

Leaders as Insatiable Learners

The Secret to Lean-Agile Leadership and
Continuous Learning Culture



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The background of the slide is a solid dark blue. It features decorative elements: white wavy lines that create a grid-like pattern in the lower half, and two small orange triangles pointing upwards, one in the top right corner and one in the bottom center.

Why leaders must be insatiable learners

Leaders need new skills for the digital age

A study published by MIT Sloan School of Business in January 2020 shows many leaders are unprepared to lead their organizations in the digital economy.



9%

Our organization already has leaders with the skills we need to thrive in the digital economy.



12%

Our organization's leaders have the right mindset to embrace the changes we need to make to thrive in the digital economy.



13%

Our organization is ready to compete in the digital economy

And then this happened...



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

The paradox of expertise

The more successful individuals and organizations are in their industry, the harder it can become to see the need for new learning. The best leaders are insatiable learners who continually ask themselves “**am I learning as fast as the world is changing?**”



Bill Taylor
Author, Co-founder of Fast Company



Continuous Learning

“As leaders, our job is to never stop developing ourselves. It’s a journey of self-discovery that benefits everyone we influence. What do we stand for? What motivates us personally?”

Garry Ridge
CEO, WD-40



Continuous Learning Culture



Learning
Organization



Innovation
Culture



Relentless
Improvement

The image features a dark blue background with white, wavy, grid-like lines that create a sense of depth and movement. Two small orange triangles are positioned on the right side, one near the top and one near the bottom, pointing towards the center. The text is centered in a white horizontal band.

Growth mindsets enable learning

Learning requires an open mind



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Dweck, Carol. (2006) Mindset: The new psychology of success. Random House. Kindle Edition.

Steps to Becoming an Insatiable Learner

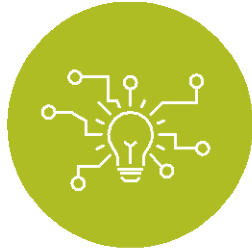


1. Identify a challenge or opportunity

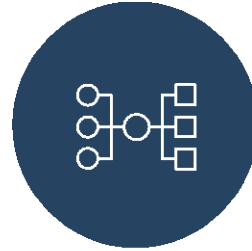
Every challenge or opportunity requires learning



SAFe Adoption



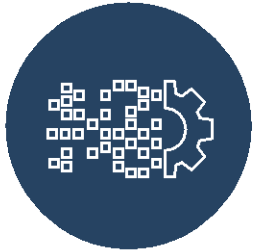
Next Gen Initiative



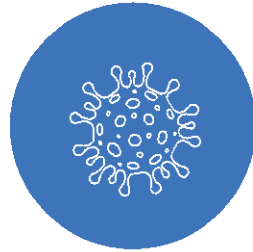
Mergers & Acquisitions



Declining Market Share



Digital Transformation



Crisis Response



Problems with Product Delivery



2. Ask “what do I need to learn?”

What do I need to learn?

Knowledge gaps

(what do I know that I don't know)

Blind spots

(what do I not know that I don't know)

Blockers

(what is keeping me from learning what I need to learn)

Strengths

(what I know that I know)



Craft a well-formed learning statement

- ▶ What is the problem or opportunity that is creating a learning need?
- ▶ What do I need to learn?
- ▶ When do I need to learn it by?
- ▶ Where and how will this learning be applied?
- ▶ Who might need to learn the same thing?
- ▶ What resources are available to help me learn?
- ▶ What will be the impact if I don't learn this? What if I do?

3. Build your learning backlog and plan

Create learning stories

Learning Story

As a leader who needs to *(to deliver an output | "job to be done")*

I need to learn *(the specific learning need)*

So that I can *(to achieve an outcome)*

Acceptance criteria: What needs to happen to consider the learning story done

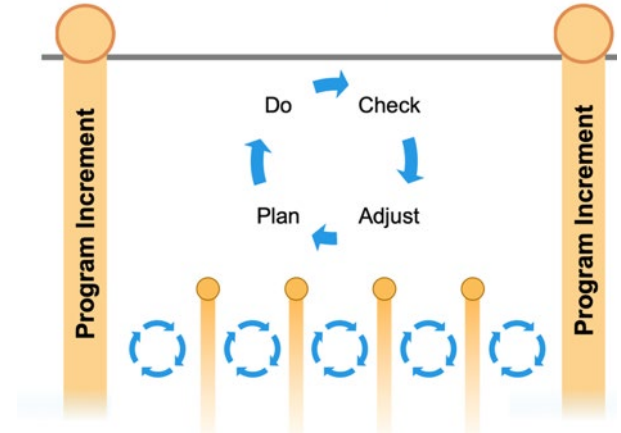
Leading Indicator: Aspect of change visible to show that I have accomplished the result from the learning

