



STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP THROUGH CRISIS

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Abstract: In the traditional sense of the term, 'leadership' refers to the act of leading through different administrative functions on the way to organizational success. In the present era of dynamic competition marked by rapid technological advancement as well as global crises, the role of leaders has increased substantially, necessitating the adoption of Strategic Leadership – leadership that helps sustain and achieve competitive advantages in turbulent situations. The aim of this paper is to identify the future challenges of strategic leadership in crisis management and suggest measures to surmount them. The paper also attempts to identify the leadership environment, which is necessary, besides putting forward some suggestions, for leading effectively in the VUCA world or in the realm of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Keywords: *Strategic Leadership; Crisis; Environment; Challenges.*

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INTRODUCTION

The global pandemic as well as the concomitant financial crisis has brought about a wave of extraordinary challenges for the world's economic and political order. Leaders across the globe in business, government and the not-for-profit sectors are struggling to lead through the crisis while also preparing their organizations for the uncertain future. In the past, studies generally investigated the factors that impacted on organizational success and how it was affected by various types of leadership such as participative, autocratic, democratic, and so on. Today, every situation is unique and critical. The current pace of change is way beyond what leaders can manage. The changes that are taking place at an unprecedented speed will affect the decision-makers and leaders of tomorrow significantly. One of the key challenges for leaders of today and tomorrow will be to effectively deal with and constructively manage this hyper-change. The Covid-19 pandemic is a case in point. Hardly could anyone predict its consequences at the initial stage. Little wonder, the whole world has been reeling under its cataclysmic impacts for months on end.

Changes and social disruptions as well as conflicts and dislocations are inevitable. The onslaught of such Black Swan events is becoming the new normal in the 21st

century (*Taleb, & Chandler, 2007*). Multi-tasking, delegating and even using algorithms and analytics are no longer enough. Therefore, future-ready strategic leadership is the demand of the time. This calls for a revolution in thinking, a steady stream of strategies and unexpected solutions. Leaders have to come up not just with ideas, but how to nurture them, test them, pitch them, and ultimately make them real and profitable. During turbulent times, leadership is one of the key factors that can make a difference, through farsightedness and skill.

Leadership has always been considered to be the conventional act of leading a group of individuals through various managerial functions. But today, the role of a leader has enhanced multi-folds and requires a leader not only to lead, but also to transform his followers into future-ready leaders. Such a transformation among sub-ordinates is possible when the leadership role is performed strategically, by making the subordinates develop a feeling of belongingness within the group and in turn the organization, by making maverick decisions in the area of needs which have not been met before, by siding with the truth even in the face of opposition and being able to face any consequences emanating therefrom. The broad objective of this paper, therefore, is to identify the future challenges of strategic leadership in crisis management and suggest the way-out. The specific objectives are to identify the necessary environment and the ways for effective and early preparedness, against the backdrop of which, strategic leadership is expected to sustain the complex challenges of the present and future and uphold the expectations of concerned organizations. During any crisis they must take the opportunity to cultivate and culture the leadership quality, to prove their worth and to contribute to the society in general and to the subordinates in particular.

TURBULENT TIMES BUILD GREAT LEADERS

The word ‘crisis’ has very interesting etymology. In the early 15th century, the word ‘krisis’ – which meant to decide - was used in Greek literature. So, the word ‘crisis’ afterwards meant a critical situation that warrants or calls for a decision. Gradually the word ‘krisis’ was used in medical dictionaries to refer to a ‘turning point’ in a disease. At such a critical moment, the condition of the patient could get better or worse. In modern parlance, the word ‘crisis’ means a low probability, high impact event which calls for immediate action.

Taleb and Chandler (*2007*) in their book “Black Swan” discussed the low probability and high impact events. The crisis can be likened but the Black Swan is not always a crisis. It could even be something positive. But predominantly Black Swan events are used and branded in a derogatory sense. So, leading through crisis is a kind of leading propagated by Lao Tzu, who emphasized “A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves” (*Seamon, 2016*). That is, a leader should lead in a way that everybody will feel having accomplished the mission

themselves. As Nelson Mandela said, “It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger.”

