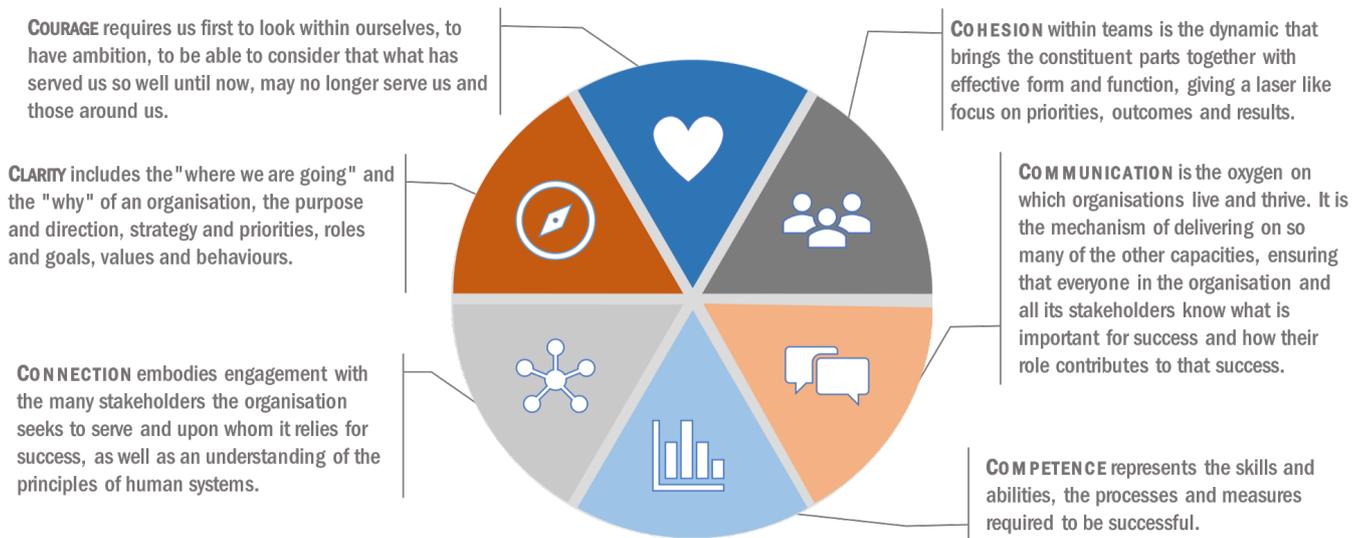
We emphasise this using the term *Capacity* for those distinctive features of outstanding organisational leadership. *Capacity* evokes the idea of quantity or scale. We define *Capacity* as the combined *character*, *capability* and *intentionality* of individuals, teams and organisations to lead, grow and evolve, to successfully navigate *strategic inflection points*.

Each of these critical dimensions contributes to determining the *Capacity* within an individual leader, a leadership team, and ultimately the effectiveness of the whole organisation:

- + *Character* - the mental and moral qualities
- + *Capability* - the ability to do something
- + *Intentionality* - the fact of being deliberate or purposeful

As such our emphasis, in contrast to other models, is on both the inner and outer aspects of leadership, on the being as well as the action of doing and, importantly, to connect both of those with intentionality.

THE MODEL IN OVERVIEW





6 CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES TO GET YOUR ORGANISATION FROM HERE TO THERE

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

A natural reaction when finding yourself at a strategic inflection point may be to repeat what made you successful previously. This is at best a continuation of the difficulties that are already being experienced, at worst failure to move the organisation to its next phase of growth.

At this moment, you must examine your own belief systems, ways of thinking and doing and, of course, your own leadership to find where the first changes need to be made. Such introspection and reflection does not come easily to many leaders and often requires intervention and support.

We all know how inevitable change is, how the frequency and complexity of change is increasing. Those organisations that will not only survive, but evolve and grow in these times are the ones who choose to ready themselves, who are prepared to invest in their leadership capacities.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES DESCRIBE EACH CAPACITY IN DETAIL AND WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alastair Kidd and Tony McGuire have many years of combined business leadership, consulting and coaching experience, working with successful leaders across many sectors. The six capacities model is derived from both our own business experience and from our extensive work with clients. It is a framework best used when it is important to look at individual and team leadership. We deploy it in team workshops and 1:1 coaching and have built a self-assessment and organisation survey to help clients understand the current state of their leadership and take action to improve it.



6 CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES TO GET YOUR ORGANISATION FROM HERE TO THERE

THE CAPACITIES IN DETAIL



CLARITY includes the "where we are going" and the "why" of an organisation, the purpose and direction, strategy and priorities, roles and goals, values and behaviours.

Greater Clarity is an attractor for people, it is the primary energiser and enabler of an effective organisation. Lack or insufficient Clarity means the organisation tends towards silos and chaos, with groups heading in different directions, operating to different strategic goals and priorities, and using different values to guide behaviour

What it looks like in action:

- States the purpose of the organisation, why it exists.
- Creates a compelling vision for the future of the organisation, ensuring everyone understands it.
- Defines and communicates a strategy that will drive the organisation to achieve the vision.
- Links everyone's role to the vision and strategy.
- Defines the values and behaviours necessary for success.
- States the priorities of the organisation consistent with the strategy, keeping them few and stable.
- Defines the roles that will drive the strategy, ensuring scope, authority and boundary are clear and understood by all.