Populate and prioritize your learning backlog

As a leader who needs to (output to be delivered)	I need to learn (knowledge to be gained)	So that I can (outcome to be achieved)	Priority

Set your learning cadence

- ▶ Learning cadence is a regular fixed timebox used to plan learning activities, after which you will review your results and use your learnings to refine your plan for the subsequent timeboxes
- ▶ A common pattern would be to adopt the same iteration and PI cadence that is being followed by your organization



4. Iteratively evaluate and evolve your plan

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Tactics to develop as an insatiable learner

- ▶ Augment your learning plan using a variety of sources (reading materials, activities, podcasts, events)
- ▶ Include people with diverse experiences and perspectives in your team
- ▶ Give permission to trusted advisors to help you identify your blind spots and accept feedback with gratitude
- ▶ Use powerful questions to seek out diverse viewpoints
- ▶ "Go see" (gemba) to evaluate and validate with your customers

Tactics to develop as an insatiable learner

- ▶ Identify at least one thing at the beginning of each week that you don't know enough about and want to discover
- ▶ Be engaged in your organization's SAFe events (PI Planning, System Demos, I&A) and seek to identify at least one learning opportunity in each
- ▶ Establish at least one peer coaching and one mentoring relationship
- ▶ Share learnings from this technical talk with 3 or more peers
- ▶ Be curious and develop your intrinsic motivation to learn new things.

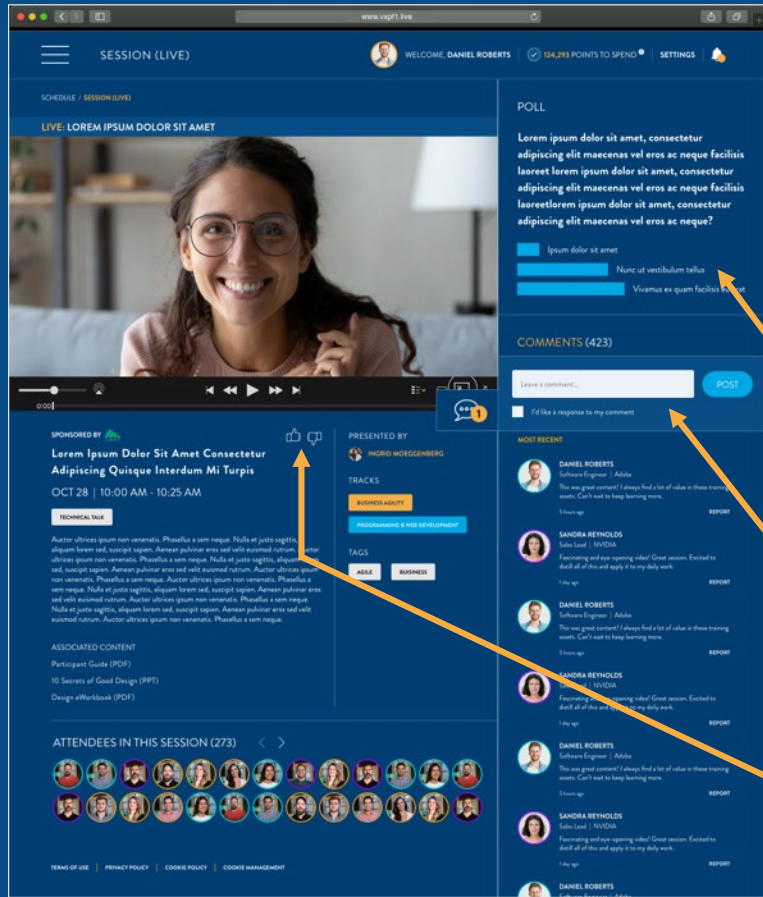
I am responsible for taking action, asking questions, getting answers, and making decisions. I won't wait for someone to tell me. If I need to know, I'm responsible for asking. I have no right to be offended that I didn't "get this sooner." If I'm doing something others should know about, I'm responsible for telling them.

WD-40's "Learning Maniac" Pledge

Join me at the Meet the Speaker Session!



Please refer to the agenda for scheduled times



Participate in polling, post comments, and rate sessions

1

Polling

2

Comment

3

Thumbs up or down

Thank you!