



Fearless Leadership[®]

A Leadership and Influence Development Roadmap

Strategy

Leadership

Culture

Fearless Leadership and Influence

As organizations seek to compete and grow effectively in a changing marketplace, the need for leadership to create sustainable competitive advantage is growing. In particular, organizations see the need to embrace change by both finding opportunities to create positive change and responding creatively to changes in the environments in which they compete.

Successfully responding to change requires a new leadership approach, drawing from the intelligence and experience of the entire organization, and emerging knowledge and ideas about strategy, management, leadership and culture.

Making this shift requires first and foremost a change in the leadership paradigm. Great companies develop a culture of leadership from the most senior executives through the most junior front-line employee. This kind of change must come from the top down, as senior leadership demonstrate a tangible and daily commitment to leading by example, shared responsibility for leadership and to developing leadership in others, and it must apply to every employee in the organization. Leadership becomes not only the job of senior management, but an expectation from every person every day.

To respond to this need, Transcend has developed the Fearless Leadership model to assist organizations in evolving their approaches to change and generating resilience throughout the organization. We work with leaders to create sustainable growth in changing environments through the development of innovative strategic thinking, leadership ability at all levels and a culture that encourages innovation, collaboration and continual improvement. The combination of these three powerful elements creates the Fearless Organization.

Of the three elements, perhaps the most powerful starting point is the Leadership and Influence Development. The Leadership and Influence journey incorporates the two major aspects of leadership: **Leading Self** and **Leading Others** and is powerful and relevant from the senior executive level through leaders at all levels.

Objectives for Developing Fearless Leadership

- Develop self-awareness in each person of his or her own leadership strengths and attitudes and provide feedback on how the person is perceived by others.
- Develop self-management abilities in each person enabling greater performance and influence.
- Develop a greater appreciation for diverse capabilities across the organization and improve collective team effectiveness through a common framework and tools to use this understanding to improve interactions and results.
- Clarify the link between leadership and individual and organizational capacity.
- Develop greater accountability and responsibility at each level, for greater productivity in decision-making.
- Introduce proven models for developing stronger individual leadership and practice their use in real business-relevant situations.
- Build leadership into the organization culture through shared vocabulary and concepts for teams and leaders.
- Develop individual goals and action plans for each leader, using tools related to leadership development and teamwork and provide follow-up.

Fearless Leadership Process

The capacity of an organization, or the volume of high quality work it can produce or lead, is derived directly from the capacity of each individual to perform and lead as well as from the structures, processes and culture of the organization. High performing organizations work on both technical competencies and the core skills that create high performance teams and companies. The Fearless Leadership Roadmap includes an integrated approach to increasing organizational capacity through the introduction of key concepts, the practice of new skills and behaviors and the integration of both into the daily business of each leader.

Growing organizational capacity, like growing individual capacity, is a journey and a process, not a one-day event, or even a week-long retreat. Making real change in capacity requires a shift in behavior and thinking, and practice and reinforcement to maintain that new behavior or thought pattern over time. Unlike traditional training, where an individual or group might be exposed to a concept over a few hours and then left to apply it on their own, a leadership development program creates regular follow-up, a peer group for support and accountability, and ongoing opportunities to hone and refine skills in different situations and environments over time. In this way, the learning is reinforced, and performance improves in a sustainable way.

Leadership is fundamentally the ability to inspire and motivate yourself and others to take positive action toward a goal. It begins with taking control of your own thoughts, feelings and actions to direct them in a way that is more effective in reaching your goals. With these skills in place, you can also begin to influence the thoughts, feelings and actions of others to assist them in becoming more effective as well.

At Transcend we believe in a ***leader-leader model***, where each individual is leading every day. Leadership is not a title or a position, but is rather a fact of life and takes place in every interaction you have with others, including your written and spoken words, your body language, and your actions. You are either leading others to increase their ability to create and respond to change (their capacity) or you are leading them to decrease it. Most people “lead” without awareness of their impact on themselves and others. The Fearless Leadership Program increases awareness and skills in harnessing that ability to have a positive influence and channel it to achieve specific results. Whether that result is a new contract, a completed task, a changed personal habit or a more energized and productive team, a more direct path to that result increases personal and organizational capacity as the leader can move on to subsequent goals and achieve them more effectively and rapidly.

The two major components of Fearless Leadership are: **Leading Self** and **Leading Teams**. Fundamental to building capacity at all levels is ***Leading Self***, including deep self-awareness of your own preferences, strengths and weaknesses, how you are perceived by others, and how you show up at work. To become stronger as a leader, executives and managers need a complete picture of both the core personal assets they possess as well as how they are currently using them to achieve results. Armed with the knowledge of how they are currently influencing others, leaders can begin to strengthen their ability to lead by example and demonstrate leadership in their own daily actions through ***self-management***.

