

Leadership in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous World

如何在複雜多變的不確定環境下 領導企業

Richard S Roque 羅禮全

We are currently living in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous world or VUCA, a term coined by students at the U.S. Army War College after the cold war, which has, in the last 10 years, gained increasing prominence in management circles. It is reaching a climax in the current times as manifested in the combination of complexity and uncertainty of multiple factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, growing hostility amongst the leading nations, repercussions of climate change, trends toward stakeholder capitalism, the inexorable accelerating technological change and the attendant new forms of competitive pressures that are engendered across all sectors, which necessitates the presence and need for strong leaders at all levels of an organization.

How a leader should cope with such a world or in the context of the 2021 HKIoD Symposium “Leading in New Normal”, where the “New Normal” is very different from what we are familiar with. In March 2020, McKinsey published an article, *Leadership in a Crisis*, stating that: “This crisis places extraordinary demands on leaders in business and beyond.... In routine emergencies, experience is perhaps the most valuable quality that leaders bring. But in novel, landscape-scale crises, character is of the utmost importance. Some of the critical qualities leaders need to display include deliberate calm, bounded optimism, empathy and communication.”

Leadership in a VUCA world is therefore about character



development. Building a good character is the result of cultivating the human virtues which makes up one's character. At this stage, it is useful to recall that our human personality is made up of two components: temperament and character. Temperament is our native predisposition to react in certain ways and character is made up of virtues, which are moral habits, acquired through training and repetition. There are four classical temperaments: choleric, melancholic, sanguine and phlegmatic, which are given by nature, and this belief dates back to Hippocrates (460-377 BC), who is considered the father of medical science. Character on the other hand evolved from aretology, the science of virtue, which was founded by the classical Greek philosophers and enriched by Judeo Christian thought and spirituality. The name derives from aretē, the Greek word for virtue. Aretology comprises two kinds of virtues: intellectual virtues related to human knowledge and ethical virtues related to human behavior. Plato (428-348 BC) defined the main human virtues as prudence, justice, fortitude and self-control, which later were called cardinal virtues, since it is upon these four virtues that all other human virtues hinge. For Alexander Havard, founder of the *Virtuous Leadership System* ("VL System") these four cardinal virtues form the foundation of leadership, while the essence of leadership lies in two other virtues: magnanimity and humility. According to Havard, Peter Drucker, one of the greatest management thinkers of our times, has most of his teachings permeated with deep aretological considerations. For instance, in his book "The Practice of Management" he described that "It is character through which leadership is exercised".

According to research by the Values in Action Institute in the US, the six virtues cited are more or less uniform across many of world's ancient civilisations. In China, for instance, cultivation of virtue was highly regarded by Confucius (551-479 BC): "Virtue is more to man than either water or fire." (*Analects of Confucius* 15). Confucian belief sees virtues as the primary locus of the power of a leadership. Zengzi, one of disciples of Confucius (505-434BC), remarked that the steps to better the world should be "first better yourself, then your family, then your nation and then the world".

At its core, although there are hundreds of virtues, the VL System focuses on six virtues which has the greatest relevance for leadership:

- Prudence: to make right decisions.
- Courage: to stay the course and resist pressures of all

kinds.

- Self-control: to subordinate passions to the spirit and fulfil the mission at hand.
- Justice: to give every individual his due.
- Magnanimity: to strive for great things, to challenge oneself and others.
- Humility: to overcome selfishness and serve others habitually.

As the ultimate goal, the VL System proposes the striving for greatness of oneself and the people around oneself, thru the pursuit of personal excellence by practice of the six virtues. The VL System is organised so it is human-centric and aims to develop both leadership capacity and leadership competencies.

Havard cites examples of Virtues Leaders in the 4 books he has written regarding this topic and what makes these leaders standout is their extraordinary humility and magnanimity. The website of Virtues Leadership Institute¹ profiles 22 leaders from different nationalities and in diverse fields, from CEOs to scientists, civic leaders and religious leaders.

