

The 2020 Visionary Cube Revealed

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# ALL ABOARD THE **BRAIN** TRAIN



49 **Futuristic Positive Leadership Skills** for 2020

Niall Kennedy



# **ALL ABOARD THE BRAIN TRAIN**

**49 Futuristic Positive  
Leadership Capabilities for 2020**



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*All Aboard the Brain Train: 49 Futuristic Positive Leadership Capabilities for 2020*  
Niall Kennedy

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## About the Author

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Niall Kennedy has been designing leadership capabilities for the past 13 years. Assisting organisations in the discovery of leadership gaps is very exhilarating. As Niall observes, many leaders work on the same old leadership skills over and over again. They are often unaware of the breadth of critical leadership skills. They don't know what they don't know and this limits their propensity to grow as leaders.

Some of the organisations that Niall designs leadership capabilities for include Boeing, Department of Defence, City of Boroondara, BHP Billiton, AGL, Toll, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Transport, Legal Aid, Amcor, CSL, BNP Paribas, Crown Casino, Hastings Deering, Lander & Rogers, OneSteel, Thales, TRUenergy and WorkCover.

Born in Ireland, Niall has a Masters of Marketing Degree from Monash University, Melbourne and has lived in Australia for the past 16 years after studying leadership styles in the USA, UK and the Netherlands.



## **Dedication**

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*To my family whom the angels sent.*

*I'm a firm believer that I would have achieved very little in my life without being touched by such wonderful people. Thank you so much to my wonderful family for your love and generosity of spirit.*

*This book is dedicated to my parents Patrick and Catherine, and to Melinda, David, Deborah, Avril, Sifat, Chris, Michelle, Celia, Dennis, Kylie, Marie, Kris, Lori, Saoirse, Jodie, Oscar and Pat.*

*This book will hopefully give you the reader some insights and tips on how to lead and embed a positive culture.*





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## **Foreword**

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At the onset of globalisation, many Western countries panicked at the thought of competing with the Asian juggernauts. Academics were given the task of figuring out how Western countries would be impacted. The results were shocking. Over and over again the leadership styles of Western countries were identified as substandard.

Governments threw zillions of dollars into leadership training. Useless “leadership training organisations” sprung up overnight and made truckloads of dollars training people in leadership skills.

Now the Western world is awash with perceived leadership skills. But it’s leadership thinking, visionary thinking and positive thinking that is required. This book is full of self-assessments. It is designed to help you surface your individual leadership needs.

The future of the world will be dramatically impacted by the actions of leaders.

# The 2020 Visionary Cube

Active Listening & Questioning Techniques	Flexible & Adaptable Management Styles	Getting Discretionary Effort	Positive Supply Chain Relationships	Aiming Higher & Challenging Status Quo	Ambiguity & Contrast	Setting Positive Customer & Client Experiences
Identifying Workplace Assumptions & Alternatives	Systems Thinking	Behavioural Interviewing Styles	Breaking Down Communication Silos	Change Management	Collaboration Skills	Marketing Skills
Cultural Awareness Skills	Delegation	Employee Autonomy & Accountability	Negotiation Skills	Advanced Communication Skills	Influencing & Persuasion Techniques	Keeping your People in the Picture
Managing Meetings	Career Management	Managing Your Vision & Mission	Energy Maintenance	Motivation Skills	Meeting Client/ Customer Expectations	Financial Acumen
Networking	Performance Management	Advanced Writing Skills	Time Management & Work/Life Balance	Presentation Skills	Preparedness Planning	Process Improvement
Retaining & Luring Talent	Assertiveness Skills	Workplace Resilience	Strategic Thinking & Planning	Conflict Resolution Skills	Positive Workplace Culture	Trust Building & Integrity
Speed Reading	Workplace Patience & Tolerance	Values Congruence Leadership	Results Orientation	Political Astuteness	Team Based Leadership	Authentic Leadership

To figure out the skills you'll need in the future, our research team asked current leaders to predict leadership gaps for the future. We were amazed with the response. It's hard to believe the amount of senior managers and leaders who have been willing to help out and discuss critical leadership capabilities with our researchers. In the past three years we have met 1400 leaders from the top private and public organisations to discuss real and perceived capability gaps. The 2020 Visionary Cube is the combined findings from these meetings.

