

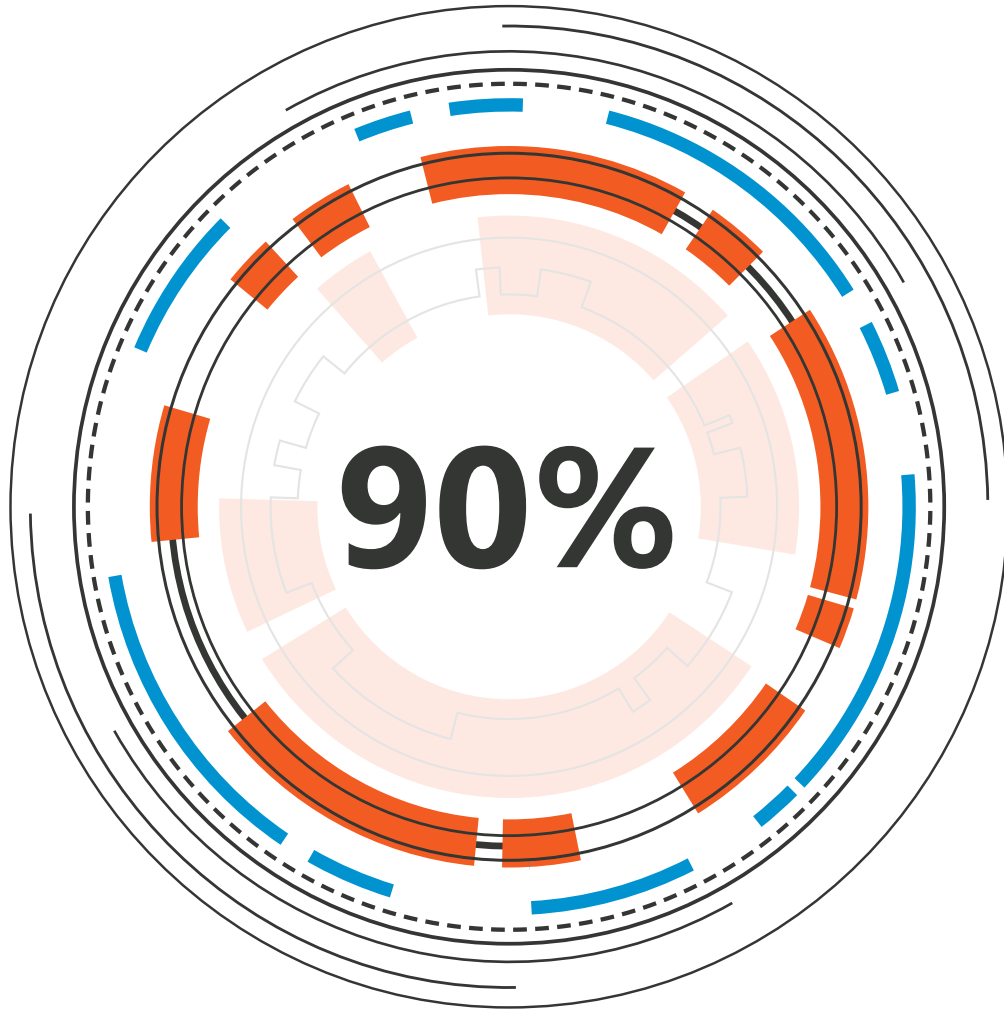
Don't Lose **SIGHT**

of **COMPETENCE** and **CONNECTION**
in a **DIGITAL WORLD**

Leah Clark, Director, Strategy and Development
BlessingWhite, A Division of GP Strategies