In an enterprise setting, the VL system is well suited to enabling an organization to transform its corporate culture, beginning with senior management team and then cascading thru to the different organization levels. The process begins with senior management team, who are expected to reflect and understand each other's temperaments, , to be followed by a deep orientation on the virtues of humility and magnanimity wherein the latter virtue generates noble ambitions and former channels these ambitions into serving others. The concluding phase involves: (a) personal dimension - for each team member to prepare a personal development plan; and (b) organisational dimension - to review the organisational mission and reflect on how to achieve greatness and pursue excellence thru transformation of corporate culture — one that resonates with the personal development plans of the organisation leaders. The above exercise seeks to achieve tangible results from empathy, a heightened spirit of service, which will be instilled throughout the organization to form a strong mission-orientation and stakeholder-focus culture, and a deeper sense of integrity and trust. The approach is to lead by character not by manipulation, with the ultimate aim of achieving personal excellence and greatness for oneself and for those whom one leads.

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It is worth noting that the VL System dovetails with what is defined as a “Capability-based program” set out in the Guest Editorial of the Training Industry Magazine on the theme “Elevating Leadership Development” (August 2021 edition):

¹ <https://hvli.org/models>

The “new normal” has the ability to distort a corporate culture or enhance it to new levels. The tangible and intangible components of most organizations’ cultures have developed over many years. Keeping employees engaged and committed to the common purpose can be tricky in this environment. Employees want to engage with one another and feel as if they belong – whether virtually or in person. Creating outreach opportunities and programs is a great start, but as we enter this next phase, we need to develop leaders capable of embodying the core values while molding the new corporate culture that organizations need to move forward. ...so rather than creating standard skill-based programs, we should consider making a subtle shift toward more capability focused programs. Capability-based programs effectively capture the way an individual thinks and/or feels, and then help identify how that impacts the way leaders behave and make decisions. This focus can drive programs that help build leaders who can create a vision, model behaviours they want to see and motivate others. 

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前環境多變、不確定、複雜且模糊。這種情況英文簡稱 VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous)，是美國陸軍戰爭學院學生在冷戰結束後開創的名詞，在過去十年日益受到管理人員重視，現時在多項因素產生複雜的不確定性下受重視的程度更是前所未有。這些因素包括新冠肺炎，大國日趨敵對、氣候變化、持份者資本主義、各行各業在科技日新月異下產生各種競爭壓力，因此企業的不同階層必須由能者領導。

面對這種截然不同的環境，或香港董事學會「董事研討會2021」主題「在新常態中領航」所指的「新常態」，企業領導應該如何應對？管理諮詢公司麥健時 (McKinsey) 在2020年3月發表題為《危機領導》(Leadership in a Crisis) 的文章，當中提述：「是次危機尤其需要商業專才及其他專才領導....在一般緊急情況下，經驗可能是領導人員最寶貴的素質，但當出現前所未有且影響範圍廣泛的危機時，品格 (character) 至為重要。領導人員必備的重要特質包括處變不驚、樂觀、具備同理心和溝通能力。」

因此，在複雜多變的不確定環境下領導企業講求品格發展

而培育構成品格的各種美德有助形成良好品格。謹此一提，人格 (personality) 是由氣質 (temperament) 和品格兩大元素構成。氣質是人以某種方式回應的自然傾向，而品格是由各種美德構成，並透過訓練和重覆而形成的道德習慣。基本上，人類天生氣質有四種：(choleric) 膽汁質、(melancholic) 憂鬱質、(sanguine) 多血質和 (phlegmatic) 黏液質。此理論源自醫學之父希波克拉底 (西元前460年至377年)。相反，品格源自美德學。這門學說由多位希臘古典哲學家開創，其後加入猶太基督教學說和精神發揚光大。美德學的英文是 Aretology，源自美德的希臘文 aretē。美德學包括兩種美德：跟人類知識相關的知性美德和跟人類行為相關的德性美德。柏拉圖 (西元前428年至348年) 將主要的人類美德界定為審慎、正義、勇敢和自制，後來稱為四樞德，原因是所有其他美德都是衍生自四樞德。美德領導力制度的創始者 Alexander Havard 認為四樞德是領導力的基礎，而領導力的精髓還需取決於另外兩種美德：寬宏大度和謙卑。Havard 認為當代最偉大的管理思想家之一 Peter Drucker 的大部分理論有著濃厚的美德色彩。例如，Drucker 在其著作《管理的實踐》(The Practice of Management) 中指出「領導是透過品格執行」。

