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1 Introduction—The Human Being as an Individual

Nature gives us many examples and pictures of networks, symbioses, mutations and adaptations to permanently changing environmental conditions. In plants and animals we speak of evolution, in economics we use change and challenging processes. Changing environmental conditions are comparable to the economic terms. We do not only see these processes at play in economy and ecology but also societal and political contexts. These processes are fueled further by technological and economic progress, globalization and crises. The speed, intensity and efficiency of change is a very complex system, which can only be properly dealt with by using artificial intelligence (AI), swarm intelligence and adaptive tools, processes and management methods.

This results in co-existences, co-evolutions, co-operations, collaborations, as well as the working together of up to now separate specialist subjects: digitization, sustainability and leadership. The New Normal or the solution of new problems of today cannot be solved in the long term by relying on old methods, which worked in the past. The required courage, the speed of adaptation and the ability to adapt to new and different phenomena is the basis needed for successful change.

The human being as an individual is at the heart of this change, as the individual can change him- or herself or the situation, as well as adapt the processes. Digital sustainable leadership is one option in a globalized changing world to act as a responsible and future oriented manager, to be courageous when innovating processes and to continuously develop one's own potential and grow.

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2 Purpose Giving Leadership for Future Leaders

In our fast-paced modern world, a dynamic process has established itself—“higher, farther, faster”—resulting in an overstraining of people, organizations and whole societies. In particular the speed of communication and information leaves marks and impacts the quality of communication and information processing in people. This becomes evident when specialist terminology is used imprecisely or even in distorting ways. Comparing leadership versus management clearly shows, how the impact of acting is different, merely by looking at the definition.

It is surprising how terminology is used in economic contexts. We primarily speak of and write about management and managers and much less of leadership and leaders. But it’s people who create, decide and work. Processes and organizations are but framework and structure. When we build organizations and processes around people and we know their needs and fulfill them, the result is a connecting unit. But if we try to adapt people to organizations and processes, this is not helped by natural or organic growth and thus has no sustainable foundation. Maslow contributed with his research and observation results to and more comprehensive understanding of human motivation, needs and behavioral norms. The well-known pyramid as depiction shows in a simplified way the complexity of Maslows research and was never published by Maslow in this form by himself.

Figures 1 and 2 show that the factors which are difficult to quantify, such as feelings, emotions, needs and motives form the basis of all human action. In planning and decision making it is thus essential to know these drivers of human action, to take them into account and to steer them, when necessary.

Simon Sinek researched why some companies are much more successful than their competitors (Reference Website). His result shows that it depends on the attitude and the type of leadership personality. This he showed in his model “the golden circle”. He makes visible the hidden core, the soul of the enterprise and focuses it in his visualization like a dartboard. It is not a question of what someone does but why and for what they are doing it. Also focusing on the quality of action before examining the result proper is a completely new way of looking at leadership in management literature (Fig. 3).

To know the purpose of our actions and our work and define it is not a new approach. The realization regarding the import and power of this approach has been

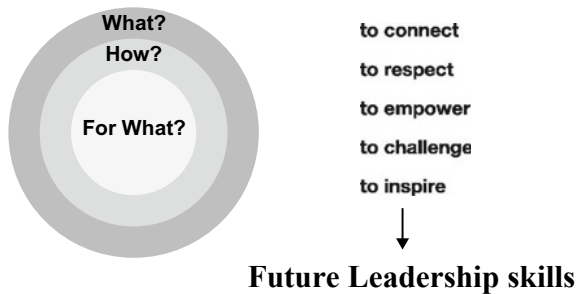
Fig. 1 Leadership versus management. *Source* Own figure

Leadership	<i>versus</i>	Management
People		Organisation/Processes
Feelings		Facts and Figures
Emotional Level		Factual Level
Direct Interaction		Indirect Interaction

Fig. 2 Maslows Pyramid.
Based on: Maslow (1943)



Fig. 3 Golden circle. *Source* Sinek (2009)



brought back into focus by Simon Sinek. Purpose-giving leadership means not only understanding the “why” of an enterprise but also being able to practice the “how”. In applied leadership and from my 30-year experience, the big five of how to lead are a challenge.