BLESSINGWHITE
A Division of GP Strategies



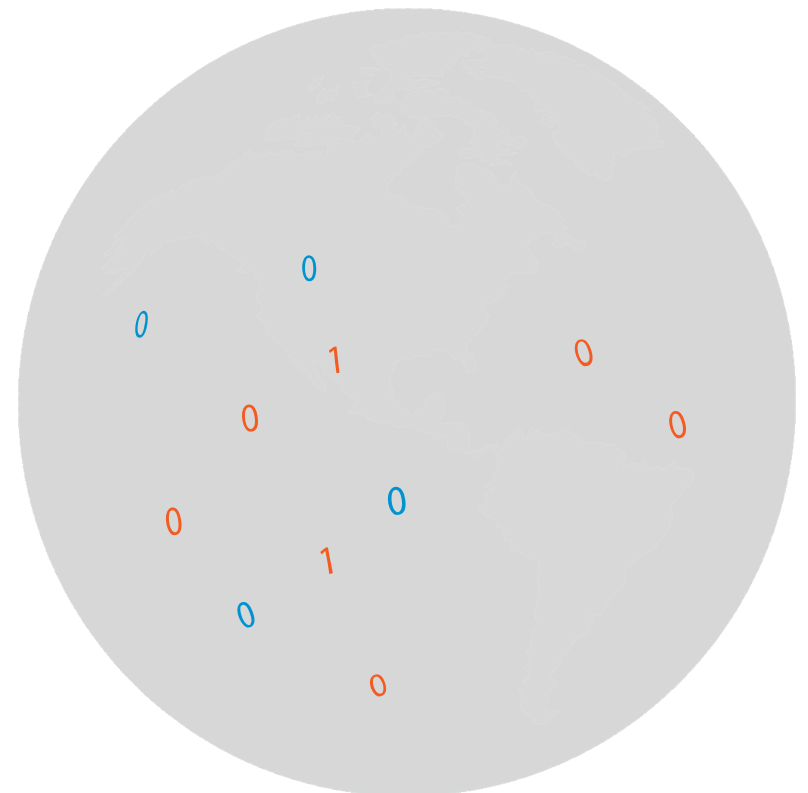
of Executives believe their

businesses are being
DISRUPTED or **REINVENTED**
by digital business models.

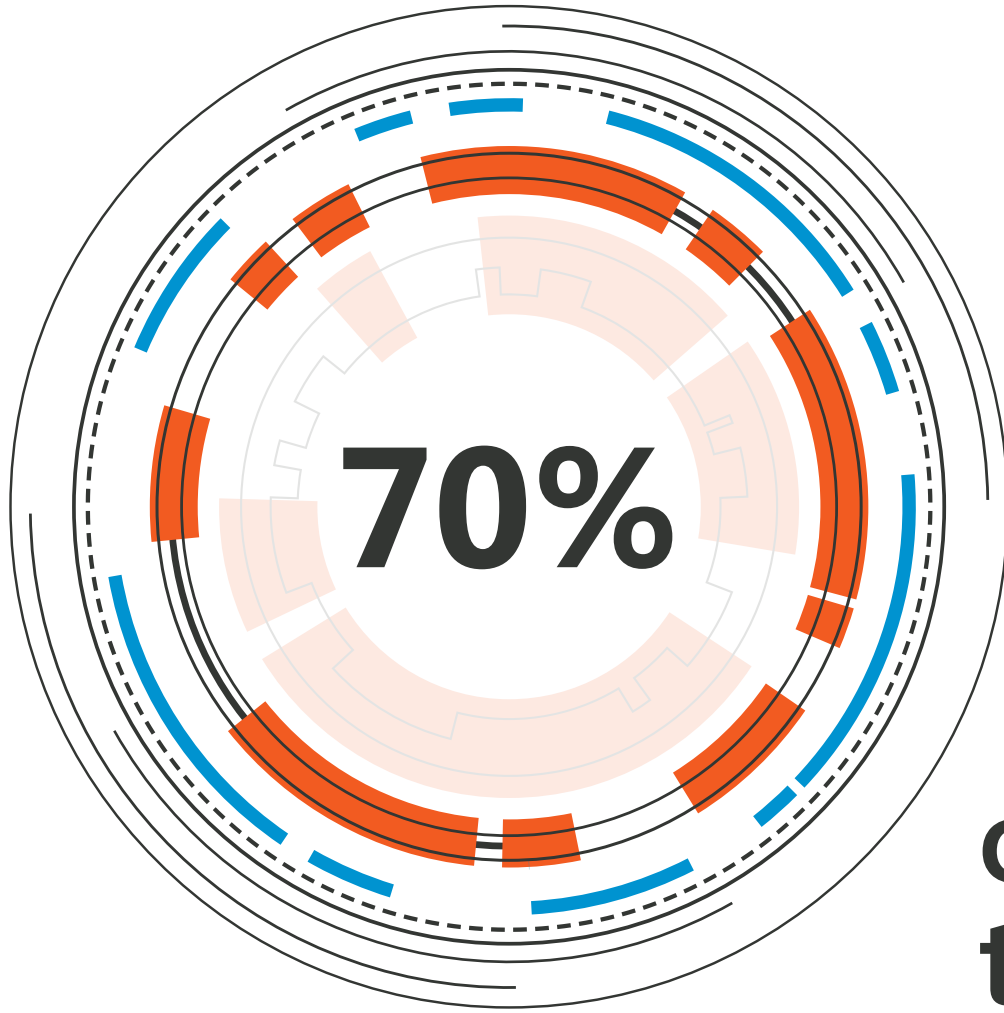
It's no surprise

to anyone that **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

is likely to continue to profoundly impact how organizations conduct business. This disruption is massive, requiring new rules for operating in a digital world as well as changing how employees and customers want to interact with organizations.



Businesses need to **SHIFT**
to a new way of working.



**of CEOs believe
they do not**

have the right skills, leader, or
operating structure to **ADAPT**.

