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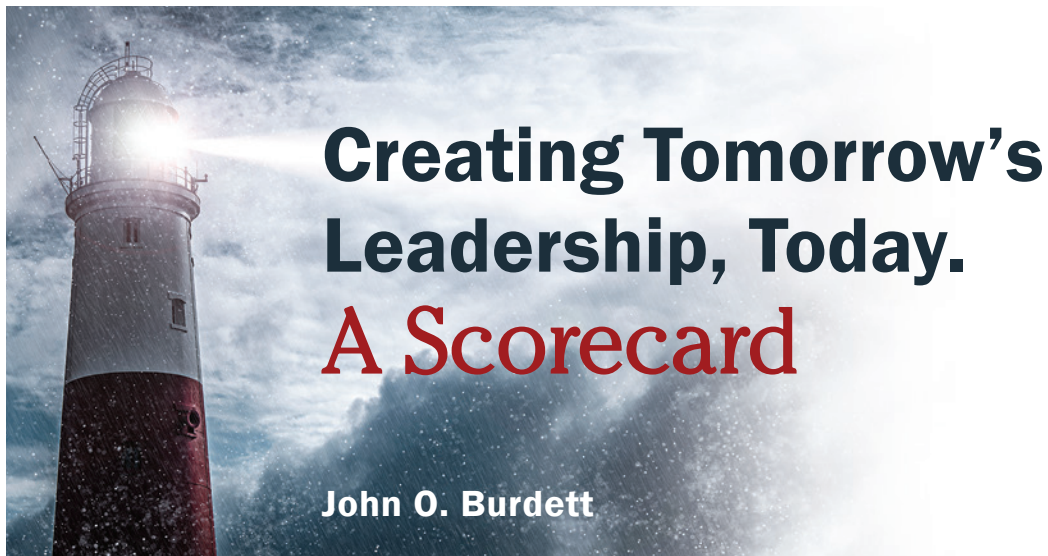
YOUR WORLD PARTNER IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Creating Tomorrow's Leadership, Today.

A Scorecard

John O. Burdett





“Now is the winter of our discontent.”

When Shakespeare wrote the opening lines of *Richard III* little did he know that he was scripting the perfect anthem for our times. A worldwide pandemic reinvented the workplace; in a 12-month timespan in the US, 49 million employees quit their jobs; global supply chains were disrupted (probably permanently); Vladimir Putin has sought to turn the clock back 75 years; the Cold War got colder; the planet got warmer; internet-based manipulation and mental health issues became more common; access to fresh water became scarcer; globalisation took a major step backwards; and authoritarian leaders took a step forward.

In the meantime, the 4th industrial revolution didn't go away, rampant railway unions somehow overlooked the term “driverless trains” and COVID merely “masked” the reality that the mythology that framed the 20th century organization will no longer get us to where we need to be. In place of *control*, an organization that was *built to last* and a focus on *shareholder value*; the organization we need to create will be *agile*, *built to change* and directed towards *stakeholder value*. The resulting focused, flat, fast, flexible and fertile (to new ideas) organization will be, of necessity, a team of teams. And despite the hyperbole, hiring, compensation and performance management – and much else – are still skewed heavily towards the individual. When did you last undertake a serious assessment of how successful your team is – as a team?

Hesitate and you are lost. The time to change is while you are successful. Waiting until you *have* to change is much too late. Meanwhile, the same old conversation produces the same old behaviour. In what ways are you changing the conversation?

In recognising that what got us here won't get us to where we need to be, there is a pressing need to revisit what it means to be a leader. We explore that question in two parts. Part one presents a series of statements that challenge where you are today. Part two provides a simple assessment of: (i) the mindset that currently shapes your team's behaviour; and (ii) the mindset you need moving forward. In turbulent times, it's all about mindset!

It's clearly important to understand where there is work to do. In many senses, however, it's even more important to know where you excel. Affirmation opens the door to inspiration. To lead is to catch people doing it right.