## **How to Use This Book**

The 2020 Visionary Cube is a 7 x 7 matrix which is divided into three groups.

- Core Leadership Capabilities
- Capability Extenders
- Outliers

Your leadership career should have started by fine-tuning and becoming an expert at the capabilities in the middle of the cube. When you've got the core capabilities well and truly under your belt, you then need to push outwards. You've got plenty of time between now and the year 2020 to be adept at every capability in the 2020 Visionary Cube.

## **Core Leadership Capabilities**

The green group in the centre is the group of “core leadership capabilities”. Most readers of this book will have already attended core leadership training courses. Please note that I did not suggest that you would have mastered the capability, merely that you would have most likely received core leadership skills training. For example everyone knows someone who has been to umpteen time management courses but who still has a messy desk and always reacts to events in crisis management mode. Please don’t make the mistake of seeing leadership as a tick box list of courses to attend. You need to master each capability and embed key skills into your daily habits.

For your convenience every capability identified has a self assessment test. You can self examine yourself (and be truthful) to see if you have a strong or weak grasp of each capability.

## **Capability Extenders**

Outside the core group you’ll see the blue group which are the capability extenders. These capability extenders assist leaders like you to engage your people to want to achieve specific objectives. Since you are reading this book, you are likely to have developed some of these extending skills and some will be alien to you.

As you’ll see leadership extends far beyond these skill extenders. It’s very important that you have a very strong connection with these skills. These extenders will help you determine the direction that you are taking. If you don’t clearly know the direction you want to take, then you can’t expect people to follow you.

## Outliers

The outliers are the red group of capabilities along the perimeter of the Visionary Cube.

These are the capabilities that you would be least aware of. You might even think we are pulling your leg as some of these capabilities will be completely outside your leadership perspectives. Please bear in mind that these are the capabilities that today's top leaders predict will give you a competitive advantage in the market. Remember the market in 2020 is predicted to be saturated with highly qualified leaders. By 2020, developed countries will be aggressively attracting the world's best leaders, so as a leader you're not only competing domestically. Let's look at one of the capabilities identified as an outlier, "Speed Reading". Many leaders complain today that they read too much but most are unaware that a skill like speed reading exists.

In essence leaders don't know the leadership skills that they don't know about. So get prepared to jump on the Brain Train and push your leadership skills right to the edge of this cube. You'll be amazed the difference these skills will make to your leadership career.





## **9 Core Leadership Capabilities**

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- Managing your Vision & Mission
- Negotiation Skills
- Advanced Communication Skills
- Employee Autonomy & Accountability
- Energy Maintenance
- Motivation Skills
- Advanced Writing Skills
- Time Management & Work/Life Balance
- Presentation Skills



# 1. Managing your Vision & Mission

**A**re your people aligned with your organisation's directions and objectives? Do your people truly understand the reason your organisation exists? Here's an interesting exercise to try at your next staff meeting.

## **Exercise 1**

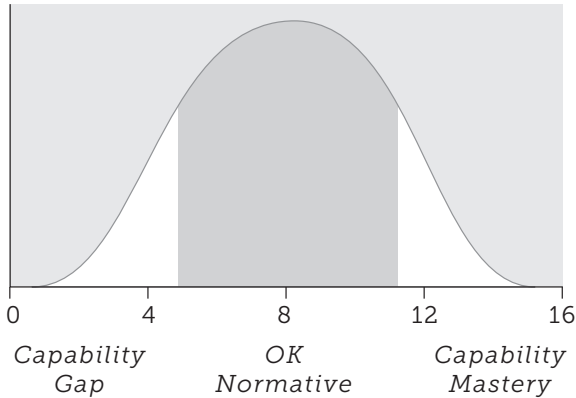
Ask everybody in the room to close their eyes. Now ask everyone to straighten their arm in the direction of West. When everyone is pointing, ask your people to open their eyes. Let them see for themselves arms pointing in every direction. Now let your people know exactly the same result occurs when there is no common mission, vision and *raison d'être* for an organisation with everyone counter pulling in different directions.

## **Test Your Skills**

Simply answer YES to the following statements that you completely agree with.