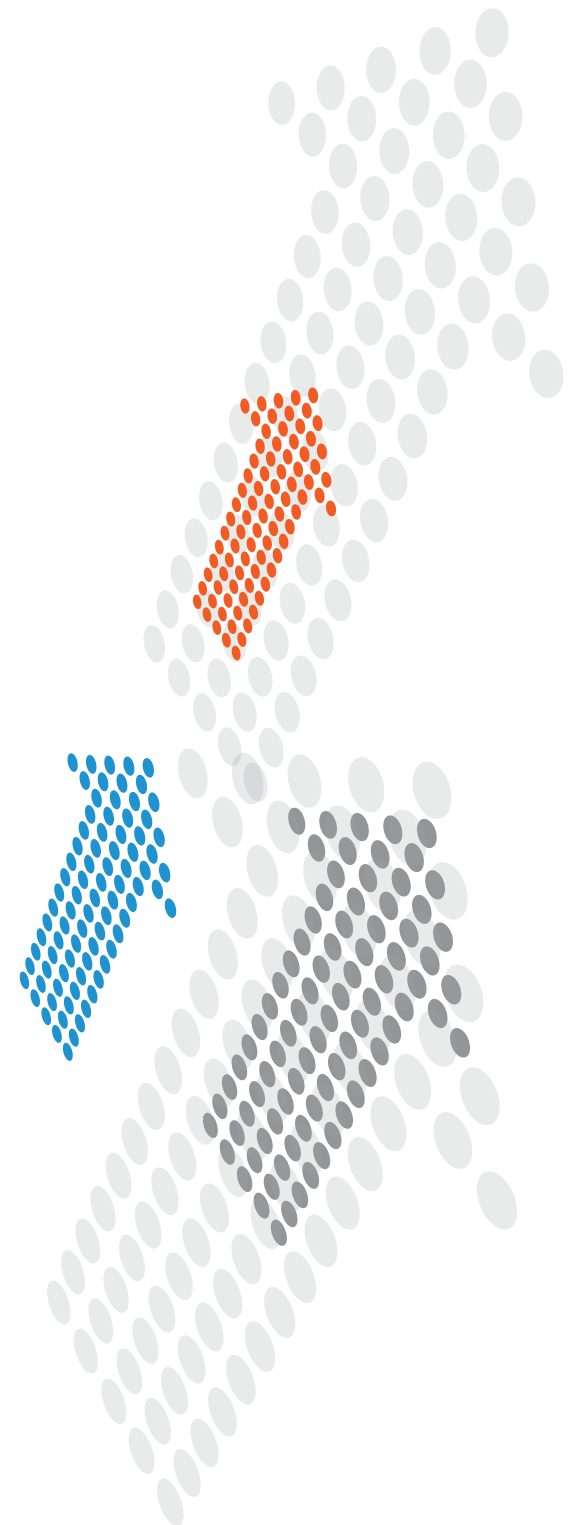
As organizations evolve

and try to figure out how to shift to a **DIGITAL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP** model—from recruiting and sales to customer service and internal communications—what are the implications for the leaders of these organizations?

How does **leadership** change in a digital age?

What skills will become most critical **to lead** successfully?

This eBook outlines the key areas leaders should focus on to ensure their teams excel in a digital environment.



For years, Blessing White's POINT OF VIEW

has been that strong leadership comes down to two things: **COMPETENCE** and **CONNECTION**. And, despite the pace of change that defines a digital world, the foundation of competence and connection is still very necessary for all leaders to be successful. At the same time, how competence and connection take shape for each individual digital leader will look different.



This raises the question,

“Does the DIGITAL AGE change
how leaders **engage, connect,**
and **lead** employees?”