PART ONE

In addition to the presumption of financial success – always an essential gauge of business success – the criteria identified on the following pages can be thought of as a future-oriented “leadership scorecard.”

Go through the ten clusters of leadership capability outlined. Review and reflect on each of the underlying statements. Consider: (1) how important that topic is to your organization’s future success; and (2) your effectiveness (self/team) with regards to that issue.

In that measurement is synonymous with focus, calibrate your response. That is to say, arrive at an overall score for each of the ten clusters. A low score (1-4) indicates that this is a leadership issue that we have largely overlooked but must be addressed. A medium score (5-7) indicates that we often work/think this way but we need to invest more time and effort. A high score (8-10) is indicative of leadership excellence.

A false positive is misleading in the extreme. Be a tough marker. In responding to the statements outlined, move beyond aspirational thinking, stated intent and/or isolated best practice. Focus on what is actually happening, the ongoing conversation and evidence that change/transformation is underway. Actions that truly matter are accompanied by a sense of urgency. No less important, beginnings start with endings. To support your assessment, identify, not only what’s being actioned but what you have deliberately let go of.

Leaders must lead! The three critical questions at the conclusion of Part One will frame the next steps. If you can’t address the issues personally, make your voice heard.

**“Without reflection there is
no learning.”**



1. We manage the business from the outside-in. The evidence?

- i. We are fully cognisant of the emerging social, political, economic and environmental landscape.
- ii. As an organization, we perform ongoing and wide-reaching research into how the marketplace within which we operate is unfolding.
- iii. As a team, we regularly discuss what makes our most successful competitors “successful.”
- iv. As a business, we are highly knowledgeable regarding the emerging technology and, were it successfully implemented, how it would change the way we do business.
- v. We know that to truly take advantage of the next generation of technology means that we will have to dramatically rethink how the business is organized.

Score: _____

2. We recognise that tomorrow will be different. The evidence?

- i. We understand that, essential though it is, in a world subject to unprecedented levels of disruption, our strategy is, at best, a work in progress.
- ii. What takes precedence, what has primacy, what will be around long after our strategy has been shredded will be our culture. We also appreciate that, figuratively, strategy is a bicycle and culture is a bus. The implications? One: when the road is uphill, a bicycle can’t even start to pull the bus. Two: if the bicycle and the bus collide, only one will survive.
- iii. In an environment where agility is a business imperative, the traditional linear strategy represents conceptual handcuffs. In its place we have adopted a series of strategic scenarios.
- iv. Our future direction is shaped by the reality that: (i) who we hire today determines what is possible tomorrow; and (ii) the market for top talent will, in all probability, get even tighter.

Score: _____



3. We work on the assumption that organization culture is a system. The evidence?

- i. We employ a robust and meaningful measure of the culture we have (roots) and the culture we need (wings). We do so because we are fully aware that CEOs who insist on rigorously *measuring* and managing all cultural elements that drive performance more than double the odds that their strategies will be executed. And over the long term, they deliver triple the total return to shareholders that other companies deliver.¹
- ii. In addressing culture, we apply systems thinking. That means embracing not only *all* of the issues that impact/create our culture but striving to recognise how everything is connected to everything else. Systems thinking means that we avoid the quick fix. Addressing only aspects of culture – organization values or organization design, for example – is likely to lead to unintended consequences. A holistic mindset also pushes us to be careful in the use of language. Reference to “organization structure,” by way of example, immediately traps you into assumptions around hierarchy. Conversely, the term “performance platform” is much more in keeping with the “self-managed” organization we need.
- iii. Considering the emerging business and market climate, the four dominant pillars of culture – purpose, diversity, brand and speed – are appropriately positioned for future success. A compelling purpose gives the talent you need most a reason to stay. Diversity is the hidden handmaiden of innovation. Your brand *is* your culture. And if you are not (at least) as fast as the rest, give up any hope of being among the best.
- iv. We work assiduously on both the interventions that move the culture in a new direction (culture drivers) and those that, if not addressed, hold the culture back (culture anchors). The former includes: strategy, technology, organization design, process, how people learn, psychological safety, team chemistry and the freedom to act. The culture anchors include: mindset, metaphor, story, support from middle management, the history we need to let go of and, of course, myth.
- v. We recognise that power moves into a vacuum. If we are not managing our culture, someone else is – an aggressive union, a predatory supplier or customer and/or other group(s) who, for their own reasons, act in self-interest. Only about one company in five manages its culture.
- vi. We explore the world through metaphor and share our learning through stories. Leaders are storytellers. Leaders who leave a legacy are great storytellers.