Sharma (2010) in his book “The Leaders Who Had No Title” mentioned in the second principle that “turbulent times build great leaders”. Leadership in a crisis is not different from leadership at any other time. But a true measure of leadership can manifest itself only during a crisis. Brian Tracy, the famous motivational speaker said, “the true test of leadership is how well you function in a crisis.” His words have not resonated more than they do today. There is a popular English proverb that says “cometh the hour, cometh the man” – the idea that the right leaders will come to the fore during times of crisis. So, leaders really prove their worth by leading through crisis, and not by leading at ordinary times. According to John C. Maxwell, “leadership is a verb, not a noun” (Austin, 2020). What this means is that leadership is the act of doing, it is not a static entity. Leadership is taking the followers through the crisis. Most of the leaders who are recognized in history proved their worth by leading through crisis, and they emerged during crises.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES DURING CRISIS IN DAY TO DAY WORK

While performing routine tasks even highly competitive, successful organizations can and do face crises, defined as low-probability, high-impact events that threaten the viability of the organization and are characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly (Pearson & Clair, 1998; p. 60). Leaders are faced with various paradoxical situations as follows:

- **How to be an inspirational leader while continuing to push for performance.** Setting deadlines for employees is easy but keeping them engaged along the way is the real difference that a leader can make. Depending on leadership, either staff burn out can set in or employees may feel hungry for more. The right performance on the part of the leadership remains inspirational for employees.
- **How to respond to countless questions from subordinates when no clear answers exist.** There will be many queries for clarification inasmuch as there will be fake news and social media propaganda that will generate further queries, more doubts, more stress and more uncertainty. Hence, a leader should pass on authentic information to the people he or she leads, so that they know the fact. It is imperative that the information be presented in a cut and thrust manner so that the subordinates or followers know what the truth is.
- **How to maintain visibility and influence in the organization with**

limited interaction opportunities. Studies have highlighted the importance of visibility in the workplace for informal interaction that can be used as a measurement for productivity (*Motamed et al., 2013*). Leaders have to make an effort to be visible to sub-ordinates and peers alike, notwithstanding the fact that they are often constrained by regulations and procedures.

- **How to keep building personal brand within the organization without appearing self-centred.** Personal branding is a way of establishing and consistently reinforcing who we are and what we stand for in our career and life. Leaders have their own personality, and they should strive to develop a personal brand that lives in the minds of the ones they lead.
- **How to keep the team engaged while working remotely.** While working remotely has its fair share of benefits, like saving time and money on commutes and encouraging better work-life balance, it also has some drawbacks. McGregor and Doshi (*2020*) showed that employees who work remotely are less motivated, because of lack of personal engagement. So, a leader must engage the team effectively by defining goals for remote workers, improving the overall internal communication strategy, and encouraging continuous involvement however they can.

CHALLENGES FOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP DURING CRISIS

Crisis situations can overwhelm even the most experienced leaders, presenting unexpected and complex scenarios that evolve at a fast pace and in several directions:

- **Detecting incoming issues in a fast-changing situation.** The rapid pace of change often gives rise to a new set of challenges, as in a VUCA-situation. The acronym VUCA stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Originating from the United States Army War College, the term has been widely used to describe the conditions resulting from the Cold War (*Lau, 2020*). There is a growing need for leaders to be aware of VUCA situations, which could be managed with VUCA vision, understanding, clarity and agility. So, it is important that leaders be equipped with these skills to effectively deal with a VUCA situation.
- **Making sense of a dynamic threat with limited information.** The pace, nature and implications of COVID-19 have proved to be frustratingly difficult to comprehend. There are reasons, but there is not

enough information. Moreover, there is hardly any agreement on the escalation of rates, or on the effects of measures taken so far. The simulation attempts that make use of controversial input variables are focused on apparently drastic forecasts. As a result, leaders are navigating in semi-darkness.

- **Making life-or-death decisions.** There will be times when a leader has to assign people for any administrative or training jobs where they could be exposed to risks. Sometimes, the leader has to make very crucial decisions, balancing the risks to which those decisions can expose an individual or subordinates against organizational functions and goals.
- **Ensuring strategic coordination.** In a global crisis such as COVID-19, many governmental, private, and societal institutions will have to do their part. As the credibility and efficiency of the overall response is strongly contingent on them sharing their individual responses, they must work together. For residents, all of whom are willing to volunteer, the same is true. There is a great deal of social resilience on offer, but a license to function by clear facilitation, public cooperation and regulatory stability need to be granted.
- **Keeping worried personnel on side.** Crisis communication 'best practice' is remarkably simple and consistent. It stresses the need to provide trustworthy channels of simple, timely, consistent, and replicated messaging and actionable advice. Yet how much crisis coordination turns out to be an Achilles' heel to crisis management remains shocking. Leaders also struggle to communicate and may be distant from the perspectives of people. In resisting panic among people, they can even be too vigilant and thus fail to share the entire reality.

