

# LEADING WITH PURPOSE

LEADERSHIP & CAREER



“So, what did we learn from that exercise?” asked the ‘leadership development trainer’ back in 2019, when a management group had been whisked away for a whole day and a half to undertake team-building and bonding sessions.

As one of that group, I learned that if this was the best that could be done, leadership development and team building hadn’t moved on much in the past 25 years. Literally, the same (lame) exercises, the same (tired) processes, the same ‘have a few drinks and sing karaoke’ and, of course, the same end result: zero discernible change. My observations reinforced an earlier decision I had made to become a qualified and practicing executive coach and mentor. There had to be a better way of what I consider to be fundamental to leadership – taking a purposeful approach to making others better.

But this was pre-pandemic, so nobody was too bothered about what leadership development was all about. The most enlightened businesses were already changing their engagement with colleagues, and they were already thinking how the development of individuals and teams was not only one of the most important factors, but *the* most important.

People are a company’s biggest asset, yet I have seen many businesses where the subject does not even feature on a risk register. Leadership development and team building should be fundamental, not merely a chore, and senior leaders should, in my opinion, have this as a core, and accountable, part of their role.

Think about the comparison with when our children go to school. We want them to learn from great teachers, and we can all remember the good ones from our own childhood. But when someone enters a company, quite often, that development angle just, well, stops.

Has anything changed since the pandemic? Well, hybrid-working patterns have emphasised how much choice employees have and, as far as I can see, people are exercising this choice. No longer is a job just about salary and traditional benefits – it is about development and acquiring new skills, as well as being valued. If the current employer falls down on those aspects... then off that person trots (or more likely no longer has to physically move now) to a business that recognises and – more importantly – embodies them.

Trust is another value intrinsically linked with good leadership and great teams. Indeed, in organisations such as the military, there have been several studies that highlight critical issues for staff. Of course, everyone wants a great leader with impeccable trust. Nobody wants a poor leader with no trust. But every single time, for example, Royal Marines and Navy Seals would choose a slightly lower-performing leader with great trust over a higher-performing leader with serious trust issues. The result of the latter combination? Yes, readers have seen these characters multiple times – the dangerous, power-crazed, self-before-team boss.

What COVID-19 and homeworking have done is to create real visibility of what really matters in leadership development and team building: empathy, support, trust, engagement and culture. Bring on the new world, I say, and let’s start making others better in areas that go way beyond their key performance indicator metrics. ♡



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## BEST BUY’S HUBERT JOLY’S FIVE KEY TIPS FOR PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

- 1** Be clear about your purpose, the purpose of those around you and how that connects to your company’s purpose.
- 2** Be confident of your role, which is to create energy and momentum in your organisation.
- 3** Know who you serve – this should focus on the people on the front lines and not on yourself.
- 4** Be driven by values – in essence, doing right, and not just knowing or saying what’s right.
- 5** Be authentic – the hardest one of all. Be yourself, your true self, your whole self, the best version of yourself.