1 Carolyn Dewar, Martin Hirt, and Scott Keller. *The Mindsets and Practices of Excellent CEOs* (October 2019).



Those in the organization who hold down a mission-critical role are, likewise, exceptional storytellers.

- vii. Organizations, more often than not, have more than one culture. The ability to move comfortably across different cultures² – both within our own organization and with suppliers/customers – is central to how we define what it means to be a successful leader.
- viii. We are fully aware that, at best, the typical engagement survey addresses no more than 20% of the factors that make up the organization’s culture. Furthermore, to move away from a false positive, we have stopped bundling “highly engaged” and “somewhat engaged” into the same “engaged” metric. Recognising that you can’t be somewhat engaged, we now (as does Gallup) refer to that group as “disengaged.” In that there is a proven link between engagement and retention, making decisions based on false assumptions is no small thing.
- ix. We nurture the grapevine. Our thinking on culture embraces the reality that there are two organization cultures: formal and informal. We also know that if those cultures are in conflict, the organization cannot sustain. To that end, we think deeply and act wisely when utilising the various communication channels that interest, inform and hopefully inspire our workforce. In particular, we acknowledge that if middle management aren’t on board – no one is on board.

Score: _____



² A capability best described as “leadership reach.”



4. We have clear organizational values (guiding principles). The evidence?

- i. If asked, everyone who makes up the ranks of middle management can outline not only what our values are and mean but how they shape day-to-day decision-making.
- ii. We hire and promote with our values in mind.
- iii. We agree enthusiastically with the following: One: our values are actually “values” – not merely good business practice. Two: our values are written as action verbs. Three: at least one of our values is employee-facing. Four: our values both connect with the new workforce and reflect the emerging (hybrid) workplace. Five: “fairness” is evident in both the language used and how our values are applied.
- iv. A deliberate and ongoing emphasis on psychological safety means that behaviour not fully in line with our values is quickly challenged.

Score: _____

5. We have a winning value proposition, a distinct point of difference that is fully aligned with what tomorrow’s clients want to buy and how they want to buy it.

The evidence?

- i. We can clearly identify: (i) the specific aspects of performance where we compete on par with the best of our competitors; and (ii) those areas where we have a distinct competitive advantage.
- ii. In partnering with our customers – rather than merely delivering a product or service – we have the opportunity to clearly identify what their future needs are.
- iii. We recognise that hybrid employment is here to stay. To ensure that we always deliver on our promise to the customer, we: (1) make team chemistry a business priority; (2) introduce technology that enriches connectivity; (3) invest in middle management capability³; and (4) work on creative approaches to collaboration.
- iv. Performance agility means that, as and when warranted, we can fully deliver our value proposition either face to face or from a digital platform.

Score: _____

3 Including sensitivity to mental health issues.



6. We have a meaningful and focused marketing plan. The evidence?

- i. The plan defines our ideal client, utilises a business development funnel and outlines the marketing channels to be employed.
- ii. Those with a business development mandate build customer relationships such that our best customers coach us.
- iii. Our website: (i) is built around the assumption that the current level of visual literacy is unprecedented and that where the site lacks immediate emotional impact few visitors will move beyond the opening screen;⁴ (ii) factors in that story-based referrals are the key to future business; and (iii) builds on the belief that proprietary, leading-edge and interactive thought leadership is why potential customers return.