美國實踐價值觀研究院的一項研究發現，全球不少古文明所提倡的美德或多或少跟以上六種美德相同，例如在中國，孔子 (西元前551年至479年) 極力提倡培育美德。子曰：「民之於仁也，甚於水火」(《論語》衛靈公第十五)。在孔子學說中，美德是領導力的基要。孔子的弟子曾子 (西元前505年至434年) 說只要實現「修身，齊家，治國，平天下」，世界便會更美好。

美德領導力制度包括數百種美德，但以六種跟領導力最相關的美德為重點：

- 審慎 (Prudence)：作出正確決定。
- 勇敢 (Fortitude)：面對各種壓力依然不屈不撓。
- 自制 (Self-control)：由精神支配熱忱並實現當前任。
- 正義 (Justice)：一視同仁。
寬宏大度 (Magnanimity)：從大處著眼，努力使心靈朝
- 向偉大的目標，挑戰自己和他人。
- 謙卑 (Humility)：克服自私心、慣於服侍別人。


是美德領導力制度的最終目標是透過實踐六大美德來追求一己之卓越，為自己和身邊的人發揮極致。美德領導力制度以人為本，旨在發展領導潛能和領導能力。

Havard 曾就這個議題著書四本，每本書均列舉美德領袖的例子，並指出他們成為傑出領袖是因為具備超凡的謙卑與寬宏大度。美德領袖研究院的網站 介紹二十二位來自不同國家和領域的領袖人物，包括行政總裁、科學家、公民領

袖和宗教領袖。

企業方面，美德領導力制度適用於從高層管理團隊著手改革企業文化繼而層層遞進。從高層管理階層著手改革是因為高層人員能夠互相反映和了解彼此的氣質，繼以謙卑與寬宏大度為本，藉著寬大產生崇高目標，再利用謙卑將這些目標化為服侍他人。最後階段包括：(a)個人方面——由團隊每位成員擬定一份個人發展計劃書；及(b)機構方面——檢討機構的使命及反思如何透過改革企業文化來發揮極致及追求卓越，這點跟機構領袖的個人發展計劃互相呼應。此做法是旨在透過同理心取得實質成果。同理心是一種崇高的服務精神，只要在機構上下產生同理心，便可形成以使命和持份者為本的濃厚文化，同時加強忠誠和信任。這種做法宜以品格領導而非強制執行，最終目標是使個人和個人所領導的員工實現卓越和發揮極致。

值得一提的是，美德領導力制度貫徹了《訓練業雜誌》(Training Industry Magazine) 2021年8月號題為「提昇領導能力發展」(Elevating Leadership Development) 的客座社評提述的「才能計劃」：

「新常態」有能力將企業文化扭曲或提昇至新境界。大部分企業文化的有形和無形部份均經過多年發展而成，在當前環境要令員工投入工作和致力實現共同目的不易，員工都希望彼此交流，不管是線上或面對面，從而提升歸屬感。公司可從提供外展機會和計劃著手，但為進入下階段須培植有能力秉承核心價值及打造新企業文化的領導人員。因此與其推行標準技能計劃，我們應推行較著重發展潛能的計劃，這類計劃可有效掌握個人所想及 / 或所感，然後確定這將如何影響領導人員的行為和決策。計劃以此為重點可以培育出較能訂定理念、塑造理想企業行為和推動他人的領導人員。 

羅禮全先生 FHKIoD 是美德領導力 (亞洲) 有限公司的執行董事。



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