COMPETENCE

in Digital Business
Leadership

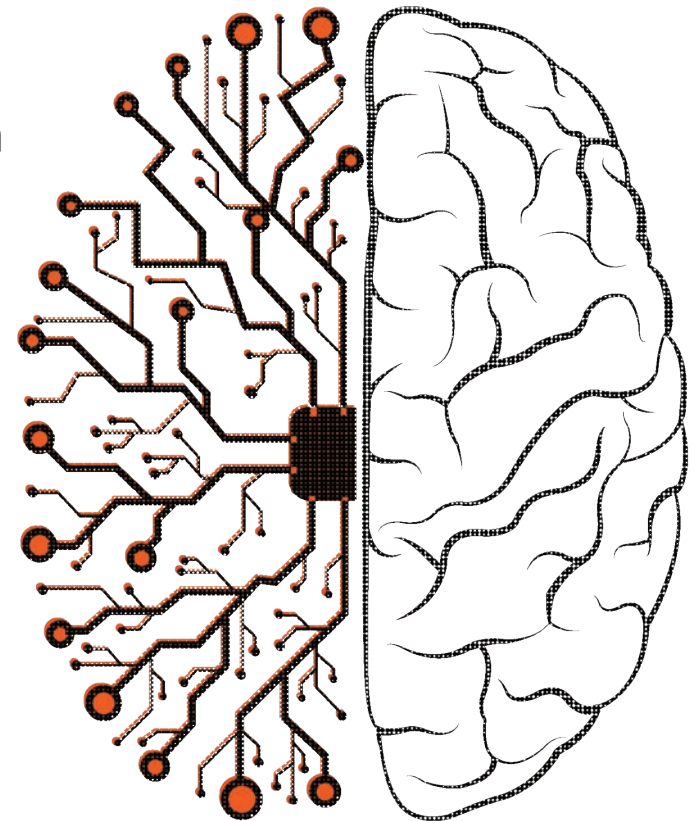
COMPETENCE

Competent leaders:

- Understand what is expected of them
- Know themselves
- Understand the business

Individuals who lead with competence focus on organizational **SUCCESS** and **BUSINESS RESULTS**.

How does this **UNDERSTANDING** shift in an age of digital leadership?

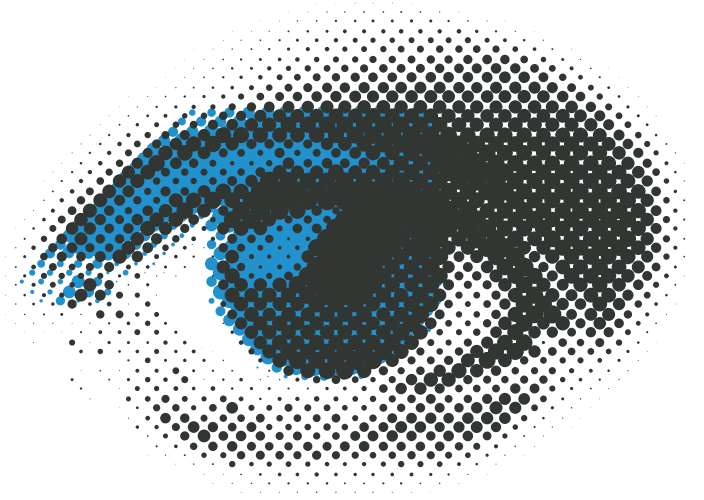


COMPETENCE

ACKNOWLEDGE that massive change is underway, spurred by digital transformation.

Step one to competence is simple **AWARENESS**.

Leaders can't lead as they did 5 or 10 years ago, ignoring the impact of digital transformation. We are in a **NEW AGE** with **NEW RULES**. Competent leaders demonstrate they are attuned to these changes even if they haven't figured out exactly how to respond to them. Imagine a leader today who fails to understand the importance of social channels on relationships. How competent would socially charged Millennials perceive that leader to be?



While a degree in digital leadership isn't a requirement, a willingness to **embrace digital** is.

COMPETENCE


LISTEN at scale.

A competent leader listens.

A digital leader listens **AT SCALE**.

Listening at scale is an acknowledgment that, in today's digital age, a leader can hear from hundreds, if not thousands, of people at once without ever being in front of them. Digital business leaders can **HEAR DIRECTLY FROM INDIVIDUALS** without the feedback being subject to someone else's interpretation.



The background of the slide is a dark grey grid with a white ECG (heart rate) line. The line shows a regular rhythm with two prominent peaks. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the grid.

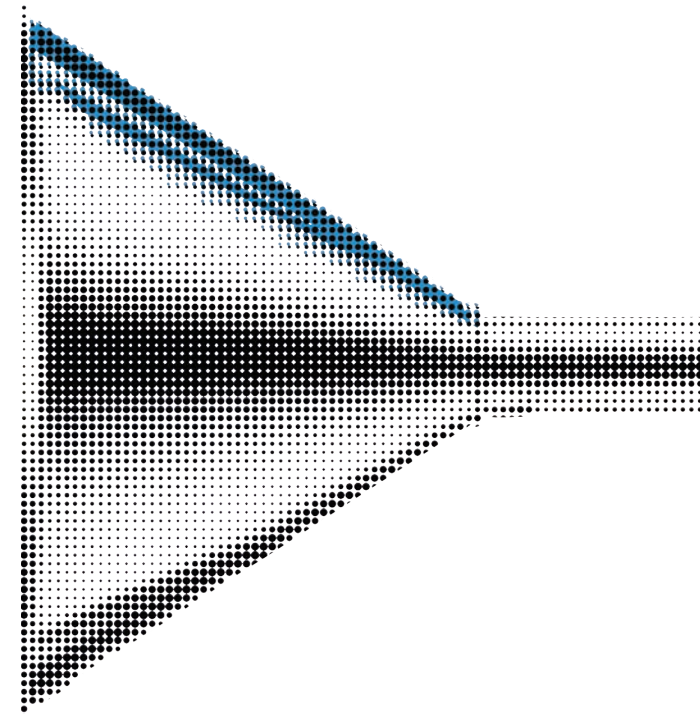
Without waiting for the information to be shared in a dashboard or formal report, leaders can turn quickly to social media and get a **PULSE** on how their employees feel about the **culture, salary ranges leadership,** or **professional development** of their organization.