Score: _____

7. We enjoy customer loyalty. The evidence?

- i. On an annual basis, we have to replace no more than 20% of our customers.
- ii. We work with a highly regarded third party to regularly assess: (i) where we excel in the marketplace; (ii) what we can do better; and (iii) how we compare to the best of the competition.
- iii. Our leadership point of view as it applies to hiring top talent, training, customer responsiveness, collaboration and business development reflects the opportunities that working in virtual space offers.
- iv. Many of the suggestions, ideas and stimulus for innovation originate with our customers.

Score: _____

**“Yesterday, the focus was on super stars.
Of necessity, tomorrow, it will be about super teams.”**

⁴ Where the opening graphic on your website lacks real emotional impact, expect visitors to spend ten seconds or less before they move on.



8. We enjoy employee loyalty. The evidence?

- i. We have a winning employment brand as demonstrated by the fact that we are able to attract the talent we most need.
- ii. Because we understand how to ask them, we know **exactly** why our top talent stay. We are also working hard to do more of it.
- iii. A compelling purpose, a sense of belonging, team chemistry, environmental responsibility, inclusion, matching capability with opportunity and employee choice around working (or not) in a traditional work setting shape our thinking around retention.
- iv. Hoteling and cubical farms are in our past. We are doing everything we can to make the traditional workplace a joyful experience. This embraces human-centric design, greater flexibility overall, healthy food, areas designed for collaboration, a balance between open space and areas set aside for focused work and, where appropriate, a hub and spoke⁵ approach. The overall theme? Lower density, no gimmicks and space where people enjoy being together.
- v. We regularly take time out as a team to: (i) measure team effectiveness; (ii) review issues that will take the team to the next level; and (iii) act in line with the recommendations made. To complement and support such regular assessment, we conclude important meetings with a review of the team's behaviour – four to six, specific, pre-agreed, success criteria that define what it means to work together as a team.⁶
- vi. We emphasise “leadership balance” in everything we do. Leadership balance, in turn, means that a successful leader *employs* the head (makes a successful tomorrow come alive in the room, today); *empowers* the hand (agility, resilience, delivers results); *engages* the heart (works for and develops the team); and *enriches* the spirit (empathy, humility and willing to be vulnerable). A leader whose only real contribution is defined by results will no longer be tolerated. The head and hand leadership that was much in evidence prior to COVID is now clearly in our rear-view mirror.
- vii. Engaging the heart and enriching the spirit doesn't eschew the need for leaders, when required, to be tough minded. We never duck the tough conversation.

Score: _____

5 To cut down the energy draining and expensive commute, the company operates a centralised main office (hub) with more localised satellite offices (spokes).

6 When someone new joins the team you have, in essence, created a new team. That is an apt time to review the agreed “team” success criteria.



9. We act on the belief that you can't grow the business unless you grow the people in the business. The evidence?

- i. The first step in addressing retention is to hire the right people. All those who make hire decisions are, as a result of the exemplary and up-to-date training provided, fully equipped to deliver interviews that have a proven, high predictability of success. To bring rigour to the talent acquisition process overall, we demand fit in four key areas: (i) culture; (ii) performance; (iii) leadership; and (iv) team. We also know that those who don't land, won't stay. To that end, we have an array of tools, processes, assessments, access to best practice and team support that allows those moving into a leadership role to, for the most part, integrate themselves. Leaders must lead!
- ii. Top leaders, without exception, display coaching mastery. The coaching being described embraces both: (i) performance and (ii) strategic coaching. The former refers to enhanced performance and ongoing development within the role as it currently is (content). The latter focuses on redefining both the role and the behaviour needed within that role such that the leader's performance is aligned with the business model and organization culture needed to drive strategic success (context). Strategic coaching – a conversation that explores success three to five years out – is especially valuable for members of the C-suite.
- iii. Regardless of the level, we have a specific and active development plan for each team member. The plan looks at not only equipping talent for a very different tomorrow but at surfacing, reinforcing and enabling an individual's personal purpose. Beyond that, team members regularly coach each other.
- iv. Our succession process measures capability against: (i) the culture we need; (ii) tomorrow's performance demands; (iii) future role-specific leadership competencies; and (iv) the emerging team ethos required. Our approach to succession also fast-tracks women, minorities and candidates who, in the past, have been overlooked or disadvantaged.
- v. We invest with the belief that the only truly (sustainable) competitive advantage is how quickly those in mission-critical roles adapt and learn.