STRATEGIC LEADERS IN VUCA WORLD

During unfavorable times, volatile and intensely contested markets or macro-economic crises, leaders in the VUCA world show the features of successful leadership. Historically, when fighting the enemy on the battlefield, VUCA was used in military campaigns around the world, where things were uncertain, chaotic, and there was a shortage of knowledge on which to base decisions. Nevertheless, effective strategic leaders are always able to ascertain the prospects and make decisions accurately to lead their people forward and gain momentum in the current situation.

In the current operating environment, the dynamics need strategic leaders to make deliberate decisions during turbulent situations in order to manage and develop agile organizations despite the uncertainty. In the operating environment, changes often determine and impact how choices are made to prosper and manage uncertainty. This needs a strong view of where we are now, and a sense

of intent. Where will we go? And how are we getting there? These are critical questions to solve uncertainty and clear confusion (ambiguity) within the organizations or political landscape. The response to these questions is that we need to be clear about where we are going and be flexible about how we are going to get there. Leaders need to formulate concrete action plans about how to get there, such as short-term and long-term priorities and goals. The second important thing after defining priorities is to build communication techniques that need to be synchronized to get buy-in and impact followers or team members to get them to the desired future.

Leaders are expected to clearly express the current situation, the progress that needs to be made, the time frame at their disposal to cross the river, possible threats, and the advantage of intervening now in order to facilitate action among individuals. It is crucial that everyone feels and shares the same risk of probabilities to enable everyone to do outstanding work, with a high degree of diligence to achieve the objectives or target set that could eventually contribute to the creation of an agile organization. The significant events faced by many companies, large and small, are: a significant decrease in market results, such as volumes of sales/production, which can affect companies in terms of high operating costs, competitiveness and profitability, and which can generate potential uncertainties. Leaders, however, ought to make important decisions with high levels of cautionary judgment and exercise. Most corporations have been impacted by external factors, such as current global, regional, and local economic vulnerabilities. However, decisions taken at the strategic level must always represent the interests of different stakeholders. Successful leaders typically devise a semi-risk potent strategy integrating flexibility frameworks that empower the company to pursue different opportunities, optimize new technologies, and utilize their professional workforce's core competencies. The nature of their workers, direct or indirect rivalry, the political landscape (government policies) and the general regulatory structure must be recognized by leaders in the VUCA world. This helps leaders make smart choices when dealing with difficult business survival circumstances.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE THE LEADERSHIP IMPACT IN A VUCA WORLD

Today's leaders must have an appetite to embrace VUCA. They do not have a choice. They either prepare themselves to lead effectively in the midst of chaos or they simply fall prey and become victims. Here are three leadership principles that will help leaders lead successfully in a VUCA world:

- **Principle 1:** Leaders must have an unquenchable appetite to learn. They need to have a large appetite for learning in an ever-changing world. Futurist and philosopher Alvin Toffler once wrote: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who

cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

- **Principle 2:** Leaders must have a resolute mindset to embrace change. A VUCA setting is all about transformation. These improvements are imposed on us, whether we like them or not. Successful leaders may not avoid transformation.
- **Principle 3:** Leaders must have an unwavering commitment not to compromise values. They must do what is right. They never compromise their faith to fit in. They do not conform to the ways of the world or condone sin.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The 21st century is characterized by a coalescence of artificial and human intelligence. Leaders so far have been dealing with the VUCA environment. But now with ever-evolving technology and new processes, leaders and organizations are facing ever-stronger challenges than they were even five years ago. The concept of digitizing everything is becoming a reality. Automation, artificial intelligence, internet of things (IoT), machine learning and other advanced technologies can quickly capture and analyze a wealth of data that gives previously unimaginable amounts and types of information to work from. In order to generate value from the results obtained through advanced technology, the challenge moves to the next level, changing how to think, train and work with data. Industry 4.0 is the fourth in a sequence of technological revolutions marked by their potential, through the implementation of new technologies and processes, to change economies, employment and even society itself.

The first industrial revolution began mechanization in the late 18th century with the introduction of steam power and the invention of the power loom, and drastically altered the production of products. Electricity and assembly lines made mass manufacturing feasible in the late 19th century, giving rise to the second revolution. The third revolution was thought to have taken place in the 1970s, when advances in computing allowed people to program machines and networks, powering automation.