COMPETENCE

FILTER appropriately.

A competent leader is able to take in DATA QUICKLY, from a variety of sources, and use it to make decisions.

At the same time, it's important to filter the massive amount of information coming their way to assess what is useful and what is just noise. In a digital age, this ability to **FILTER INFORMATION** is even more important. Looking at not only what is said, but also at what information gets shared, is a critical part of this process.

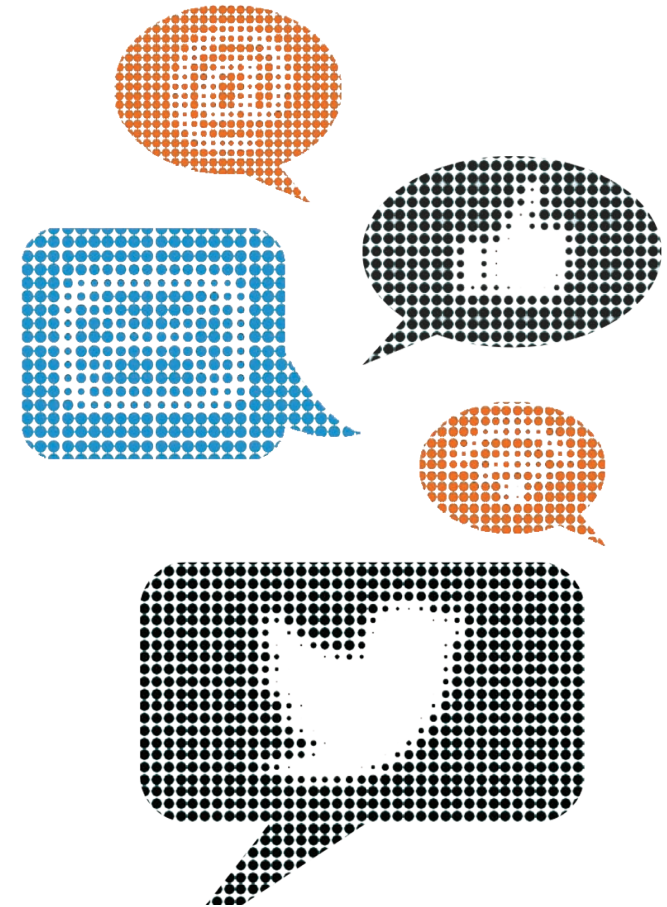


COMPETENCE

MANAGE your reputation and the message.

Competent leaders are strategic in **MANAGING** their own messages.

Digital business leaders don't simply use and view information in a voyeuristic way. They jump in and communicate about themselves and their company's brand. Today's technology platforms allow them to do that in a very personal way. Without the formality of a sanitized press release, digital leaders can share **WHO THEY ARE** and **HOW THEY FEEL**.



Competent leaders understand that they need to manage the message with **CONSISTENCY** and **CONGRUENCY**, but how they do it has everything to do with their **CONNECTION** skills.

CONNECTION

in the Age of Digital
Leadership

Connection in the age of digital
BUSINESS LEADERSHIP doesn't
refer to how many people are in
your LinkedIn network.

CONNECTION

CONNECTION for a digital leader—and all leaders—is about building trust, establishing relationships, and appreciating individual differences.

How do you connect and **“LEAD WITH YOUR HEART”** when that heart beats with a digital pulse?