Score: _____

“Leaders are readers.”



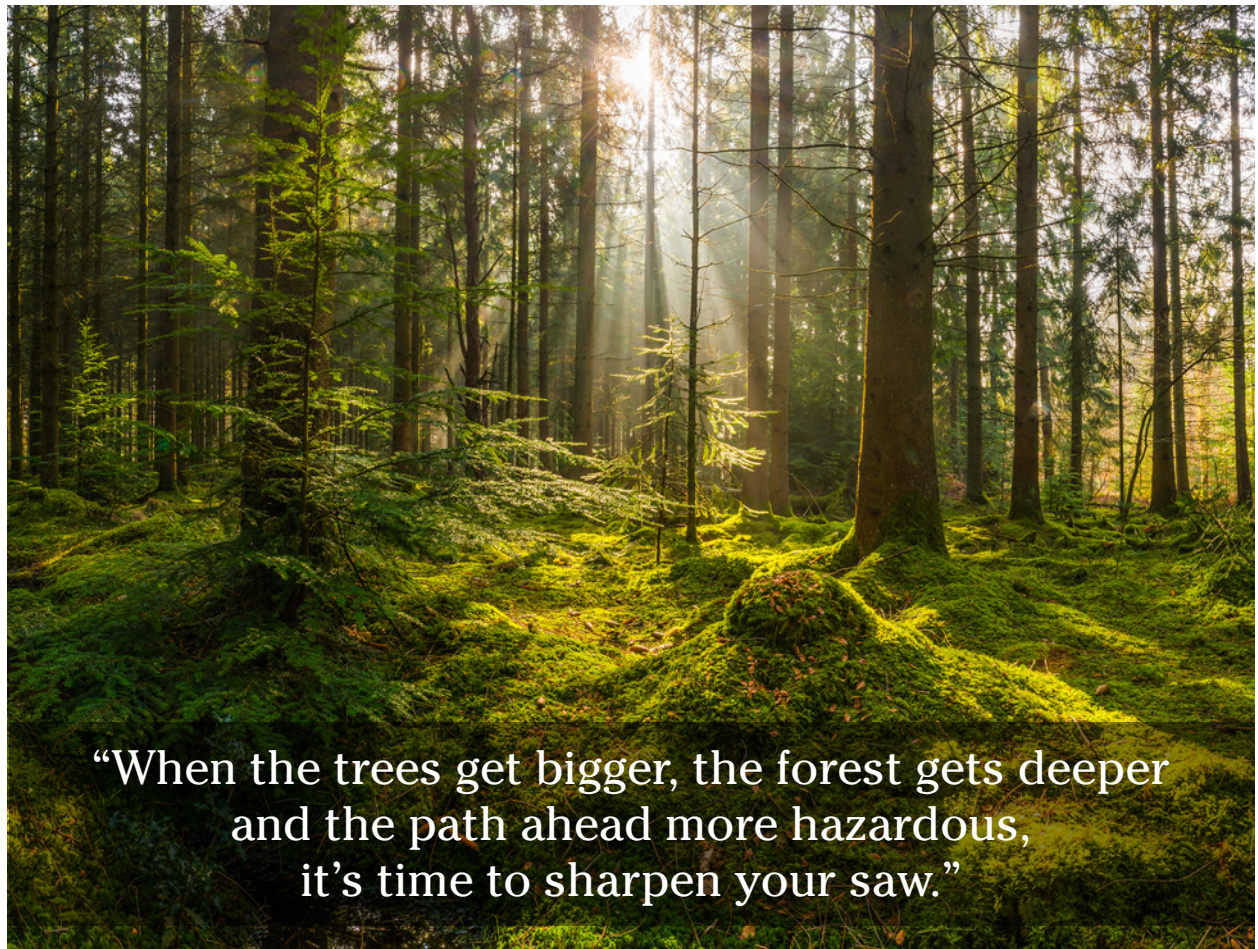
10. We recognise that to succeed in the international marketplace no one business can operate independently of the community that they are a part of. The evidence?