Future Leadership Skills:

- To connect
- To respect
- To empower
- To challenge
- To inspire.

The challenge lies in keeping the order of 1–5. Skipping a step or switching the order causes problems depending on the type of interference—which leads to energy loss on all sides. leadership competences are changing. The competence of communication, social and empathetic competences gain importance. The role of leadership personality changes and adapts more and more towards the ideal of a team captain, coach and mentor.

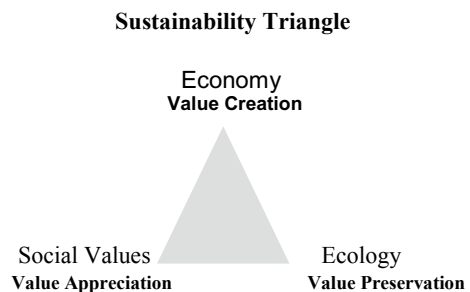
3 Sustainability—Value and Attitude for Behavioral Navigation

Why sustainability started out as a trendy slogan and was subsequently treated as an old notion is incomprehensible from the point of view of a gardener. On earth everything is in limited supply and is lost if it is not carefully used and treated. Nature and her resources may be used but not depleted and we may only use as much as to allow for regenerative processes to replenish them. Humankind has disturbed the balance of nature and climate through endless exploitation, a process which we can observe daily. Because of the necessity to act responsibly to allow a proper balance between people, environment and economy, models of sustainability were created, such as the three pillar model, the sustainability triangle or the tilt model (Fig. 4).

The dimensions of sustainability impact one another and thus improve or limit the balance. Sustainability is a fundamental attitude and should be one of the fundamental values of our society. Without this foundation the co-existence and the individual appreciation on our planet will become more and more fragile and more and more destroyed. Values are the basis of our actions, our behavior and our leadership. In the following model “value tree” foundational values, functional values, and behavioral norms form the basis of leadership culture. When looking at change and challenging factors, such as climate change and technological progress, putting leadership culture at the center is not only sensible and valuable but decisive for success. It is well established that leadership requires values. In order to grow tall like a tree, deep roots are necessary. Our values form this foundation, these roots, without which no tree can stand up (Fig. 5).

How do leaders know which values make their company grow? Why do we spend much more time looking at future plans than looking at our foundation? These questions show that the focus is shifting and from quantitative growth towards qualitative growth. Quality includes the inner quality and the inner values of both the leadership personality and the company and the society itself. Changes in the environment cause automatically changes in the inner values. Values are subject to temporal, political and social change. Ethical values and fundamental rights of people are defended by the United Nations. The times required states to establish common mandatory targets for sustainable development in all three levels of sociology, economy and ecology

Fig. 4 Sustainability triangle. Based on: Walker et al. (2019)