Professor Klaus Schwab, the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, has published a book entitled ‘The Fourth Industrial Revolution’ in which he describes how this fourth revolution is fundamentally different from the previous three, which were characterized mainly by advances in technology (*Schwab, 2017*). Definitions for Industry 4.0 abound, but the convergence of physical and digital technology such as analytics, artificial intelligence, cognitive technologies and IoT is the primary transition it brings to its heart. This physical and digital union enables a digital organization to be built that is not only integrated, but also capable of making more comprehensive,

educated decisions. Data obtained from physical structures in a digital organization is used to push intelligent behaviour back into the physical world. These feedback loops are the possibilities that create ample prospects for new goods and services, improved ways of servicing consumers, new types of work, and completely new business models.

The effect of these changes has the potential to ripple through industries, companies, and cultures, as in the previous industrial revolutions, impacting not just how we operate, but also how we live and relate to each other. But this time, the revolution is progressing at incredible pace, powered by the exponential rate of technological growth. Amongst changing demographics and unparalleled global connectivity, either technical, social, or economic, Industry 4.0 can herald greater opportunities than any that came before it. Future leaders will need to adapt to these environmental changes.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE THE LEADERSHIP IMPACT IN THE WAKE OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

There will be enormous strategic leadership challenges as the impact of technology and the disruption that comes with it will result in an exogenous force over which leaders would have little or no control at times. However, it is the role of leaders to guide their teams and to be mindful of these forces when making business decisions that would impact on the sustainability of their organizations. They should thus grasp the opportunity and power so as to shape the Fourth Industrial Revolution and direct it toward a future that reflects the organizational values and success. Though some traditional leadership capabilities still remain critical, the following leadership principles will help leaders lead successfully in the digital era:

- **Principle 1 - Mindsets not skillsets**

- A lack of expertise is not what makes leadership inefficient in today's economy. It is the mixture of a constantly evolving world combined with a mental attitude transfixed (being stuck in non-changing patterns of thought)
- The co-creative collective culture takes for granted a high degree of learning versatility. People have to be able to adapt constantly and rapidly.

- **Principle 2 - Focus on what works**

- In the economic environment, looking at the learning ecosystem, it is easy to see that it is not centered especially on new ways of work and leadership.
- It will leave a huge impact on the organization by turning the

emphasis on achieving sustainable progress, generating progress in innovative design systems, and motivating people to bring improvements together.

▪ **Principle 3 - Prioritize differently**

- People who critically analyse their feelings and reactions without assessment fail to comprehend the old patterns of thought that still influence them. The brain has been conditioned in one direction and will function in the same direction until it is retrained consciously.
- In order to be able to form relationships – both new and current ones, it is advised to first focus on one's own personality.

Change is important, but when leading in a VUCA and digital world, good leaders must know what should not be changed. In reality, it can be argued that it is as necessary to know what does not change as to know what needs to change. Modern companies in the 21st century deal with various problems that have evolved rapidly. In Bangladesh, the situation is no different. Therefore, in the constantly evolving organizational climate and economic model, proper leadership is essential for organizations to succeed. The level of transition is the driving force, while one of the essential reasons for corporate progress is good leadership. Company leaders today need to have an appetite to accept VUCA and the new world, so we are either planning to lead successfully in the midst of uncertainty or only being casualties. Strategic leadership and the appropriate investment in human resources development, particularly the leadership development program, are factors that contribute to the creation of an agile company.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

To secure a better future, strategic leaders must seek out experiences and opportunities to learn and apply 10 new skills:

- **Maker instinct:** Ability to take advantage of the inner drive to create and develop stuff, as well as to interact with others in the making.
- **Clarity:** Willingness to see a future despite messes and inconsistencies that cannot yet be seen by some.
- **Dilemma flipping:** Ability to turn dilemmas into rewards and opportunities that, unlike problems, cannot be solved.
- **Immersive learning capacity:** Capacity to immerse oneself and learn from them in a first-person way in unfamiliar environments.
- **Bio-empathy:** Capable of seeing stuff from the point of view of nature-to consider, appreciate and learn from the patterns of nature.

- **Constructive depolarization:** Having the ability to stay calm in stressful environments where disagreements dominate, and contact has broken down and leads people to constructive interaction from divergent cultures.
- **Quiet transparency:** Capable of being transparent and genuine-without advertising oneself on what matters to us.
- **Rapid prototyping:** Expertise in the development of rapid early innovation versions, with the assumption that early failures would be needed for later success.
- **Smart mob organization:** Skilled in developing, engaging, and cultivating purposeful networks for business or social change through the intelligent use of electronic or other media.
- **Commons creating:** Has the ability to seed, cultivate and grow common assets that can help other players and often encourage higher-level competition.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS TO MANAGE CRISIS

For moving forward in a crisis, leaders need to cultivate four behaviors in themselves and their teams. They must decide with speed over precision, adapt boldly, deliver reliably, and engage for impact.