Leading Teams adds to that self-knowledge with knowledge of how other people and groups of people are motivated, how they prefer to communicate, how they interact, and what you can do to influence outcomes and effectiveness of a group. Under ***Leading Self***, the Fearless Leadership Program includes assessments of style, strengths, attitude and how you are seen by others. As persons learn about themselves in each component of the program, they also learn about differences in style, strengths and attitude and how to leverage them to improve performance. ***Leading Teams*** skills to improve overall functioning of the organization, reduce negative conflict, increase motivation and organizational capacity.

1. Leading Self

Self-knowledge begins with knowing one's own **innate strengths**, and having a foundation for understanding the kinds of activities, environments and approaches that bring out your best work. The most effective learning style for a great reader will be different than that of a greater talker; a more gregarious individual may derive more benefit from working in larger groups than a less gregarious individual who may benefit more from individual or small group work. Understanding the personal assets each person brings to their work allows them to develop leadership strategies and development plans that will best suit their unique strengths.

To build on self-knowledge with self-awareness, a **360-degree leadership assessment** provides a comparison of how a person sees themselves with how they are seen by peers, subordinates, supervisors, customers or other groups they interact with on a regular basis. With those gaps in mind, each leader can assess how their current behaviors might create or allow those gaps, and determine which modifications in their own behavior might shift their results in positive ways. **Personal Development Planning** provides a framework for each leader to set realistic and powerful personal goals for shifting behavior and a tool for self-coaching through those goals.

In addition to understanding and leveraging **strengths**, we recommend each leader identify **attitudes and mindsets** that strongly influence the ways in which each leader shows up and the results they achieve. While strengths and style shift only slowly over the course of a lifetime, attitude can shift very quickly and is an area where leaders can choose to make changes if they find their current approach is not as effective as they would like. We recommend assessment that helps identify the core thoughts we carry with us about ourselves, others and the world, and how those thoughts contribute to our current results. Leaders learn about different categories of thought, how to identify and shift limiting beliefs and other thought patterns, and how shifting core beliefs removes many of the barriers to success. This transformational work helps leaders shift from being driven by their emotions to making a choice about the most effective approach for each situation.

Rounding out these core personal skills, each leader must understand his or her **default interpersonal pattern and conflict styles** to better understand how they themselves prefer to give, receive and process information, and how they approach situations when there is strong disagreement. Communication is often the heart of building trust, inspiring others and avoiding interpersonal conflict. By identifying specific patterns and how they contribute to and impede success and smooth working relationships (both internal and external), leaders have the opportunity to identify how they can make small modifications to improve their own overall effectiveness and resolve issues more quickly – freeing up capacity.

The most critical daily thinking skill for leaders is **strategic thinking**. Leadership and influence means understanding the nature of strategic thinking and how leaders must apply this and expect it. The era of 5-year strategic plans in thick 3-ring binders has passed, and the exercise of strategic planning and strategic thinking in an integrated way is the hallmark of a high performing organization. One key gap in many leadership development efforts is the development of core strategic thinking skills in leaders at all levels. It is this final ability to keep the big picture in mind while making daily decisions that separates leaders with vision and drive from those who meander or get distracted.

Other elements for greater leadership and influence include identifying **personal values**, and developing **core values rituals, stories and artifacts**. We believe that incorporating the latest science on behavioral change is critical to addressing both the rational and emotional sides of leadership. Throughout this leadership development journey, leaders learn about key characteristics of great leaders, evidence from leadership research and work on a common framework for assessing leadership capability in themselves and others.

2. Leading Teams

While developing greater skills in Leading Self, leaders will also start applying those concepts or skills to teams and organizations. To build great teams, leaders must truly understand ***how great teams differ from good teams***, and apply Fearless Leadership principles to elicit greatness from their teams. We recommend starting with a common view of what makes a great team, how your leaders have seen those elements in action, and connect that back to the relationship between leadership and capacity. One of the strongest models of teams is the *Five Behaviors of Cohesive Teams* work by Patrick Lencioni, build upon his model of Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability and Results. With this foundation, leadership concepts can be applied to each level of high performing team behaviors.

The Fearless Leadership approach to teams begins with understanding how your own ***strengths interact*** with the strengths of others and the importance of understanding the tasks, environments and perspectives that are most helpful to different individuals and how a leader might work toward optimizing work for each individual. The leadership team can share strengths and discuss how to best leverage strengths and minimize the impact of weaknesses in the group. It is common for the weakness of one leader to appear in the strengths of another leader, allowing some tasks or processes to be traded or shared to allow the team member with that strength to overcome the weakness of another. In this way, we don't ask leaders to be perfect at everything (an impossible and demotivating goal), we ask them to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the entire team and offer tasks and roles to maximize the strengths of the group.