Values Tree - Basis of our Leadership

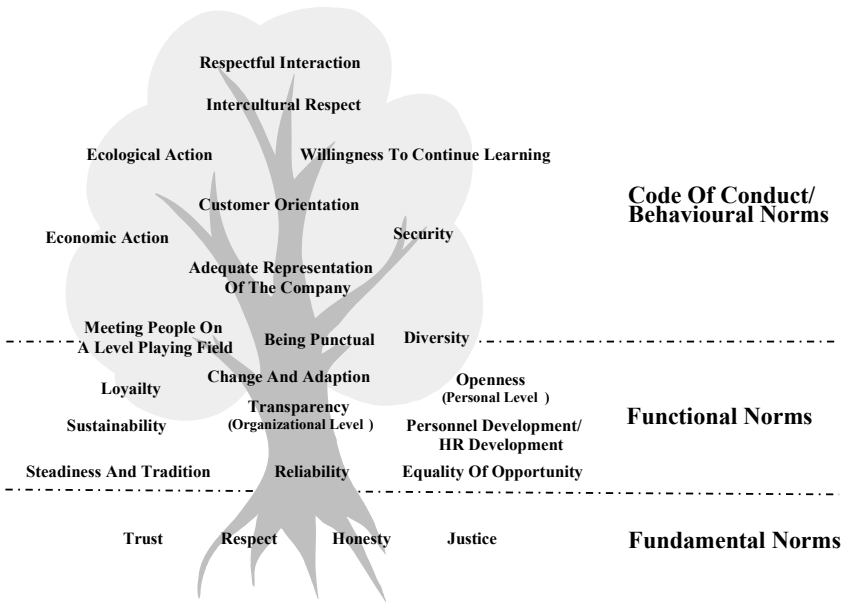


Fig. 5 Value tree. Based on: VDV-Akademie e.V (2016)

and the values that are fundamental to these disciplines. Since January 1, 2016, the 17 sustainable development goals are mandatory for the entire world, all states and all peoples (Fig. 6).

4 Analog and Digital Ways for Decision Making

Changes are sped up in times of crisis. In 2011 an earthquake with following tsunami has caused the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima, Japan, which caused political change and change of attitude towards climate change in Germany and in many other countries overnight. This event caused Baden-Wuerttemberg to become the first German federal state to be led by a minister president of the green party and the German government under Angela Merkel decided to exit nuclear energy. A crisis is often speeds up change or is a catalyst for change—this is also true in the Corona crisis. Analog methods, such as school teaching in person had to be switched within a few days to digital and surprisingly this was possible within a very short period using online technology. Digital technology has become an irreplaceable component. The ability to adapt and the speed of adaptation of digital communication, digital interaction made the crisis strategy of the politics of lockdown, Corona-App, home office and home schooling and Corona tracing possible. Hybrid models, i.e. a



Fig. 6 SDGS. Source UNESCO (2021)

combination of analog and digital processes are becoming more and more important and have become part of our daily norm. What this means and what is important to us, has been made clear by the Corona crisis. The necessity and the desire of local freedom and social closeness have become evident. This can be seen in Fig. 7 of digital and leadership.

What has to happen to make a functional unit out of digital technology and leadership? All new technology, every new form of organization and every new law forms our thinking and acting. If you look at it from the point of view of ethics, morality, and sustainability, there will be some kind of unifying symbiosis. The decision for an inner attitude towards sustainability will bring human and technological systems into co-evolution.

Digital		Leadership
Virtual Rooms	Where?	Analog und virtual Rooms
Machines/ Devices	Who?	People
Language (1-0 unambiguous)	What?	Spoken And Written Word
KW	How?	Kcal/ Felings/ Social Energy
Efficiency/ Information Medium	Why?	Leadership/ Communication Medium
→ Technology		→ Society

Fig. 7 Digital technology and leadership. Source Own figure

5 Future Prospects-Analog and Digital Ways

We have the privilege and the opportunity to co-shape our world. Growth is different every time and that is key. Individual worlds are created by new and different ways of creating. Joy and courage are important energies. With great confidence in the next leadership generation one thing is clear: they will think and hopefully also act differently in order to build a peaceful society on a healthy planet earth. Albert Einstein once coined the phrase: “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

Live and love what you do!

Be smart—follow your heart—invest in SDGs.

6 Question Thinking for Digital Sustainable Leadership

- What has influenced you most?
- What change history can you tell about yourself and your company?
- What are your roots?
- What kind of responsibility do you like to take on?
- What is your motivation?
- Are you rather cost or quality oriented?
- Which three values unite you and your company?
- Do you feel like an ambassador of your company?
- Are you thinking in terms of problems or solutions?
- Do you prefer thinking of people or processes?
- For what do you get up in the morning?
- What strengthens and what inspires you?
- What kinds of value appreciation do you know?
- Which code of conduct you think most necessary/appropriate/suitable for you?
- Which SDGs are you already following in your life?
- Which virtual rooms do you use most frequently?
- Are you equally competent in the digital and the analog world?
- Are you in charge of your smart phone or is your smart phone in charge of you?
- Do you know your values? Do you know your non-values?

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