- **Decide with speed over precision.** The situation is changing by the day — even by the hour. The best leaders quickly process available information, rapidly determine what matters most, and make decisions with conviction. Leaders must break through the inertia to keep the organization trained on business continuity today while increasing the odds of mid to long-term success by focusing on the few things that matter most. They should decide with speed over precision because if leaders delay and keep thinking and get into analysis —paralysis then their decision is so much so late that perhaps it will be counterproductive.
- **Adapt boldly.** Leaders should get ahead of changing circumstances. They seek input and information from diverse sources, are not afraid to admit what they do not know and bring in outside expertise when needed.
- **Deliver reliably.** Leaders should take personal ownership in a crisis, even though many challenges and factors lie outside their control. Leaders should stay alert to and aligned on a daily dashboard of priorities. They should set KPIs and other matrices to measure performance, and keep mind and body in fighting shape.
- **Engage for impact.** In times of crisis, no job is more important than

taking care of the team. Effective leaders are understanding of their team's circumstances and distractions, but they find ways to engage and motivate, clearly and thoroughly communicating important new goals and information. Leaders should:

- Connect with individual team members.
- Dig deep to engage the team.
- Ask for help as needed.
- Collect and amplify positive messages.

LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES FOR MANAGING CRISIS

Leaders managing their organizations through crisis show six distinctive capabilities:

- **Calm.** All the while, effective leaders are able to remain calm and maintain a sense of perspective. According to Gene Klann (2003), author of the book *Crisis Leadership*, “During a crisis, your goal is to reduce loss and keep things operating as normal as possible. The leaders should project a sense of calmness through this difficult and uncertain situation. Panic is contagious. It will infect the subordinates. If we feel uncomfortable but pretend that we are calm, that will also be transmitted amongst peers, or subordinates.
- **Confidence.** The leader should project confidence that he is going to be able to see this through successfully. Whatever direction he is giving, he should stick to it. If it warrants change, he should change. The fickleness again gets people a little worried as to whether they will comply with the instruction whole heartedly or they should still wait and see.
- **Communication.** The leader must create a sense of order in which to communicate decisions and priorities. He should communicate with authenticity and veracity and communicate continuously with each other across the board.
- **Collaboration.** The leader should call on the resources and capabilities of all his team members and bring them together. A crisis like COVID-19 cannot be fought independently. It requires collaboration between the health department and a host of other departments and organizations, which will have to synergize their collective efforts with a view to overcoming the challenges of COVID-19.
- **Community.** The leader should set an example and model behaviors that are community friendly and supportive. The measures that we take or the action that we prescribe must involve the community and seek support therefrom.

- **Compassion.** Compassion at a time of crisis is a very important manifestation of leadership. We can hardly overemphasize the need for compassion. Leaders have to be empathetic; leaders have to be compassionate. They should demonstrate that they bear the same risk as their followers do and they are fighting together. Only then can leaders win over the hearts of their followers and motivate them to put their best efforts for a common cause.

SUGGESTIONS TO LEAD EFFECTIVELY DURING A CRISIS

Leaders can step up to lead effectively and turn their teams' attention back to the challenges of meeting the goals. Here are some of the actions the best leaders take during the times of crisis – some ideas for aspiring managers and leaders as they look to strengthen their leadership muscle to prepare for an unknown and unpredictable world.

- **Take own energy seriously.** Leaders should surround themselves with positive minded people. Should they often have pessimists around them, they tend to get infected and worried, thereby jeopardizing their ability to lead.
- **Put individuals ahead of organizations.** Conflicts occur when differences exist between the needs, values, and interests of individuals or groups and those of the leaders of the organization. It is important to create a win-win situation to balance the dominating needs of the organization with those of the individuals in order to retain satisfied employees and meet organizational goals.
- **Cultivate hope not just confidence.** Confidence is important but there must be hope that there is light at end of the tunnel.
- **Reduce risk to Zero.** If possible, leaders should avoid taking any risk that is not worth taking. In other words, they should try to minimize the risk.
- **Do not be vulnerable and be empathetic.** Leaders should share their experience with everybody. There is no sparing anyone.
- **Do the unexpected.** Leaders could sometimes do unexpected things that help them win people's heart.
- **Focus on the small things.** When people are stressed, just giving a call or small things like that can be immensely helpful.
- **Point to credibility.** In the age of social media, fake news and propaganda are rampant. Leaders must make sure whatever information they are providing is credible and authentic. In other words, leaders must use credibility to build trust.