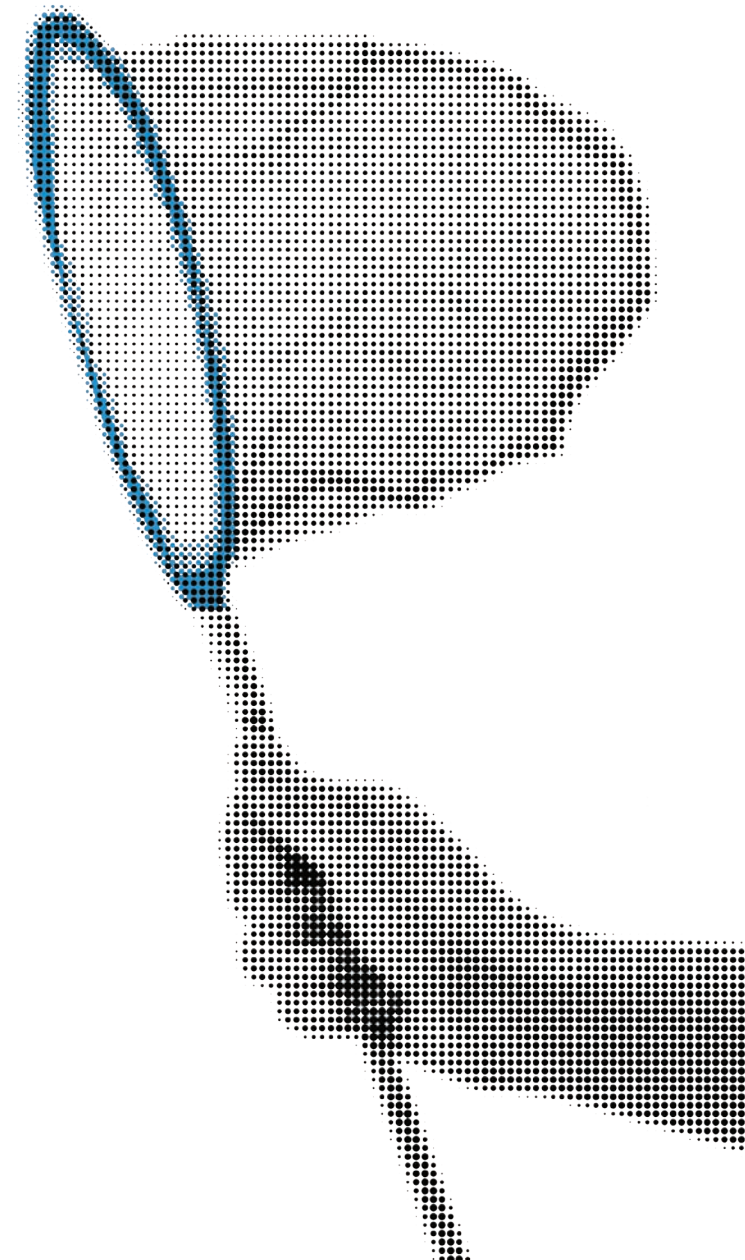
CONNECTION

Read the **ENVIRONMENT**.

We say good leaders are able to read their environment by situation sensing.

They can **COLLECT AND INTERPRET** the information around them, even if information is attained through intuition. Leaders who have these skills are able to uncover less obvious signals and sense what is going on.

Digital leadership will require the same **INTUITIVE ABILITIES** to read what's happening in a social or online environment to understand what employees are feeling, the impact of their comments on recruiting talent, the choices they are making, and the reputation of their company and brand.



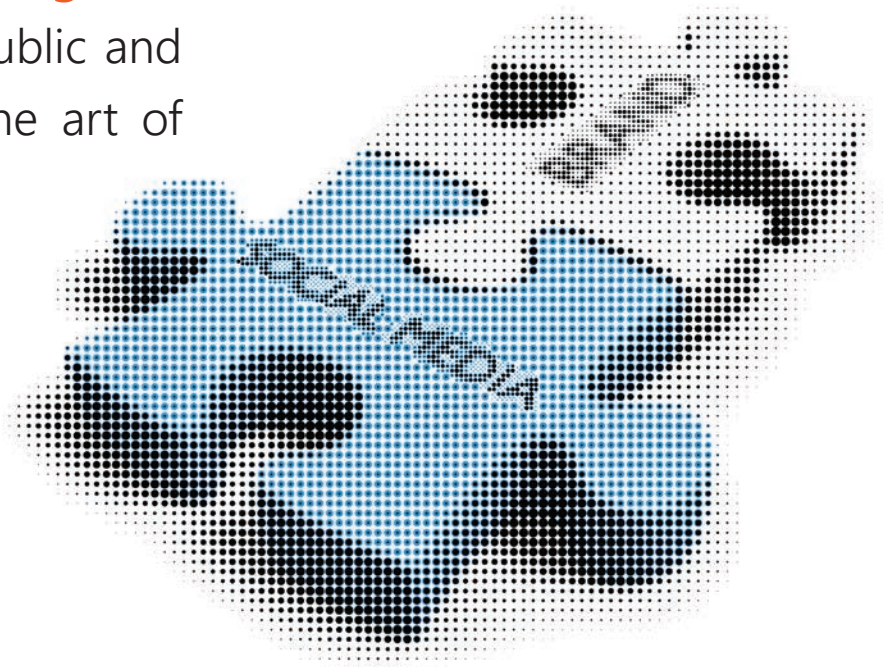
CONNECTION

SHARE authentically.

Digital social leaders understand the power of sharing—both personally and on behalf of their company.

When any leader shares more about themselves, they forge stronger relationships with the people they lead. **BlessingWhite**, and authors Robert Goffee and Gareth Jones, talk about authentic leadership as “**knowing and showing yourself more...with skill**”. With public and private personas colliding online, mastering the art of sharing appropriately takes new meaning.

