



# COMPLEX ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

THIS IS AN INFOGRAPHIC SUMMARY  
OF A GIBS ACUMEN ARTICLE

Complex and rapidly changing business landscapes require a different kind of leadership for organizations to remain competitive

Solving complex, hard to identify challenges take time, require reflective learning, experimentation, empathy and buy-in from all involved. This is a complex adaptive style (referencing Harvard Business Review's Heifetz and Linsky)



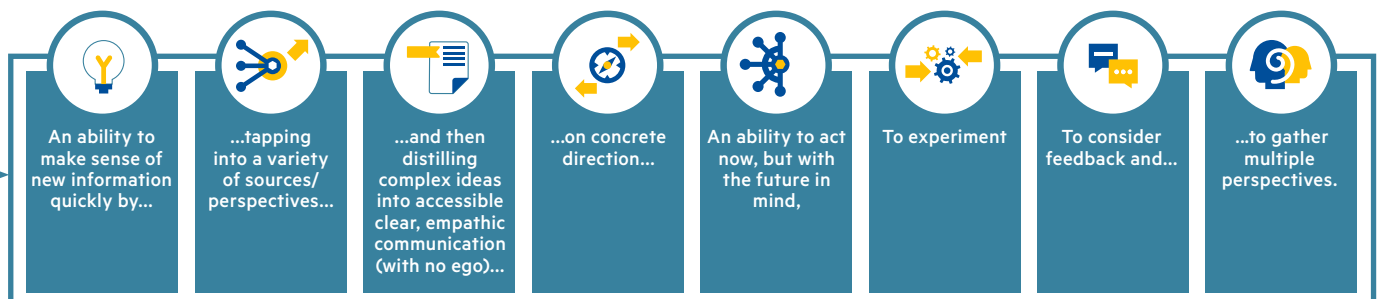
**EXAMPLE** Financial services firm Alexander Forbes. Their leader, CEO Dawie de Villiers, was described as authentic, engaging, communicating clearly and empathically. His inclusive approach and willingness to listen, allowed him to pivot the organization, quickly and effectively, during the COVID-crisis.

THIS INVITES  
THE QUESTION



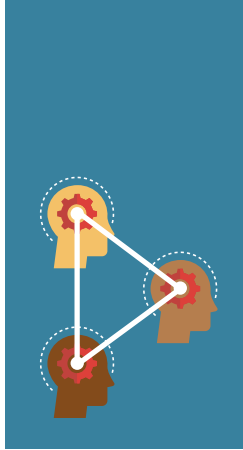
WHAT ELSE DO GREAT  
ADAPTIVE LEADERS  
DO?

GIBS FACULTY EXPERTS WERE  
POLLED ON THEIR VIEWS:



Are part of a fundamental approach to leading people in complex times

And a significant advantage because it allows critical urgent decision-making to be undertaken with long-range views in play.



# COMPLEX ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

## SUMMARY INFOGRAPHIC

The article offers 7 Hallmarks of Complex Adaptive Leadership



1

### HOLDING STEADY

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTY, PUSH BACK AND DISCOMFORT



2

### THINKING STRATEGICALLY

AND POLITICALLY INVOLVING ALL STAKEHOLDERS



3

### UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT AND ENCOURAGE RIGOROUS DEBATE

IF THAT MEANS TAKING SOME HEAT, SO BE IT



4

### GIVE BACK THE WORK

RATHER THAN SOLVING THE PROBLEM FOR OTHERS, ALLOW THEM TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION



5

### MAINTAIN A POSITIVE INTENT

THE FOCUS MUST BE ON HELPING PEOPLE



6

### UNDERSTAND THE ASK

UNDERSTAND FULLY WHAT YOU ARE ASKING OF YOUR PEOPLE



7

### ANCHOR YOURSELF

BE MINDFUL AND GROUNDED TO ACHIEVE CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND PURPOSE

Balancing rapid adaptation, with slower, more reflective ability to spot patterns, receive feedback, perceive opportunities

### ASK YOURSELF



Do you know yourself and your way of thinking?

How can you create an environment where people can regulate their stress and focus on the challenge?

How are you managing key relationships for collective thinking?

How should you time your responses in this situation?

How are you managing key relationships for collective thinking?



### ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Is the ability of the people to be flexible and open to change. Therefore it also speaks to an individual's own capacity to absorb and navigate changes. This includes being able to challenge their own assumptions, values & biases

To read the full article go to:

<https://www.acumenmagazine.co.za/articles/complex-adaptive-leadership-11209.html>

