

## Three ways to lead through change



Last year [Mark McCrindle](#) spoke at an event called *The Future of Leadership* where he presented a keynote on the topic of 'Leading teams in changing times', in which he outlined three ways in which leadership is changing, and three ways in which leaders can respond.

Leadership is an important topic in this time, in this nation, and in this world. It's essential for today's leaders to understand the context in which they are leading and their teams that are changing generationally, attitudinally and socially.

Thinking about the future, it used to be a place to which we were headed, to which we could plan our strategies. But these days, such is the speed of change, the future is coming at us. And it's hard to work out the velocity and the direction of that speed of approach.

It was only a decade ago that we didn't have smartphones. Mobile phones used to be a lot

simpler. They weren't touchscreens or glass. We weren't just a few clicks away from any piece of information on the planet. We now carry with us 'devices', because they're not just phones, they're everything else - all the different apps and platforms that we use. We now live in 'the great screen age', where screens are dominant and have transformed our expectations of the time frames in which our needs are met.

So how do we lead and communicate with the emerging generations who are more globally connected, visually engaged and disconnected from face-to-face interaction?

## **Three trends impacting the future of leadership**

### **Technological advancements**

Looking to the future, what will the decade ahead hold? We hear much about autonomous vehicles and drone deliveries, but we can often wonder "is this stuff really going to arrive?" Artificial Intelligence and robotics - will these become mainstream? Sometimes we can be skeptical. I guess in 2009 if someone had said that by 2019 you won't just catch taxis around, you'll pick up a smart phone, click on an app and get a ride with some random stranger, we might have been skeptical about that. And yet the changes have come, the sharing economy is mainstream. And we have adopted to these new platforms in a short period of time.

Two in five Australians now earn money through non-traditional work and three in ten are non-full-time (either part-time, casual, contractors, contingent workers or freelancers), so we're going to be leading people in the future who aren't just full-timers. We're leading amidst greater change, a greater mix of employees, more generations and more types of employment than ever before.

### **Demographic shifts**

We're changing technologically, but we're changing demographically as well. Population growth, greater cultural diversity and Australia's ageing population are key demographic trends impacting how we lead our teams.

We need efficient leadership to bring about solutions when we've got more urbanization and growth in vertical communities not just horizontal ones. We need leaders who possess both emotional intelligence (EQ) and cultural intelligence (CQ) to bridge gaps in times of greater cultural and language diversity. Can we connect across not just different generations, but

different cultures and bring about greater outcomes for teams that don't just think locally, but globally?

## **Generational change**

Because of Australia's ageing population, we now have more age groups to manage in the workplace than we did three decades ago. Our emerging generations are spending longer at university and will have more careers than ever before. The average school leaver today could have 17 jobs in their lifetime across 5 separate careers. They will be lifelong learners, plugging in and out of education regularly.

## **Three ways to respond**

Our population is changing, our generations are changing, our communities are changing, our teams are changing, and so in response, our leadership needs changing.

### **1. Be responsive**

Leaders need to be responsive to the changing cultures, generations, backgrounds and expectations that comprise their teams. We've got to understand some of the nuisances across the segments that define our teams, and spend more time listening and responding, not just speaking and commanding. It was Stephen Covey in his book, the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, who said, "Seek first to understand then to be understood." It's imperative for a leader to understand those they lead, particularly in these times of change with more subgroups in our community and teams than ever before.