- i. We are totally committed to sustainability, fairness in hiring practices and reaching out to those who society has left behind. Beyond that, we don't just talk a good game, we **ACT**: **A**wareness, **C**ommitment, **T**rust building
- ii. When looking for scarce talent, we take advantage of the "work from anywhere" business culture we have now entered.
- iii. The board, by way of experience and expertise, is a full partner in the strategic challenges the organization faces. In addition to the more traditional capability – e.g., finance, legal, operations – the board bring, as needed, culture savvy, emerging technology awareness, sustainability know-how, the work demands and buying patterns of different generations and sector-related thought leadership to the table. To foster the above, the board selection process is as rigorous as were we hiring a new member of the top team.

Score: _____

Reviewing the scoring. In that you can't do everything at once:

- (1)** What is the one thing that, were you (and your team) to work on it now, would make the greatest difference?
- (2)** If left unaddressed, what leadership behaviour would have the most harmful impact on the firm's long-term competitiveness?
- (3)** Beyond your current approach – were you to truly reach a level of excellence, what leadership behaviour would have the most positive impact on your (your team's) reputation within the organization?



“When the trees get bigger, the forest gets deeper
and the path ahead more hazardous,
it’s time to sharpen your saw.”

“Organizations don’t have a culture;
they are their culture.”

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History reveals that society was changed out of all recognition by: (1) the age of steam (IR1); (2) the gasoline engine/assembly line (IR2); and (3) the microchip (IR3). We are on the leading edge of a fourth societal transformation: advanced computing, AI, and the climate crisis (IR4). An emerging reality that was disrupted by COVID. Indeed, the fallout from COVID has redefined the workplace; a change no less significant than the introduction of the typewriter. When the reframed assumptions that define "work" are added to the imperative that organizational agility represents, it's time to revisit/reinvent what it means to be a leader.



Add your scores from each of the leadership capability clusters (1-10) and apply to the above. Circle the appropriate number (1-90). "Reviewing the scoring" questions on page 11 will help you establish priorities. Keep in mind, however, that everything is connected to everything else.

Move to Part Two: changing mindset.



PART TWO

Reworking the content makes us better at what we have always done. To change the game, we have to reformat the context. Meanwhile, our mindset determines not only what is possible but, more importantly, what we *believe* is possible.

As we move into an era of organizational life where focused, flat, fast, flexible, fertile and the organization as a team of teams becomes the new reality, our mindset dictates whether we will succeed or not.

Go through the simple assessment that follows. What state of mind shaped how you and your team made decisions today? Go through the assessment a second time (ideally with your team) and reflect on the question, “To build a stronger and more agile business in the future, what collective mindset must we adopt?”

As we become more mature as a leader our behaviour evolves. For example, a leader is unlikely to think and act as a master coach unless they have first developed a compelling purpose for the team and, no less important, brought the organization’s values to life. In a similar vein, learning faster than the competition, draws, in no small measure, on mastery in coaching.

