



## Leadership lessons from 2022, trends for 2023

### Description

We live in a time of unexpected changes – this is a chorus we’ve been hearing for decades. So it’s both trivially true – change is, by nature, often unanticipated – but it is also significantly true in this new decade. The pandemic, war, new technologies, economic slowdown, and so much more are truly impacting business, society, and life in new and unexpected ways on a seemingly daily basis. We’ve noticed, over the course of 2022, some standout examples of doing things – be they positive, or negative:

### Communication and authenticity

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has caught the attention of leaders and the public worldwide for his authentic, emotional, fearless communication style. He is able to express compassion, fears for his people, appeals for aid rooted in a call on our common decency rather than a sense of him begging from the rest of the world, and he is able to communicate with a range of domestic and foreign audiences effectively. His background as an actor has actually helped him, but the authenticity is what we can all learn from: remember how, when President Biden offered to evacuate him he answered ‘The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride’. To the excellence of communication, we can add determination to the qualities he is modelling for us on the world stage, in difficult circumstances.

### Lack of transparency and ethical commitment

Now, a bad example. After weathering various storms, the earlier part of the year saw the Boris Johnson Premiership in Great Britain scuttled by Partygate – a scandal over 10 Downing Street insiders holding an undistanced party right in the thick of Covid-19, at a time when ordinary citizens were struggling under strict, but essential, lockdown measures. As much as the bad optics of the party itself, the efforts by Johnson’s inner circle to cover it up lost the public’s support. People today know what it is to live with life-or-death decisions, and they have no time for double standards and dishonesty from their leaders. Related to this, we’re seeing consequences come knocking for Elizabeth Holmes and Sunny Balwani whose once-touted medtech startup, Theranos, imploded over charges of fraud. Bitcoin whizkid Sam Bankman-Fried became the subject of investigation and was arrested when

it turned out his business was engaging in dubious practices to stay afloat. Remember how Zelensky's authenticity has won hearts and minds worldwide? Similarly, dishonesty, strategic lying, massaging the facts – whatever we call it – has less and less takers in world where we all have so much more at stake.

## **What are 2022's key lessons for leaders?**

### **Hybrid working is here to stay**

Lockdowns showed us how much work can be achieved by remote teams. As restrictions lift, there is a temptation to justify those real estate expenses and get the workforce back in the office. But we have had a glimpse of better ways of doing things. Ways in which people get to truly balance life and work, give quality time to their families and their jobs. Going forward, successful businesses will find ways to intersperse all-important in-person check-ins and strategic meet-ups with remote regular work.

### **Hire people for careers, not just jobs**

The younger working generation has seen more uncertainty in the past years than some of us have in decades. They demand a job that offers a long-term vision, with opportunities for learning and advancement. Increasingly, [inspiring leaders](#) will be the ones who can understand the career and personal needs of their team, and help each member chart out a path that works in the mid-and long-term. Attrition will continue to be a reality, but jobs are increasingly valued if they provide both stability and growth.

### **Mental health matters**

Faced with unprecedented personal pressures over the course of the pandemic, many of us experienced periods of anxiety, depression, and heightened stress. We can see clearly how managing doesn't just mean managing performance but managing well-being. Workplaces that are sensitive to the emotional lives of people will make the difference in offering them the safe space and nurturing environment needed to weather the crises of the historical moment and pursue professional excellence simultaneously. A good approach to mental health isn't just nice-to-have – it's vital.

### **Keep learning, keep centered**

Technologies, geopolitics, and more are subject to more sudden shifts than ever before. A good leader is not one who does things just the way they have always been, but one who has a durable, meaningful ethical core which they can use as a compass while learning from everything around them. It is easy to succumb to the lure of new tech that seems to promise miracle cure-alls, as we have seen in the car of Theranos or Sam Bankman Fried. It's important to know where the cutting edge is, to adapt to changing social, professional, and technical contexts – but it's as important to be grounded in a clear ethical understanding to serve as a compass through the new territory.

**What are your break-out [leadership stories](#) and key takeaways from 2022? We'd love to hear from you!**

**Category**

## 1. Leadership Development

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