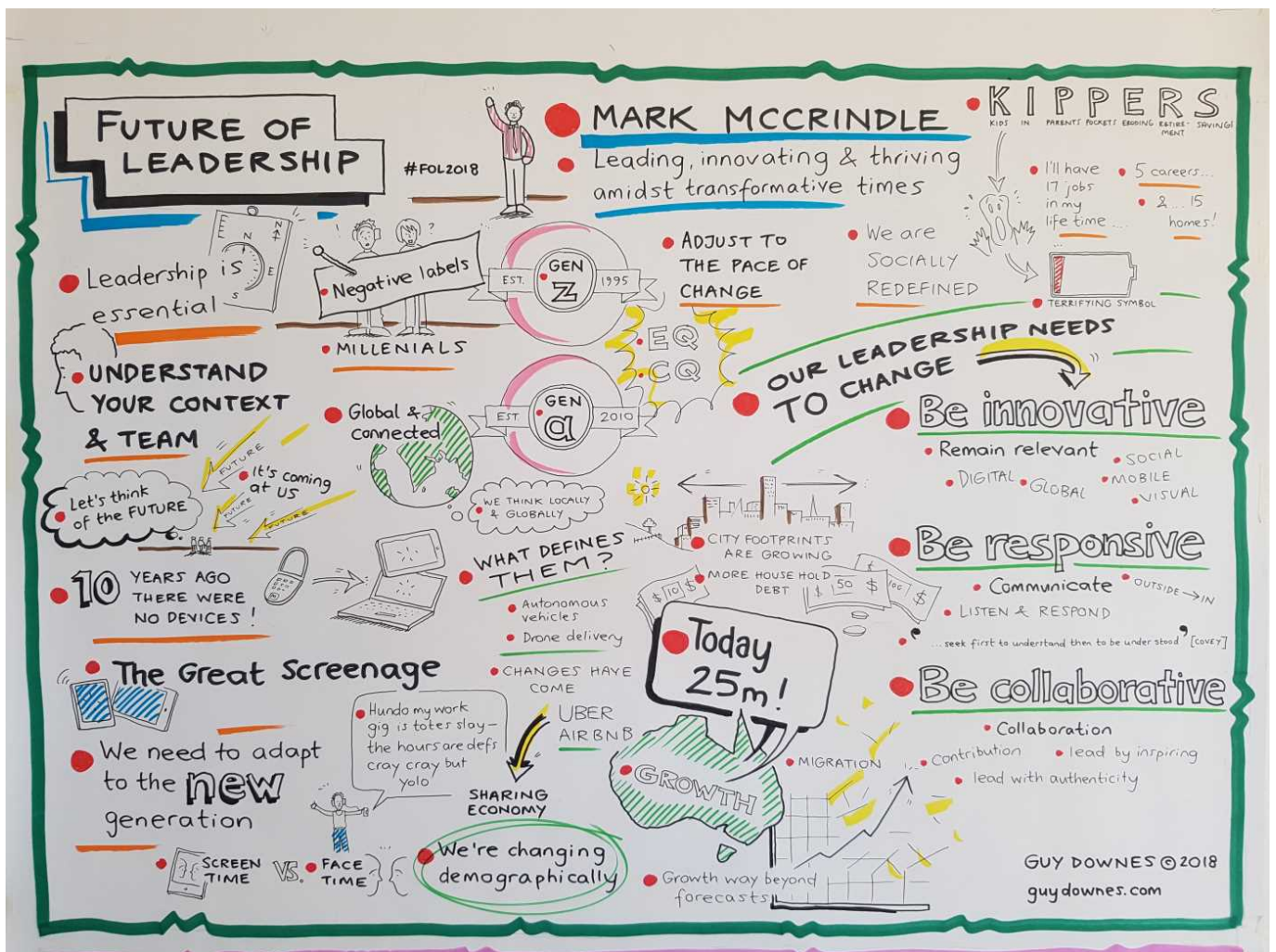
### **2. Encourage innovation**

Leaders also need to be innovative. Five words that define our era and team members is that they are: *digital* in terms of tools that they use; *global* in terms of the outlook or perspective that they bring; *social* in terms of who influences them and shapes their attitudes and decisions; *mobile* in terms of where they live, work and connect; and *visual* in terms of how they process content. So how we communicate with our teams must change. We are in a world of information overload and to get cut through we've got to find new ways to connect. We've got to communicate in a way that will engage. That means being innovative and bringing people on a journey.

### 3. Foster collaboration

Leaders also need to be collaborative. This next generation interact in far more engaging and participative ways. We need to move away from a command and control, top-down leadership model and instead focus on collaborative leadership styles. These styles are more participative and engaging, where the leaders lead from within, lead by example, lead by inspiring and lead by being part of the group. Can we lead with authenticity and by creating a culture of collaborative innovation? When we're responsive, collaborative, and when we innovate, we will not only lead this generation effectively, but future ones to come.

A fantastic visual overview of the content delivered in my keynote by [Think in Colour](#):



Listen below to Mark McCrindle's insights about leadership lessons across generations on

an episode of [ABC's This Working Life](#).

[https://mccrindle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/images/twl\\_20191029.mp3](https://mccrindle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/images/twl_20191029.mp3)

*[Mark McCrindle](#) is a social researcher with an international following. He is recognised as a leader in tracking emerging issues and researching social trends. Mark is regularly booked to deliver keynotes at conferences, and his advisory, communications and research company [McCrindle](#) count among its clients more than 100 of Australia's largest companies and leading international brands.*

## **For more information**

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For media commentary contact us on 02 8824 3422 or at [info@mccrindle.com.au](mailto:info@mccrindle.com.au)

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