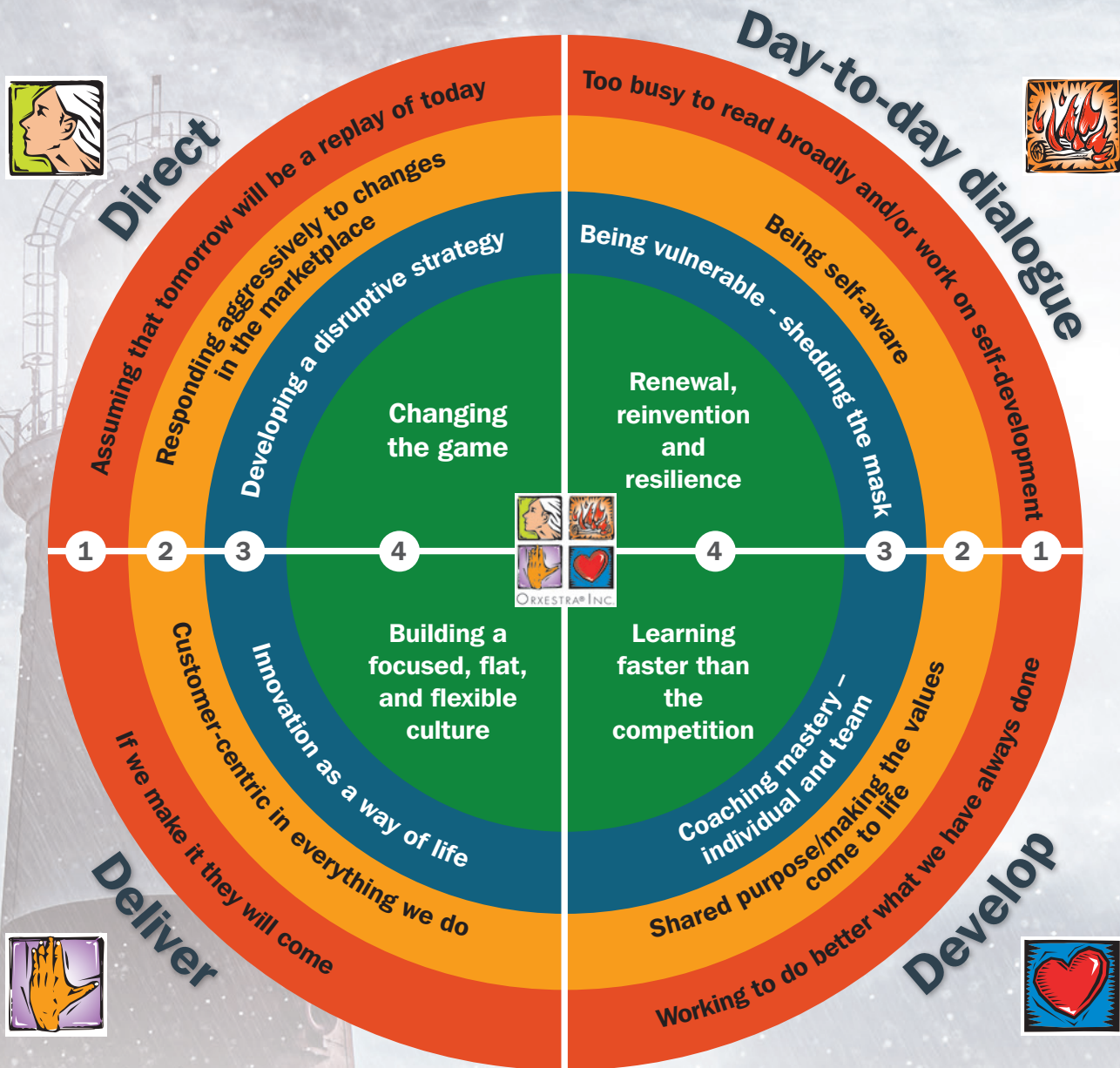
In turbulent times, it’s all about mindset!