- **Cater to the least fortunate.** That is what the priority is. Leaders must be able identify those who are least fortunate or most affected. The most affected are the ones who need to be given priority because they have the minimum capacity to support themselves.
- **Manage stress.** Stress management is important not only in a crisis situation but also in normal times.

CONCLUSION

The world is changing at a much faster pace than before and leaders are finding it increasingly difficult to deal with. This is further exacerbated by the fact that each circumstance is unique, requiring a different set of measures. One of the key challenges for leaders of today and tomorrow will therefore be to effectively deal with and practically manage this hyper-change. Multi-tasking, delegating, and even employing algorithms and analytics will no longer suffice. Future-ready strategic leadership is the need of the hour. Today's leaders will not only lead, but also transform their followers into future leaders. Such a transformation among sub-ordinates is possible when the leadership role is performed strategically. Amid emergency they must take the opportunity to nurture and culture the leadership quality, to prove their worth and to contribute to the organization in general and to the subordinates in particular.

In day to day business, even highly competitive and successful organizations face crises. A crisis situation can potentially overwhelm even the most experienced leaders, presenting unexpected, complex scenarios that evolve at a fast pace and in several directions. During unfavorable times, volatile and intensely contested markets or macro-economic crises, leaders in the VUCA world show the features of successful leadership. In the current operating environment, the dynamics need strategic leaders to make deliberate decisions during turbulent situations in order to manage and develop agile organizations despite the uncertainty. Leaders are expected to clearly express the current situation, the progress that needs to be made, the time frame at their disposal to cross the obstacle, possible threats, and the advantage of intervening now, in order to facilitate action among individuals.

Leaders so far have been dealing with VUCA environment. But now with ever evolving technology and new processes, leaders and organizations are facing ever stronger challenges than they were even five years ago. The Fourth Revolution is characterized primarily by advances in technology. Analytics, artificial intelligence, cognitive technologies and IoT are the primary transition it brings to its heart. The revolution is progressing at an incredible pace, powered by the exponential rate of technological growth. Future leaders will need to adapt to these environmental changes.

Strategic leaders must seek out experiences and opportunities to learn and apply new skills to secure a better future. They should have the ability to take advantage

of the inner drive to create and develop stuff, as well as to interact with others in the making. They should have willingness to see a future despite messes and inconsistencies that cannot yet be seen by some. They should be able to turn dilemmas into rewards and opportunities that, unlike problems, cannot be solved. Leaders should grow capacity to immerse themselves and learn from them in a first-person way in unfamiliar environments and have the ability to stay calm in stressful situations where disagreements dominate and contact has broken down and leads people to constructive interaction from divergent cultures. They should be transparent and genuine. They should be expert in the development of rapid early innovation, skilled in developing, engaging and cultivating purposeful networks, talented to seed, cultivate and grow common assets.

Today's leaders must have an appetite to embrace VUCA. They must have an unquenchable appetite to learn, a resolute mindset to embrace change, and have an unwavering commitment not to compromise values. Strategic leadership must grasp the opportunity and power so as to shape the Fourth Industrial Revolution and direct it toward a future. Leaders must follow the suggested principles to deal with the challenges. Change is important, but when leading in a VUCA and digital world, good leaders must know what should not be changed. Strategic leadership and appropriate investment in leadership development programs are essential for creating an agile organization. Finally, the best leaders must know how to manage stress both during a crisis and in normal times. Above all, a strategic leader must be confident, credible, collaborative and compassionate in managing teams, especially during turbulent times because the true measure of leadership can be displayed only during a crisis.

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In his illustrious career, Lieutenant General Mamun Khaled has served Bangladesh Army in various capacities at different Units, Training Institutions, Organizations and Army Headquarters. A few of the positions worth mentioning are Commandant of School of Military Intelligence, Area Commander Logistics Area, Director General of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Professionals, Commandant Bangladesh Ordnance Factory and Commandant National Defence College, Bangladesh. General Mamun Khaled has also served in the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and UN Mission in Sierra Leon (UNAMSIL), contributing enormously to international peacekeeping.

As a knowledge seeking military leader, General Mamun Khaled completed his Master's in Defence Studies from the National University, Bangladesh. He

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