Social leaders understand that a **BRAND'S SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE** is more than the responsibility of the marketing department.



As a leader and as an individual, you need to leverage online platforms to share about yourself personally.

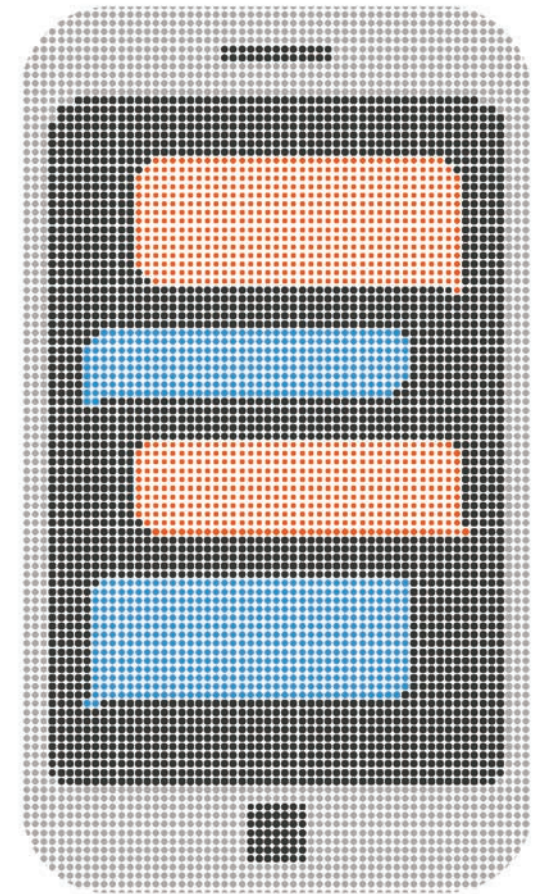
In this way you **CONNECT** with others, **UNDERSTAND** more about them and, appropriately, **REVEAL** more about yourself. This process builds trust—trust is the most important foundational building block in strong leaders.

CONNECTION

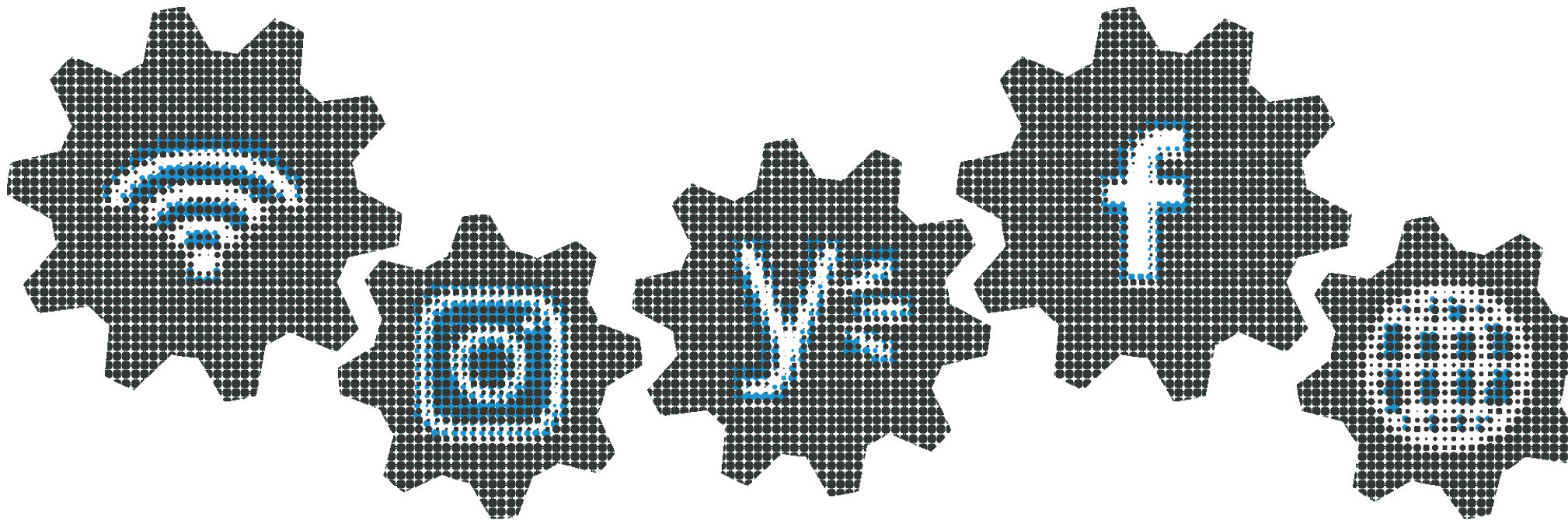
Establish **RELATIONSHIPS**.