COURAGE requires us first to look within ourselves, to have ambition, to confront the identity and assumptions we hold about ourselves and others, to be able to consider that what has served us so well until now, may no longer serve us and those around us, to take the risk to step beyond those limiting self-imposed boundaries and from there find a path towards growth and greater effectiveness.

With greater Courage leaders show up with greater authenticity, teams show up with significantly greater impact. Having courageous leaders around promotes a culture of robust authenticity, a grounded safety where truth is a priority and outcomes are achieved. With less Courage leaders, teams and organisations fall into, or stay stuck, in one of three limiting and ineffective patterns: an overly compliant niceness, avoiding reality and failing to tackle the seriousness and importance of leadership; a brittle, aggressive or domineering controlling culture; a distant, disengaged remoteness that fails to engage and inspire

What it looks like in action:

- Has ambition that is far beyond what was achieved previously
- Delegates the necessary authority along with responsibility
- Makes tough decisions
- Has tough conversations
- Makes significant changes to the Leadership Team and the organisation.
- Acts in a timely manner.
- Changes their mind appropriately.
- Goes beyond the edge of comfort.
- Listens to those who oppose their view.



6 CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES TO GET YOUR ORGANISATION FROM HERE TO THERE



COHESION within teams is the dynamic that brings the constituent parts together with effective form and function. Members of cohesive teams know each other in ways that impact the trust they can have with each and in ways that enable effectiveness. They understand, embrace and work with the varying personalities, motivators, ambitions, communication and behavioural styles. Such trust generates a preparedness and safety for vulnerability, enabling team members to engage in robust constructive conflict, allowing all to become committed to decisions and goals. It allows team members to vigorously and supportively hold each other to account, giving a laser like focus on priorities, outcomes and results.

With greater Cohesion teams have a strong and particular structure and performance. Teams with Cohesion perform not only greater than the sum of the parts, but with impact for unity and results that influences and transmits success throughout the organisation. With less Cohesion teams vacillate, failing to have meaningful dialogue, becoming unaccountable for action and results, spreading a weak and ineffective silo culture of self-interest and politicking.

What it looks like in action:

- *Shows up fully and openly.*
- *Trusts their team to deliver.*
- *Engages in open and robust dialogue*
- *Delivers their commitments.*
- *Ensures others deliver their commitments.*
- *Is accountable and holds others to account.*
- *Focuses on results.*
- *Has a bias towards action.*
- *Drives teamwork in the organisation.*
- *Admits to mistakes.*



COMMUNICATION is the oxygen through which organisations live and thrive. It is the mechanism of delivering on so many of the other capacities, ensuring that everyone in the organisation and all its stakeholders know what is important for success and how their role contributes to that success.

With greater Communication teams and organisational interactions flow freely throughout the system. People feel heard and able to show up to fully contribute, dialogue is embraced and informed decision making is enabled. With less Communication passivity and disengagement spreads throughout the organisation. Change initiatives, priorities and values become seen as dictates and sloganising. The potential and power of the organisation is drained away from within.

What it looks like in action:

- *Speaks with candour.*
- *Listens actively.*
- *Gives timely positive reinforcement and constructive feedback.*
- *States the strategic priorities regularly.*
- *Uses the strategic priorities to inform decision making.*
- *Constantly espouses the vision, strategy, values and culture.*
- *Develops channels for dialogue with the Board and the shareholders.*



6 CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES TO GET YOUR ORGANISATION FROM HERE TO THERE



COMPETENCE represents the skills and abilities the organisation needs, the processes and measures required to be successful. It represents the organisations ability to continually review, refine and refresh the skills and abilities needed for success, innovating and bringing in new skills as the development of the organisation needs, retiring those that no longer serve.

With greater Competence an organisation knows what it is good at, knows how to be successful and what that looks like, continually explores the edge of its abilities and seeks to develop through training, collaboration and innovation. With less Competence organisations retreat further and further into the safe space of what used to serve them. These organisations become jaded and stale, no longer relevant, ill-equipped to navigate through change and complexity.

What it looks like in action:

- *Has a deep understanding of the business model and what drives success.*
- *Maintains their knowledge and understanding of the products and services of the organisation.*
- *Keeps the processes of the organisation in line with the strategy.*
- *Understands and uses the Key Performance Indicators of the organisation and ensures they are timely and available to all.*
- *Develops their own leadership and management skills.*
- *Invests in the development of the management skills of the leadership team.*
- *Collaborates with all parts of the organisation and drives collaboration throughout it.*
- *Promotes innovation throughout the organisation.*
- *Maintains a good understanding of the governance required by the organisation.*



CONNECTION embodies engagement with the many stakeholders the organisation seeks to serve and upon whom it relies for success, as well as an understanding of the principles of human systems and how to work with them.

With greater Connection comes a respect for and engagement with the wide range of parties and systems that are critical to success. Uncertainty, resistance and complexity can be met as information and used for more innovative and successful outcomes. With less Connection teams and organisations reinforce their own silo, engagement drops, challenge is met as a force to be battled with and overcome. As a result, selfishness and self-interest dominate and long term sustainability diminishes.

What it looks like in action:

- *Knows the market, competitors and trends that affect the organisation's position.*
- *Establishes relationships with partners, keeping them current.*
- *Connects personally with the employees both formally and informally.*
- *Knows the investors and communicates regularly with them.*
- *Understands customers intimately and establishes personal relationships with key customers.*
- *Develops a strong relationship with the Board members, ensuring they are fully informed.*