When we explore the impact of attitude, not only will leaders begin to shift their own attitude, but they will also learn how to ***influence the attitude of others***. While it is not possible to change other people, as a leader you can greatly influence the direction of their thoughts. We recommend exploring individual and group beliefs that limit success, the process of shifting them and specific skills for increasing influence and encouraging higher-capacity thinking in a team or an individual team member. Leaders can practice this skill any time they identify a specific barrier they are facing and shift their own attitude notice how that impacts the team as a whole. As a leadership team, the impact of these changes can be shared to learn from the successes of each member and build a shared culture and attitude.

In addition to understanding your own leadership, communication and conflict style, leaders also need to ***understand and leverage communication and conflict styles of others*** to best connect with someone who prefers a different communication style, or who handles conflict differently than we do. Leaders will be able to identify the preferences of another person, and adjust to be successful in getting the best from people with a different style. Conflict styles are particularly interesting, as the most comfortable styles for many often leave the best ideas unspoken, and a skillful leader can ensure that those ideas come forward. Style "flex" can help leaders connect more effectively with all types of people, and draw out conflicting ideas in service of the best solution.

Finally, while other leadership concepts help make the most of the skills and talents in your organization, it is the ability to think and act strategically that gives direction and cohesion to the organization. Leaders must understand the meaning of the "strategic moment", know how to cultivate a habit of developing regular strategic insights, and how to make strategic thinking a core part of the organizational culture. In this way, leaders begin to grow others to make more critical decisions, identify new insights, and bring forward innovative and effective ideas.

By integrating both personal development through ***Leading Self*** and organizational influence skills through ***Leading Teams***, Fearless Leadership creates extraordinary leaders and organizations with increased ability to create and direct change and build extraordinary value.

Integration Model

While it is critical that the most senior leadership lead the way with the Fearless Leadership Development, the principles, behaviors and frameworks for thinking about leadership, strategy and culture work best when they are embraced by everyone in an organization. We recommend that Fearless Leadership be implemented in all layers of the organization, starting with the most senior leaders.

Senior Leadership: By starting with senior leadership, you set the example that this work is important enough for senior leadership, and therefore important enough for everyone else in the organization. Senior leaders learn or refresh themselves of the core concepts and vocabulary and can be capable coaches for their direct reports or anyone else in the organization. As they have developed these skills, attitudes and behaviors themselves, senior leaders can reinforce core concepts, add texture from their own experience, and ask clear questions about how these tools are being used by their direct reports and others in the organization. If senior leadership starts referring to a concept for managing conflict, the next layer or two of leadership will want to know what that is and how to use it. Culture and leadership concepts are contagious – but generally from the top down.

Directors/Management: Once senior leadership is deep in the program and beginning to implement these concepts in their vocabulary and actions, Fearless Leadership can be rolled out to the next level of management. We have seen this begin to create organizational momentum when operating unit leaders begin to make shifts in their leadership and expectations. Middle management is often called the “frozen layer” in many organizations, and getting these leaders, down to the first-line manager, engaged in leadership, strategy and culture will define whether or not Fearless Leadership is ultimately implemented in the culture of your organization. Most of your employees report to one of these leaders, and their experience of leadership and your corporate culture is most directly driven by how they experience the leadership skills of their direct supervisor. People leave or stay due to their relationship with their manager, not because of the company overall. By giving these middle layers of management the tools to lead more effectively, and to hold them accountable for doing so, you are improving the leadership capabilities of everyone they touch.

We invest more in teaching the coaching model for managers at this level than at any other, as these skills help them inspire others to lead, problem-solve and think for themselves and prepares individual contributors to lead as well. With a strong example of leadership and coaching from this layer, the capacity, engagement, and performance of all employees increases.

All Leaders: Finally, we believe that the key concepts of Fearless Leadership are valuable at every level of the organization, and that the true power of the leader-leader model resides in leveraging the talents, drive and potential of every employee. We have seen individual contributors embrace these principles to create significant change at the group, project team or individual level, with the support of their management. Clients have rolled out these principles in different ways: one function or team at a time; to target specific challenges or opportunities; and through customized programs ranging from regular lunch and learn opportunities to annual all-hands retreats and select “Leadership Institute” programs for employees. We understand the need to create a program that creates powerful results and develops relevant and practical leadership skills that drive business results and make core leadership concepts a permanent part of your culture and a source of ongoing competitive advantage.