1. I ask staff for feedback about our mission and vision statements.
2. I test the motivational power of our mission and vision statements.
3. I identify gaps between organisational direction and staff duties.
4. I decide if our mission and vision should have an internal or external orientation.
5. I build a story around why our organisation exists.
6. I build a strong strategic framework.
7. I understand how to position our mission and vision.
8. I use fresh and exciting vocabulary instead of the same old claptrap.
9. I use case studies to build longevity into our mission and vision statements.
10. I use proven tools to test congruence.
11. I break down organisational communication silos.
12. I keep staff excited with measurement and motivation.
13. I communicate objectives clearly.
14. I use laddering techniques to understand critical parameters.
15. I drill the objectives through organisational layers.
16. I promote all activities that tie into achievement of organisational objectives.

Add the amount of times you answered YES and see how you fared with this capability in the following graph:



### Signs of Duress

- Uncertainty about objectives
- Crisis management approach (putting out fires)
- Missed targets and opportunities
- Confusion
- Low sense of achievement

### WORKPLACE STORY

Once upon a time, Jack enjoyed his role as Local Laws Manager. It was indeed a tough job and he often met angry motorists from the community. Sometimes they were furious about a parking ticket, however, Jack's CEO explained that the local laws and parking tickets helped the council manage the limited parking

spaces within the community. Part of the mission of the council was to deliver excellent customer service to the community. If the Parking Officers did not do their job then people would have less valuable space for the day and the local traders would lose business. Although it was a very tough job, Jack and his team were supported by a strong mission and vision which helped them administer the unpleasant parts of their job.

And they all lived happily ever after.

## **5 Tips to Nurture this Capability**

1. Refer staff to your mission and vision
2. Be motivational
3. Reinforce objectives when an opportunity arises
4. Walk the talk
5. Don't overly focus on short term outcomes

## **Mastering this Capability — What Can You Do?**

Here are some options:

- One-on-one coaching
- Book a group training course. A program outline is available from [www.preftrain.com.au](http://www.preftrain.com.au) and get an instant online quote too
- Read “Giuliani Leadership” by Rudy Giuliani

## 2. Negotiation Skills

**T**hink of all the unnecessary concessions that your people give away. The cost of the concession comes straight off the bottom line. In today's competitive world it's lunacy not to train your people to negotiate better outcomes.

Negotiating better outcomes is a relatively easy skill to master. It is also very important to learn about the dirty tricks that people use in negotiations and how to keep them off the table.

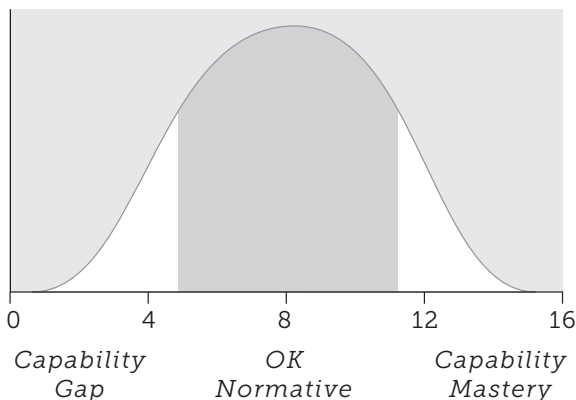
### **Test Your Skills**

Simply answer YES to the following statements that you completely agree with.

1. I believe everything is negotiable all the time.
2. I plan and have a clear strategy before going into a negotiation.
3. I know my BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement).
4. I separate people from the problem.
5. I look for multiple solutions.
6. I always aim at achieving a win/win outcome.

7. I can adjust my negotiation plan based on unanticipated moves by the other party.
8. I communicate carefully and effectively.
9. I use active listening and questioning skills.
10. I ensure that my negotiation decision is based on results not emotions or pressure.
11. I am aware of both mine and the other party's personality style.
12. I can deal with difficult people effectively.
13. I am aware of the dirty tricks and gambits that are often used in negotiations.
14. I know exactly when and how to close a negotiation.
15. I always prepare a closing checklist.
16. I never completely damage the relationship with the other party.

