



“This is a brilliant little guide that’ll help you everyday. Keep it with you. I do.”

Chris Pilling, Chief Executive, First Direct

“I do not think I have ever read such a good, simple, helpful book about leadership. This book is such a gift and will be of inspiration and support to so many people.”

Professor Gillian Stamp, Fellow of the Windsor Leadership Trust

Welcome

One of my great passions is helping people grow as leaders. Why? Because I've seen so often the difference that quality leadership can make to the lives of people and the success of organisations.

I've written this book with the sole purpose of helping you develop faster as a more confident, capable leader. The only qualification you need is the desire to grow.

It absolutely doesn't matter where you are in an organisation. You can be in your first job, you can have no direct reports. You can have a team or run a department. You can head an organisation. And it can be the local parish council or a global giant. It really doesn't matter because I've seen inspiring leadership from people in all these positions and I've realised that the fundamentals of leadership are the same for any situation.



We'll explore these fundamentals together in this book and I'll share with you the ideas and practices I've seen have most helped people grow as leaders. You'll learn more about the leader you are now, the leader you want to be and the ways of getting there, even if you don't yet fully think of yourself as a leader.

What I'll bring will come from my journey as both a leader and partner to other leaders. After my early years in Wigan in the north of England, at Oxford University and then Procter and Gamble, I moved to the US to be a chief executive in a multi-national business before returning to the UK.

I then realised that who I wanted to be was a great partner to leaders. So for close to twenty years now, I've been a leadership coach and consultant to individuals, teams and organisations of all shapes and sizes.

I've learned lots from reading other books on leadership but my most enlightening learning has come from sitting alongside leaders in 'live' situations as they have worked at engaging and mobilising others. I have captured what I've learnt in my proven approach to developing leaders, *Future – Engage – Deliver*.

I've seen that there is real value in keeping messages straightforward and practical. And this is what I'll do in this book.

This 'leadership stuff' really needn't be complicated. I believe that leading is a natural, human activity that is a part of all of us. You don't need a certain IQ or job title to be a leader!

But there is something you do need. You need to be 'up to something'. That is, you need to have an ambition or dream or goal for your team, organisation, colleagues or yourself and it's got to matter to you.

I've been a partner to hundreds of leaders and this has been the only common feature among them – whether we've been focussing on private or public sector challenges, in crisis or quieter times, on a local or global scale – the leader has wanted a different future and was determined to do something about it. He or she was 'up to something' that mattered to them.

At this moment, you may not be clear on what you're 'up to'. That's perfectly ok. I'll help you get clearer on this.

Or you may be pretty clear on what's important to you and what you want but you don't know how you're going to make it happen. That's ok too and has been the case at sometime with everyone I've worked with.

Or you may not even allow yourself to think about the future because you're not confident you can influence it. Well, I'll encourage you to throw yourself in, try new approaches, experiment, practise and learn. In particular, I'll urge you to be really open to learning about yourself, and understand what it is about you that brings people with you and makes things happen. And also how you at times hold yourself back and so limit what's possible.

The result of you taking this approach is that you are guaranteed to become an even more confident and effective leader. However, you cannot grow fully as a leader overnight. It's something that takes time. My ambition is to be your partner in this endeavour. So please do not think of this as just a stand-alone book to be read once. There will be value in you returning to it often. Here's how I suggest you best use the book:

First read at least the next chapter to get an overview of the topic of leadership.

I believe one of the factors holding many of us back from growing as leaders is that we don't have an overall grasp of what it's all about. Many of us have a number of ideas about leadership without seeing how they all fit together.

Second, when you're ready, read the book to identify what sort of leader you want to be and how you currently are as a leader. You will be naturally strong and not so strong in some aspects of leadership – that's how we all are. Get a sense of this as you read and begin clarifying how you want to grow.

Third, dip in at any time when things are not going well. Use this book to help you identify what's going on and what aspect of leadership is missing – I promise you the answer's in here!

Also use the book when things are going well. That way you can learn about what's really making things work and you can then take this learning to other situations.

Also, this book is just one part of supporting your ongoing development. For instance, at the book website at www.futureengagedeliver.com/book you'll find copies of the key pages of the book which you can print off to carry as prompts or share with colleagues. You'll also find quotes and articles and links to books that have inspired me and which may inspire you too. And you can subscribe to receive regular features and reminders about *Future – Engage – Deliver*.

And please don't keep this stuff to yourself. Part of what you care about may be helping others to grow as leaders. In which case, get them involved. Talk to them about what you're learning. Help them get in touch with what they care about and how they'd like to grow as leaders. Steer them to the webpage. Give them a copy of this book!

Also finally, let me hear back from you. If you have comments or stories to share, please send them to me. And if you want more support, there is a team of us who can support you by phone or come to see you.

I've distilled my learnings about leadership into a simple yet powerful framework, *Future – Engage – Deliver*. It captures the very best ideas and practices of how to grow faster as a leader. The book brings it to life so that you can make it real for you and rapidly accelerate your development as a leader who makes a difference.

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"...there are only three aspects to leading that you've got to grasp. They are Future, Engage, Deliver."

**Future
Engage
Deliver**

Future – Engage – Deliver

In this chapter, you'll see that all this 'leadership stuff' needn't be as complicated as it's often made out to be. And you'll see that you already have what you need to be an effective leader.

Boy, have I been slow?! For years, I've read all the latest books on people, leadership and organisations.

Why? Because I've been seduced into thinking that this leadership stuff is really complicated, even mysterious. And I believed I'd have to do lots of reading to really 'get it'.

