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# I’M A SENIOR MANAGER

## As a senior manager, where do I focus my attention and actions?

For senior managers the central challenges are to:

1. Partner with the CEO in setting the direction for the journey and designing the leadership structure to support it;
2. Build the leadership web – engaging, challenging and supporting middle management in the execution of the journey – maintaining leadership discipline all the way through completion – Finishing Strong

**Note:** “Senior Management” in this regard may refer to formal positions or to a core leadership team created to lead the journey of change.

The model will provide a framework for partnering with the CEO as well as for engaging middle management and your natural leaders. It can put everyone on common ground about what to expect and what to do as well as provide a foundation for healthy accountability as the journey unfolds.

## Partner with the CEO to Launch the Journey

This partnership with the CEO focuses on the two leadership roles in the beginning of a journey – and beginnings matter a lot.

### The Visionary Role

The partnership establishes the need for the journey (the business case), develops the “big picture” vision of the desired state to pursue and makes a commitment to people about how the journey will be led.

### The Architect Role

Others may be brought into the Architect role, but the CEO and senior management still hold the primary responsibility for the three core strategies. One is the organization design required to be successful in the desired state, which can reflect a few key changes or many changes across the organization. The second strategy is creating the plan for leading the journey. The third is designing the leadership web that will bring the power, reach, credibility, and resilience required for success in implementing the plan.

## Build the Leadership Web to Sustain the Journey

Engage, challenge and support middle management (formal roles as well as natural leaders). This involves bringing people into the leadership web in productive roles and supporting them in executing those roles. In most cases the CEO will be pulling back to an oversight role with targeted interventions and senior management will be the senior leaders. The stronger the leadership web, the easier that will be.



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*“Senior management does need to pay particularly close attention to the processes that support the individual, group and systemic capacity building required for success in the desired state”*

*“Senior management provides the leadership discipline to learn from the experience and translate that learning into increased change capability and resilience”*

### **The Catalyst Role**

This is the “force multiplier” for senior management – the role that helps them extend their leadership. Playing the Catalyst role senior management brings people into the leadership web in productive roles and prepares them to be successful on the journey. This is also where more people are involved to add realistic detail to the vision and organization design – “operationalizing” the vision, which builds understanding and commitment.

### **The Guide Role**

If the web of leaders and followers has been constructed and prepared well, senior management can look to the web to carry most of the responsibility for the Guide’s strategies. Those include strong communication systems, coaching people in letting go of the old ways and dealing with “inbetweenity” and frequent informal accountability checks that complement the formal accountability system. Senior management provides oversight and support as well as removing barriers that can’t be removed at lower levels.

### **The Builder Role**

For senior management the Builder role is very similar to that of the Guide - oversight, support and barrier removal. Please note however, that senior management does need to pay particularly close attention to the processes that support the individual, group and systemic capacity building required for success in the desired state. This includes ensuring that the necessary resources are actually committed and that people are consistently supported in stretching to achieve the capabilities. This is the most deceptively difficult challenge in most journeys and will sabotage the journey if it is overlooked.

## **Maintain Leadership Discipline and Finish Strong**

Much can be gained and much can be lost depending on how journeys are completed. The leadership role in completions is the Integrator.

### **The Integrator Role**

Senior management may need to increase its involvement in this leadership role, particularly in regard to ensuring that all elements of the organization are realigned to “fit” and achieve synergy. Senior management must also ensure that the impact of the organization’s changes on others (the “ripple effect”) is tracked and managed. Finally, senior management needs to provide the leadership discipline to learn from the experience and translate that learning into increased change capability and resilience.

## **How to Get a Good Idea of Possible Benefits - Fast**

There are several ways to quickly determine how the site can provide the foundation for partnering with the CEO and engaging middle managers effectively. It is designed to provide very clear and intuitive common ground around which people at all levels of an organization can align their efforts.

1. Review the guiding questions in the QuickStart packet on the power of clear leadership roles and strategies (click the download tab). These questions are designed to walk people through the process of determining the highest leverage tactics for each of the core leadership strategies for



leading a journey of change. There are also templates for organizing the work.

You can imagine aligning with the CEO and middle management. This QuickStart can be used to prepare for a journey or assess performance and next steps if in the midst of a journey.

2. Watch the first three minutes of the introductory video. This will give you a good overview of how the site is laid out around the four sources of leadership power, including the implementation guides for each (QuickStarts).
3. Skim the summaries for each of the four core chapters (leadership commitment, knowledge, strategies and webs). These are three to five pages long and designed for easy skimming (they are not heavy on text).
4. Just poke around in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section. The questions can be seen at a glance, so just see if any match the questions you have.