Add the amount of times you answered YES and see how you fared with this capability in the following graph:





## Signs of Duress

- Feeling uncomfortable in the negotiation process
- Feeling that you've done the deal but won with fewer concessions
- Loss of sleep thinking about the negotiation
- Not allowing the other side to air their perspective
- Being inflexible

## WORKPLACE STORY

Once upon a time, a sign manufacturer put all its senior sales people through a five day course on negotiation. The spend was \$340,000. Well the sales team knew the subject inside out. There were a few more people that wanted to do negotiation skills but the company did not allocate funds and eventually two years later agreed to run a two hour lunch-time session for anyone else who wanted to attend.

During an audit the company found that the sales people negotiated concessions of \$85,000 the first year and about \$60,000 the next year. However all the people that attended the lunch-time session saved \$190,000 in the first three months. The company had forgotten to train the internal people that were responsible for buying their stationery. Would you believe they saved \$14,000, which would not have happened if Marie, the Admin Officer didn't learn to ask "Can you give me your best price?"

And everyone lived happily ever after.

## **5 Tips to Nurture this Capability**

1. Be aware that everything is negotiable
2. Be aware of how people place price anchors to change your price perception
3. Practice active listening and questioning techniques
4. Examine win/win outcomes which are critically important
5. Attend a negotiation skills course

## **Mastering this Capability – What Can You Do?**

Here are some options:

- One-on-one coaching
- Book a group training course. A program outline is available from [www.preftrain.com.au](http://www.preftrain.com.au) and get an instant online quote too
- Read “Getting to Yes” by Roger Fisher & William Ury

### 3. Advanced Communication Skills

**A**dvanced communication skills help leaders to embed a message across the organisation. The process of communication can only be successful when both the sender and receiver perceive the message in the same way. Many professionals struggle to communicate their ideas and thoughts effectively both in verbal and written format. Lack of clear communication can cause mistrust and misunderstandings in the organisation. In order to be effective in the workplace, it is essential to clearly and effectively communicate all messages.

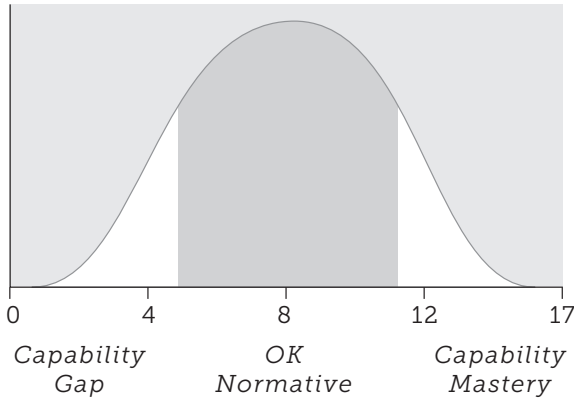
#### **Test Your Skills**

Simply answer YES to the following statements that you completely agree with.

1. I explain my ideas and thoughts clearly.
2. I understand what other people are saying.
3. I am interested in what other people say.
4. I can easily see things from someone else's perspective.
5. I focus on the issue at hand not on the person.

6. I listen more than I talk during a conversation.
7. I believe that most people understand what I am trying to communicate.
8. I always ask my listeners if they are following my line of thought.
9. I always ask for clarification and explanation when I don't understand something.
10. I never interrupt someone when he/she is saying something.
11. I never jump to conclusions.
12. I never raise my voice during a conversation.
13. I always try to put myself in the other person's shoes when communicating with them.
14. I can resolve problems without losing control of my emotions.
15. I can easily express my feelings and opinions even when others don't share them.
16. I am aware of my listener's expressions and emotional reactions.
17. I admit and apologise for my mistakes and take criticism positively.

Add the amount of times you answered YES and see how you fared with this capability in the following graph:



## Signs of Duress

- Environment of misfires and miscommunications
- Reporting issues
- Team confusion
- Costly project mistakes
- Too much talking and not enough listening

## WORKPLACE STORY

Once upon a time, Pat was in a specialist role and he needed to give very clear instructions. If his project team did exactly as Pat told them, then the project would be completed on time and on budget. Pat did not tailor any messages to the preferred listening styles of his team members. Instead Pat used a one size fits all communication approach. He did not understand that communication needed to be tailored to be effective. Pat's projects were often delayed and his team often completed the wrong tasks and Pat gave very little feedback. An independent auditor's report found that 90%

of the project's mistakes and mishaps were as a direct result of a communication breakdown between Pat and his team.

