



PRAESTA

PRAESTA INSIGHTS

Leading for the long term Creating a sustainable future

Praesta is an international firm of business coaches. We coach senior leaders including CEOs, main board directors, management team members and other key senior executives. Praesta clients comprise several hundred organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors, including major companies, government departments, private equity owned businesses, leading professional services firms and all areas of financial services.

All Praesta coaches have had senior level business careers – many were Board members, CEOs, partners, or managing directors of major organisations in their first careers. Thorough training, continual professional development and regular supervision are integral to maintaining high standards. As well as one-to-one coaching, Praesta coaches work with teams, conduct board effectiveness reviews and are leaders in working with executive women and job-sharers.

Praesta Insights pull together ideas and experience about topical leadership issues in an accessible and digestible way. We work closely with leaders in different spheres on thought leadership. This publication has been researched and written by Praesta coaches Hilary Douglas and Peter Shaw.

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Introduction

In today's complex world, leaders have to lead through uncertainty more than ever before, and face competing – sometimes contradictory – demands and challenges. Individual leaders, teams and organisations need to recognise their interdependence with other teams and systems. A sense of overall purpose needs to be matched by flexibility on how to get there.

Our research tells us that leaders who make a sustainable difference and stay resilient during challenging times:

- Unite their teams around common goals, whatever the uncertainties of the longer term
- Encourage everyone to focus on the things they must and can do, and to worry less about relative trivia or the things outside of their control
- Invite innovative approaches, and learn from disappointment, as well as celebrating success
- Remain agile in response to changing circumstances
- Encourage collaborative behaviours across organisational barriers and siloes
- Consult widely on how to get the best results from virtual or hybrid working

- Acknowledge people's different emotional and physical needs, and tailor communication to those needs
- Look after their own wellbeing, so they can help others

In our coaching conversations, we have been exploring how leaders can build on this learning, as they adapt to an unpredictable future. We often use metaphors as prompts for thought.

Metaphors that have resonated include:

- **See the wood for the trees**
- **Connect with each link in the chain**
- **Capture the genius of your people**

And, in relation to key behaviours:

- **Stay calm amidst the storm**
- **Float like a butterfly and sting like a bee**
- **Weave the golden thread of trust**

In this Insight publication we develop the thinking behind these metaphors, share some comments from clients, and offer two questions for reflection for each section. At the end of the booklet we collate the 12 questions on a one page prompt sheet which can be used by teams as a self-contained note.