John O. Burdett



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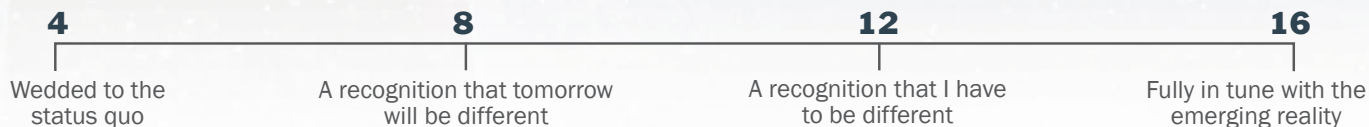
A Scorecard



Mindset: choose the one statement in each of the four domains of leadership that best describes where you are today. **Scoring:**

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TOTAL:



Creating Tomorrow's Leadership, Today.

A Scorecard

	Today/Tomorrow			
Direct (Head)	Assuming tomorrow will be a replay of today <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Responding aggressively to changes in the marketplace <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing a disruptive strategy <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Changing the game <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver (Hand)	If we make it they will come <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Customer-centric in everything we do <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation as a way of life <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Building a fast, focused, flat and flexible culture <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Develop (Heart)	Working to do better what we have always done <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Shared purpose/ making the values come to life <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Coaching mastery – team and individual <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning faster than the competition <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Day-to-day dialogue (Spirit)	Too busy to read broadly and/ or work on self-development <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Building self-awareness <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Being vulnerable – shedding the mask <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal, reinvention and resilience <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

MINDSET SHIFT DEMANDED

Step one: from previous page, capture the dominant mindset today. Mark with an (X).

Step two: from the previous page, identify the mindset demanded. Mark with a (✓).

Any conversation around mindset should be framed by a recognition of: (i) ongoing market uncertainty; (ii) the organization's emerging business model; (iii) the challenge of attracting and retaining top talent; (iv) introducing new technology; (v) hybrid employment; and (vi) the organization culture demanded in a very different tomorrow.

The leader's tools in shaping mindset lie within the realm of imagery, metaphor, story, best practice, affirmation, executive (strategic) coaching and personal example. The latter, in particular, is an essential ingredient in changing the way the team thinks and acts. Nothing is more confusing than a leader who says one thing but whose behaviour is non-supportive of what has been said. Finally, keep in mind that unless you change the music, the same old dance will continue.





John O. Burdett

*“If you can’t
clearly
differentiate
yourself from the
competition, fail
now – it will save
time later.”*

– J. O. Burdett

JOHN O. BURDETT has worked in over 40 countries as an executive and as a consultant for businesses that are household names. He continues to work on leadership development and organization culture for some of the world’s largest corporations. In 2019, his work with ABB’s top 240 executives received a major international award for the most innovative leadership development initiative of that year. His ongoing partnership with TRANSEARCH International means that his proprietary work on talent acquisition, in any one year, successfully supports many hundreds of top leadership appointments on six continents.

He has written extensively on executive coaching and was awarded international coach of the year by the Finnish Institute of International Trade. Business graduates at the University of Texas indicated that his material on coaching was the single most valuable learning source they took away from their undergraduate degree. He has also coached numerous executive teams around

the world in how to coach. He currently coaches a select group of CEOs. Apart from a range of corporate leadership workshops, he has taught at business schools on both sides of the Atlantic. His work on the MBA program at the University of Toronto received a teaching excellence award.

John holds a doctorate in management development and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. In addition to numerous business articles and twice being awarded article of the year by MCB publications, he has published 15 books on leadership, talent management, coaching and organization culture. A number of them bestsellers. His *Leadership Beyond Crisis Series* came out in 2021. More recently, he brought out a totally revised version of his international bestselling book on executive integration: *Without Breaking Stride*.

