7 steps to becoming more adaptable in the face of change

The last few years have seen a tremendous amount of change in how we live, work and play, and it's not about to slow down. Technology and automation, as well as uncertainties in the global economy, are transforming the business environment and what worked yesterday isn't necessarily going to work tomorrow or the day after that. As such, we must all learn to be more adaptability in order to thrive in the face of change.

We all have to weather challenges in life, and whilst being adaptable won't stop these sorts of things from happening, it does improve how you respond when times get tough. As an employee, adaptability is a highly valuable skill which shows your employers that you can adjust to new environments, are open to new ideas and are willing to learn new things. For employers, having a highly adaptable workforce and leadership is what allows a business to adapt to disruption, respond to new trends, and overcome challenges – all qualities that you need to win in the competitive environment of the modern business world.

There are many practical things you can do to build a culture of adaptability in your organisation and inspire people to adopt a more flexible mindset at work.

With that in mind, here are 7 ways to become more adaptable as a business leader:

1. Unlearn the old ways. Empowering your team to achieve objectives on their own terms is a great way to encourage adaptability. It fosters creative thinking and inspires people to let go of "old ways" and try new things without fear of failure. Ensuring that your team are clear on the organisation's objectives and values enables them to identify their own best way to contribute

2. Do your research. Staying ahead of change involves knowing what's coming down the line, which is where the power of information and research can truly help. Knowing what's happening with the latest trends in your industry will help you stay open to new ideas and uncover exciting new ways of doing things. You can do this through industry magazines, podcasts, audiobooks, YouTube videos, networking events, conferences, or whatever works for you.

3. Ask plenty of "what if" questions. Backed by your research, take the time to consider how any potential changes will affect your business and team by asking 'what if'. For example, "What if my customer base changes to Y?". Understanding these situations can help you prepare your mindset for change as well as put into place actions for how to positively navigate any new opportunities.

4. Step outside your comfort zone. Challenging yourself to leave your comfort zone can help you learn how to cope in unfamiliar situations. If you'd normally avoid doing something like attending a networking event or pitching an idea in a senior meeting, push yourself to give it a go. Saying yes to new things will help you move forward which, in turn, enables you to become more comfortable when faced with change.

5. Learn from others. Some people are more comfortable with change than others, so take inspiration and learn from those who routinely demonstrate adaptability in their lives. Look at what strategies and language they use which could work in your business and, if you can, ask them for tips on how they cope with change.

6. Try to fail, but don't fail to try. Failure shouldn't be seen as a negative result or something to be punished. Rather, think of every miss as an opportunity to learn and grow from. Your new idea might not work, and that's okay. Figure out why it didn't hit the mark this time, and adapt some elements when you try again. It's all about improvement, so don't give up.

7. Be optimistic. On a similar note, finding the positives amidst change can aid how you adapt to a challenging situation. In my experience, adaptable people have the mental resilience and the practical ability to find satisfaction even in unpredictable circumstances. Rather than focus on the things that haven't worked out, try to focus on what did go well. Even small steps like changing your language – for example, calling an

"obstacle" an "opportunity" – can help reframe these situations and give you a more flexible outlook when faced with challenges.

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