Transcend Approach

At Transcend, we view individuals as highly competent and capable of directing and achieving their own growth. The role of the coach, consultant or facilitator is to draw out the best in each person through joint inquiry, introduction of models, knowledge and tools, and assignments designed to accelerate the acquisition of knowledge and experience to achieve long-term performance improvement.

We are focused on achieving specific business results and a measurable return on investment for the client. Our coaches, facilitators and consultants are experienced in human and organizational development, but also in the fundamentals of business and strategy – making them a unique addition to your team focused on your key issues and how Fearless Leadership creates a direct and positive impact on critical business measures.

We believe executives and leaders at all levels benefit tremendously from taking time for self-reflection and that development engagement provides a structured opportunity for them to work on the important but not urgent task of becoming better leaders - more capable of generating strategic growth for their organizations.

We believe that organizations creating sustainable value in the marketplace today combine strong leadership skills in all positions, integrated strategic thinking every day, and a culture that encourages growth, learning and collaboration. We have three streams of development: Fearless Leadership, Integrated Strategy and Values-Based Culture to support organizations in all three areas.

We leverage the emerging fields of neuroscience, positive psychology and behavioral economics to encourage clients to recognize their existing talents and innate strengths, to proactively develop habits, attitudes and behaviors that benefit both the individual and the organization, to leverage human behavior and to develop the skills that drive long-term growth.



Fearless Results

The first step in creating your Fearless Organization is to get clear on what big results you are looking for in your organization. What challenges are you facing? How is your industry, technology, competition or marketplace shifting? What capabilities will you need in your organization to survive, grow and thrive? In other words, what difference would Fearless Leadership make in the success of your organization?

Some of the results others experience include:

- Increased Sales
- Better Customer Service
- Faster Time to Market
- Lower Turnover
- Higher Revenue per Employee
- Higher Productivity
- Greater Innovation
- Increase Success of New Initiatives
- Higher Market Share
- Clearer Product Roadmaps
- Reduced Costs
- More Robust Talent Pipelines

How would your organization be different with Fearless Leadership in place? What results would make it worthwhile for you to implement Fearless Leadership practices? And if you delay or decide to wait, what will have changed in a year?

Although Fearless Leadership is most often the starting point for the Fearless Organization, perhaps your organization needs elements of Integrated Strategy or a Values-Based Culture first, or in parallel with Fearless Leadership. We can help you decide by using our Fearless Organization diagnostic, or in a facilitated discovery session with your senior leadership team.

About Transcend

We founded Transcend in 2002 and now serve clients across the world in responding effectively to a changing environment – individually, in teams and entire organizations. We have a broad network of coaches, consultants and facilitators to create flexible teams tailored to the scope and goals of your project and to bring the right tools to bear on your organizational challenges and create sustainable results.

Our Core Belief:

We believe that change is an ongoing process, not a one-time intervention, and that today's organizations are confronted with constant change in the marketplace. These organizations and their leaders desire to develop a proactive rather than reactive approach and are looking for new ways of approaching leadership, business and their organizations to achieve long-term results.

Therefore we must deliver real-world solutions based on the best research and tools for leadership, change management and organizational excellence through deep trust-based relationships to develop and introduce the appropriate concepts, processes and skills at the right moment, and ensure they are sustained over time

What makes us unique:

- We bring real **hands-on experience in running businesses**, marketing and sales teams and strategy consulting
- We are **ruthlessly results-oriented** and work to embed learning and change for long-term results rather than “nice” one-time events.
- We have been in the shoes of the business leader and **understand the unique challenges** and pressures on them
- We bring **industry experiences** in hi tech, bio tech, consumer goods, manufacturing, services and software
- We have a **portfolio of satisfied customers** who view us as trusted advisors and their “go-to” team for key business challenges
- We **work easily with C-suite through line managers** to create meaningful behavioral and process change and business impact
- We **shoot straight and can deliver the uncomfortable truth** when necessary to accelerate positive change
- As long-time change agents, **we enjoy the process of change and can help support it** in teams and organizations where change is needed but uncomfortable for the persons

Recent Transcend clients include: *Aviagen, Aegis, Keystone Foods, Leverage, UAB, UAB Medical School, Huntsville Utilities, i3, General Dynamics, Conversant Biologics, MTSU, Endo Pharmaceuticals/Qualitest, Kaya Corporation, Hudson-Alpha Institute for Biotechnology, CFD Research Corporation, Umicore and many others.*

Resources:

- Transcend blog: www.leadfearlessly.com/categories/blog,
- [Our monthly newsletter](#) (includes a download of our Leadership Library recommendations)
- Article recommendations on our twitter feed: <https://twitter.com/leadfearlessly> or @leadfearlessly.