Digital business leaders leverage social platforms to establish one-to-one relationships in ways previously not available in a scalable way.

No longer confined to visiting a showroom floor or store, digital leaders can now interact with customers in a socially enabled way. Consider the leader who **SCANS ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS** and **RESPONDS PERSONALLY** with a commitment to higher quality products or a better experience. While the goal is not to turn leaders into a deluxe customer service center, when done selectively, establishing more **DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS** with customers can help connect leaders to their end consumer.



The digital leader who participates in **SOCIALLY GEARED SHARING** on Facebook, Instagram, or Yammer becomes instantly more accessible to their employees.

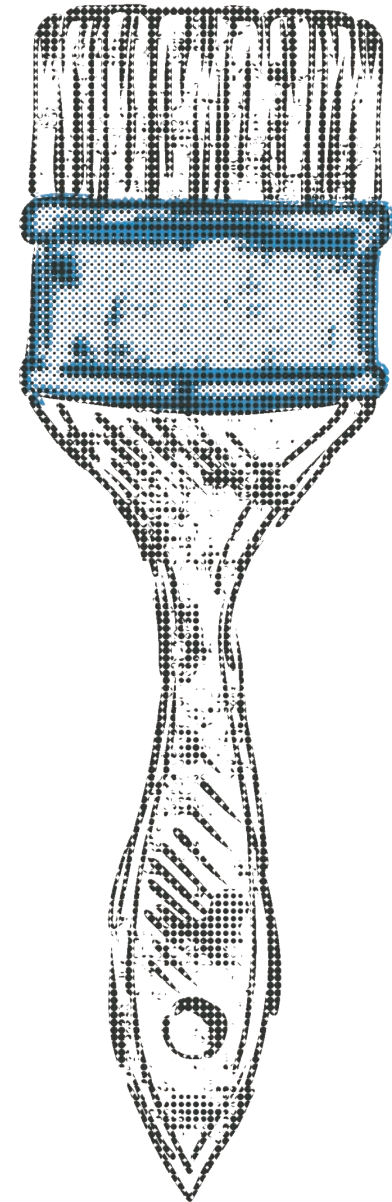


CONNECTION

COMMUNICATE in a way that *INSPIRES*

Digital leaders will find ways to share their vision and connect people to that vision.

Through both words and imagery, a digital leader has the opportunity to **PAINT A PICTURE** of where they want to take their company, and they will be forced to **SIMPLIFY THAT VISION** and be more transparent in their communication. Social and digital business leaders are not simply images you see in an annual report—they are real and present every day in creating compelling communications that help others envision the future. Digital and social leaders understand the importance of using multiple channels to reach employees and reinforce their messages.



The elimination of physical and geographic boundaries allows a **SOCIAL-DIGITAL CEO** to reach individuals across different departments or time zones with ease.

Strong DIGITAL LEADERS

Do What All Strong Leaders Have Done for Years

Digital leaders understand the power of the information they are getting and the messages they are sharing. But digital business leadership isn't about hiding behind data or social media. It's about understanding if the information you are receiving is telling you about what your employees (or customers) are **THINKING**, what **DRIVES THEM**, and what's **IMPORTANT TO THEM**. It's also about sharing in a more unfiltered and authentic way.

We look forward to exploring **DIGITAL LEADERSHIP** and its links to talent recruitment, authentic leadership, communication, innovation, and many other topics. As a start, we think it's important to remind ourselves that the need for competence and connection does not disappear with the rise of digital leadership. It becomes even more critical.

Great digital leaders will do what great leaders have done for years—**CONNECT** with the mind and **LEAD** with the heart.

Click on this **SELF-ASSESSMENT** to determine how frequently you are using digital tools to support and express your **COMPETENCE** and **CONNECTION**. When you complete the **SELF-ASSESSMENT** you will be able to download an infographic on [Leading in a NEW and DIGITAL World](#).



Josh Bersin, *Digital Leadership Is Not an Optional Part of Being a CEO*, hbr.org, Harvard Business Review, 12/01/2016
Accessed 11/07/2016. <https://hbr.org/2016/12/digital-leadership-is-not-an-optional-part-of-being-a-ceo>

About BlessingWhite

BlessingWhite, a Division of GP Strategies, provides key expertise in leadership development and employee engagement solutions that translate business strategies into results for customers by developing more effective leaders and more engaged workforces.

About GP Strategies

Founded in 1966, GP Strategies delivers performance improvement programs that strategically align with your unique business objectives and differentiate your global workforce, leaders and salespeople to ensure business excellence. Our sole focus is performance improvement, and everything we do, from technical and compliance training to process improvement and human capital technology integration, is focused on helping your organization deliver meaningful results. Visit gpstrategies.com for more information.



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