No fairytale ending here.

## **5 Tips to Nurture this Capability**

1. Learn NLP communication techniques
2. Reframe obstacles and hurdles
3. Practice active listening
4. Paraphrase to structure understanding
5. Break down communication silos

## **Mastering this Capability – What Can You Do?**

Here are some options:

- One-on-one coaching
- Book a group training course. A program outline is available from [www.pretrain.com.au](http://www.pretrain.com.au) and get an instant online quote too
- Read “Unlimited Power” by Anthony Robbins

## 4. Employee Autonomy & Accountability

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Imagine if your employees were all problem solvers. Then problems could be fixed in their infancy stage. It would be even better if all your employees were highly motivated and everyone was accountable. Consider an environment where team members respond proactively to change and are flexible and adaptable in their responses to change.

Contrast this with organisations where employees are disempowered. Problems are hidden, because management punish those who deliver bad news and everyone has a “saving face” attitude.

### **Test Your Skills**

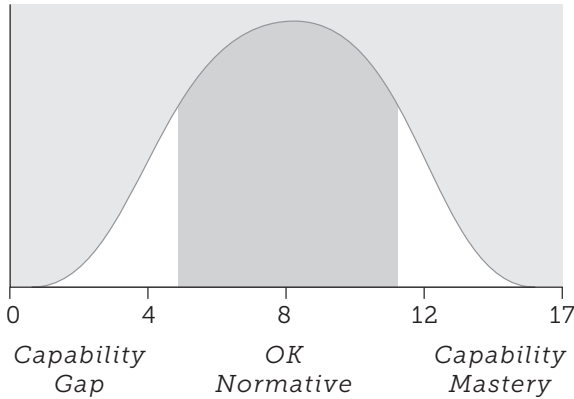
Simply answer YES to the following statements that you completely agree with.

1. Each of my team behaves responsibly.
2. Each of my team acts with a sense of ownership.
3. Each of my team has clearly set performance objectives.
4. Each of my team has appropriate behavioural targets.

5. Each of my team is motivated.
6. Each of my team experiences some level of job satisfaction.
7. I work at building trust in my team.
8. I work at developing each team member's level of personal autonomy in their role.
9. I work at creating a culture of acknowledgement, acceptance and positive feedback.
10. I work on creating a culture that avoids blame shifting.
11. I work on creating a culture of taking responsibility for mistakes and acting on the lessons learned as a result of mistakes.
12. I work with my team on identifying early stages of ineffective conflict and empower team members to participate in healthy robust conversations.
13. During performance discussions, I discuss ways in which each team member can increase their personal level of self-control in their role.
14. I address poor performance at an early stage before it spirals.
15. I coach team members to find ways of building seamlessness into their job role.
16. I work at increasing my level of self-awareness.
17. I actively seek ways to change my ineffective behaviours.

Add the amount of times you answered YES and see how you fared with this capability in the following graph:





### Signs of Duress

- People working 9-5pm and not a minute longer
- Long breaks and sickies
- Excuses for poor performance
- Defensiveness when being offered feedback
- Tension among team members

### WORKPLACE STORY

Once upon a time, Jo spent a lot of time sitting in her office wading through piles of paperwork. She was frustrated because some of her staff were off sick and those that were at work seemed to find it more interesting to discuss or engage in their social media activities. When she complained that deadlines weren't being met, she was sure they were pulling faces behind her back. She had noticed that one skill that her team excelled at was providing creative excuses for why things didn't get done and why spending time on Facebook was a productive activity if one just had a strategic view.

No fairytale ending here.

## **5 Tips to Nurture this Capability**

1. Avoid micromanaging
2. Create feedback loops
3. Delegate with confidence that the job will get done
4. Openly praise tasks well done
5. Schedule weekly follow up meetings

## **Mastering this Capability – What Can You Do?**

Here are some options:

- One-on-one coaching
- Book a group training course. A program outline is available from [www.prefrain.com.au](http://www.prefrain.com.au) and get an instant online quote too
- Read “Leadership by the Book” by Ken Blanchard, Bill Hybels and Phil Hodges