



# Business Leadership for the 21st Century

Leading in Turbulent Times

# Overview

Welcome to the 21st century: an age of complexity and turbulence where continuous disruption is becoming the norm; where information is no longer a source of strategic advantage, and where agility is fast replacing every other parameter of business success. The turbulence is the result of multiple, and apparently unrelated factors, that come together in unpredictable ways to create conditions in which old solutions no longer work as effectively as before. Globalization, digital technology, and a new demographic are colluding to create a new environment of complexity and demanding new ways of thinking and leading, and new ways of fostering innovation at the work place. It is no longer possible to solely rely on old ways of running our organizations, and leaders have to learn to thrive in complex and ambiguous situations.

Not since Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in 1899 has there been a more momentous inflection point in history. The impact is going to be massive.

Most of our leadership theories are largely based on the image of the leader as a general leading "his" troops in a planned, predictable world where instructions are obeyed and strategy is king. So much of the 21st century bears little resemblance to a time when linear solutions worked. In a complex world of multiple, convergent causes and unforeseeable discontinuities, leaders have to learn to think and respond differently.

So, what are the challenges specific to the 21st century? For one, our organizations are being driven to act more like networks than hierarchies. It is no longer what we know that counts, but how we build significance out of what we know. Everyone has a role to play; the leader's work is to help make it happen. Secondly, our organizations are under scrutiny from employees, stakeholders and customers who possess three unprecedented resources: ubiquitous access to social information; an expectation that they can engage anyone and everyone in conversation and shape the point of view of the community; availability of cheap and fast communication that allows them to react to events in real time. In reality, the "general" has very little control left.

So, competitive advantage is rapidly shifting to the generation of social relevance in an open system of global networks whose actions, decisions and interactions are beyond any management team's jurisdiction and control. From a leadership point of view, this poses a challenge to the static and insular world-view that has shaped our very organizational form, our routines and behaviors at work and our interactions with the external world. In the 21st century, these are largely becoming irrelevant.

All in all, these factors have created five leadership challenges that are unique to the 21st century:

## Anticipating Disruption

Although discontinuity is not new, it occurred in rare and dramatic ways but it is fast becoming the norm – from streaming video destroying the video rental market to big data mining of search engine terms remaking epidemiology. The ability to pick up weak signals that could be emerging from an adjacent space, and finding ways of responding to them speedily is fast becoming a leadership challenge of huge importance.

## Proactively influencing the world around you

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## Authentically relating to others

Organizations in the Social Age are driven by transparency and the demand for authenticity has never been higher as workplaces become increasingly flattened out and a new generation of “digital natives” and the early converts to the Social Age start exercising their demands for transparency.

## Taking in new information and adjusting perspectives

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## Scaling communications for different audiences

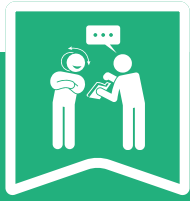
The inhabitants in the Social Age carry a megaphone and live life out loud. Speaking to the entire organization was once the purview of senior leaders. Thanks to social media, everyone who cares can speak to everyone else who cares – inside and outside. In this new reality a leader must be able to pitch communications in a way that they are appropriate for an individual, a group and the world all at once.

To stay relevant and significant, leaders must learn new cognitive tools and behaviors that are about the following four critical factors:

1. Leading in ambiguity
2. Developing agility
3. Leading with a mindful mindset
4. Inspiring others



# Programme Objectives



To understand complexity as a business and leadership issue and how it affects your performance and profitability



To develop your leadership capability to lead in times of complexity



To generate ideas and develop plans and processes to nurture and lead change

## Core Themes

1. Identifying the complexities that are posing or will pose business challenges

2. Learning to deal with complexity

3. Becoming aware of your cognitive and behavioural traps

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



4. Developing a mindful mindset

5. Building the ability to lead in times of complexity and change

## Process

Combination of some theoretical input and a workshop-oriented participation. The pre-work includes identifying the key factors that are causing complexity and uncertainty in the company plus the leadership challenges: this will be audited through interviews with selected senior management representatives.

# Programme Faculty



**Sudhanshu Palsule**

Sudhanshu Palsule is an award-winning educator, CEO Advisor and leadership coach, regarded as one of the leading thinkers in the fields of Complexity and Transformative Leadership. He has taught at several leading universities and business schools over the past three decades including INSEAD, Cambridge University, and the Helsinki School of Economics. Palsule is closely associated with Duke CE on senior level engagements around Adaptive Leadership, Leading 21st Century Organizations, and Purpose and Significance. Prior to this, he was a Senior Advisor for leadership development at the United Nations.

Sudhanshu consults to several organizations around the world and works with CEOs and top teams to help them navigate through complexity. His latest book, *The Social Leader*, was published in September 2014 in New York. He has written several books including *Managing in Four Worlds*, *The Ecology of Organizations*, *Personal Growth*, and *Science, Technology, and Social Change*. His new book on Complexity and Purpose will be published in 2017.

## Programme Details

### Dates



4, 6, 11, 13 February 2025

### Duration



4 Days

### Mode



Live-Online



**Programme Fee: INR 50,000 + GST Per Participant**



# About Centre for Executive Education

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The Centre for Executive Education (CEE) at Mahindra University, creates and conducts learning programmes for working professionals, which are designed to provide timely and relevant knowledge, insights and perspectives, that help them progress in their current and future roles in organizations. By enhancing performance of executives, these programmes are aimed to positively impact the organisations that they work for.

Executive Education Programmes at Mahindra University span across multiple business disciplines, engineering & data science, and law, for different seniority levels, in various national and international geographical locations.

CEE's mission is to be a hub for engaging & beneficial interactions between business leaders and the academia. The centre works with some of the finest faculty in India and from leading Global Business Schools. Participants will have opportunities to learn from the innovative research and consulting experience of the faculty, wide experience of the peer group of learners, and from Industry practitioners who bring in strong domain knowledge.

# About Mahindra University

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Mahindra University, established in May 2020, is a multi-disciplinary global education and knowledge campus which offers industry-aligned curricula, a student-centered learning environment, and opportunities for international exposure. The University offers Undergraduate and Post Graduate programs in its five Schools namely Ecole Centrale School of Engineering, School of Management, School of Law, Indira Mahindra School of Education, School of Media, Centre for Sustainability, School of Design and Innovation and Liberal Arts. The University has been established in a sprawling, green, 130 acres at Bahadurpally in Hyderabad. The University provides students with a modern lifestyle and a unique multi-cultural immersion in a predominantly green campus. The Lecture Theaters, Seminar Halls and Syndicate Rooms deploy state-of-the-art technology, to impart a multi-media, interactive learning experience to participants. Executive Housing facilities on campus come with contemporary design, spacious & comfortable air-conditioned rooms.



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University  
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