A major error! In contrast, when I've reflected on what was it about the leadership that switched on that board, project team or warehouse operator, I've recognised that there have always been three ingredients at play:

Future – Engage – Deliver

This is the model I have proven in use with leaders the world over. It has consistently been the catalyst for leaders who have wanted to accelerate their own and others' growth. It really is that simple – I promise you that you'll find a place for any leadership idea you come across inside this framework.

The fact is that whether you want to organise a great birthday party, create a high-performing team or help build a society that prospers, you will need to practise these three aspects of leading.

Of course, it may not be easy to be brilliant at all three aspects, but I promise you that these ideas are all you need to 'get' in order to grow your leadership. Let me explain.

First, leading always starts in the Future.

Leading always starts with ideas and thoughts about what you'd like to see in the Future, how you'd like things to be, where you'd like to get to or what you'd like to build.

We have many words to describe these ideas; they include 'goal, target, ambition, aspiration, dream' and from the world of business you can add words like 'vision, mission, direction and strategic intent'. These are all ways of describing the Future you want.

I'll say a lot more about Future later but let me be absolutely clear right now

Powerful and effective leaders are guided by the Future that they want. And more than this, the leader is strongest when that future is powerfully connected to what he or she cares about.

Why does this matter? Because the more commitment the leader has for the desired future, the more they will persist, the more energy they'll bring along the way, the more they'll stay 'up to something'.

Additionally, when the leader has this powerful relationship to the Future they care about, it can also have an extraordinary impact on others ... sparking innovative thinking, giving people a reason to go the extra mile, providing hope in times of difficulty and, most importantly giving meaning to people's work. In essence, a strong connection to the Future you want can create a mood of optimism, hope and possibility that can ignite human creativity and build confidence.

Second, if you want the help of others to create that Future, you'll need to Engage them.

That is, you will interact with them in a way that has them *want* to build the Future with you. Engagement is central to a leader's ability to build alignment, involvement, ownership, unity and team. Crucially, it is absolutely distinct from 'communicating to', 'presenting at', or 'telling'.

I am staggered that so many leaders still appear to believe that in order to get the best from others it's enough for them simply to 'transmit' their ideas or wishes. It isn't.

Engaging others is all about interaction and it's something that happens inside your relationships. To be fully effective, you'll need to engage people in yourself, as well as in the Future you want to create, and this calls for qualities like integrity, openness and consistency. When engagement occurs, not only is an enormous sense of possibility generated but people will be ready to knock down barriers as they pursue what they have helped to invent. What's possible for a group or organisation when people are really engaged can be immense.

And third, in Deliver, you make things happen.

This is where words like 'performance, execution, implementation and results' live. Leading doesn't stop with 'vision' or 'team'. It ends with delivery.

So for the birthday party, you start with ideas about how you'd like the party to be – you start in the Future. Then you chat with others you'd like to organise it with – you Engage them. Then you encourage and support them to make it happen, to Deliver. And if you're really being a leader rather than a doer, the other people who you've engaged will make most of it happen.

Whatever the ambition or goal, this is what's involved: **Future – Engage – Deliver**. You'll notice I don't dwell on leadership competencies or qualities. Rather I prefer to focus you on what you have to get done. If you want to be truly effective:

- you have to be guided by a Future you want,
- you have to Engage others, and
- you have to Deliver.

Let's get practical right now and start working with this framework by using it to look at your organisation and then you.

What do you see about your Organisation?

Have a look at your organisation through the Future – Engage – Deliver lens and consider these questions:

Future

- How strong is the sense of Future in your organisation? Is there an uplifting sense of purpose and ambition? Or is the focus more on analysing the past?
- Is there a sense of possibility in the air? Do people readily think about what could be achieved rather than what can't be done?
- Is there a feeling of optimism and hope? Is this strong enough to help people feel confident in the face of barriers?

Engage

- Are people engaged in and want to contribute to the goals of the organisation?
- Do they feel valued and involved?
- Do people look to engage colleagues or is it more a culture of 'communicate to and tell'?

Deliver

- Is your organisation strong at delivering what it sets out to?

- Are conversations about delivery full and robust, or do people 'go along' with what's being asked of them?
- Also are people helped to develop in order to increase the organisation's overall capacity to deliver?

Ask the same questions about your department, team and key individuals. What do you see about how strong the leadership in your organisation is and where it's coming from?

What do you see about You?

Now let's turn to you. There is something here I really want you to take on board. It is that each of these aspects of leading requires what I call **Leadership Muscles** and the really good news is that you already have the Leadership Muscles for each of the three essential aspects of leading that I've outlined.

Let's demonstrate this now:

Future Muscles

At times, you have ideas about how you'd like things to be in the Future; you imagine, you dream, you visualise; you have ambitions and aspirations. This is the Leadership Muscle at the core of the Future aspect.

Engage Muscles

Similarly, there are times and places in your life where you've interacted with others so they've wanted to help you and do things for you. You already have the Muscles needed to Engage others.

Deliver Muscles

And finally, there have been times when you have followed up with people and they have delivered for you. This may have been delivery on a large or small scale. Either way, you were using your Deliver Muscles.

Not all your Muscles may be strong. That's ok - I've yet to work with a leader

who's been really powerful in all three aspects of leading. Feel good about and exercise the Muscles that are strong, and enjoy developing through practice the ones that are weaker.

I'll show you how to do this as we go along and particularly in the next chapter where we'll look at how the leaders I've seen grow fastest do so.

In Summary...

Future – Engage – Deliver, it's as simple as that. Don't believe that this 'leadership stuff' is any more complicated whether you are leading a full organisation, a team or just yourself.

You already have all the fundamental Leadership Muscles. And you can grow them further with practice.