



THE **GC** {RE}DEFINED

LEADING WITH
INFLUENCE



GLOBAL LEADERS IN LAW

MORRISON
FOERSTER

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3 INTRODUCTION
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 4 THE GC OF THE FUTURE

WHAT MAKES A GC FUTURE-FIT

- 5 FOUR EMERGING THEMES:
LEADING WITH INFLUENCE
- 7 GAME-CHANGING COMPETENCIES
 - 9 ADAPTING TO CHANGE
 - 10 PROVIDING DIRECTION
 - 11 BEING INTERPERSONALLY ASTUTE
 - 12 WORKING UNDER PRESSURE
 - 13 CONCEPTUALIZING STRATEGIES
 - 14 WORKING TOGETHER
- 15 THE GC PERSONALITY SNAPSHOT
- 16 GC VERSUS THE C-SUITE

LEADING WITH INFLUENCE NOW AND BEYOND

- 19 CONCLUSION
- 20 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Leading with Influence was written with you in mind. As part of an ongoing commitment to supporting the professional growth of legal leaders, Global Leaders in Law and Morrison & Foerster have partnered to create Leading with Influence, a new research study aimed at highlighting the most significant areas of development and drivers of change for today's general counsels (GC). For the study, we have collaborated with leadership experts from Lazarus & Maverick, a global leadership development and high-performance executive coaching consultancy, to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research that shines a light on the game-changing competencies required for the GC of the future.

THE FUTURE-FIT GC

If you have recently wondered how to keep all the plates spinning or how to stay ahead of the game, you are in good company. Many legal leaders are reflecting on their increasingly complex roles in increasingly complex times. This report is designed to help you explore your own formula for success in order to effectively lead with influence in uncertain times.

The report contains research-validated insights on:

- The ideal characteristics of the GC of the future versus their current state, and how these compare to other executive functions.
- The GC's key attitudes and aptitudes as leaders, including both strengths and possible blindspots.
- How to put theory into practice by providing a skills manual and behavioral examples to help assess your strengths and determine learning opportunities to become an exceptional legal leader with far-reaching influence across your organization.

Additionally, the study confirms that there is plenty of room for legal leaders to move from transactional to transformational work, and, above all, to become integral to shaping the future of the business. However, unlike other surveys exploring the evolution of the GC's role, our study focuses specifically on legal leaders' behaviors and behavioral patterns known to supercharge or stall their effectiveness.

Our research findings also provide guidance on how to acknowledge your own behavioral patterns and how to make small adjustments in order to thrive in complex or uncertain situations. We refer to this

as one's behavioral agility. By cultivating behavioral agility, legal leaders can significantly increase their influence within an organization, improve engagement within their team, and unlock new potential by reframing ineffective self-perceptions, improving team cohesion, and accelerating goal achievement.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted interviews with more than 30 global GCs and surveyed nearly 120 global senior executives to understand the competencies crucial to the GC of the future in order to enable you to future-proof your career, team, and organization. Our research includes companies in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the United States. The voices represent diverse industries from many locations around the world, including Armenia, Austria, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, India, Israel, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Russia, Slovakia, South Korea, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Our results confirmed these GCs have a unique opportunity to demonstrate their value as the function best suited for an aerial view of the business. In the words of one participant, “Everything that is happening now is legal in foundation and the boundaries have blurred,” and it is “particularly pertinent” to determine what the GC of the future must look like.

THE GC OF THE FUTURE

What does the future require of you, your team, and your organization?

In our ever-changing world, the answer to this question is urgent for all leaders who wish to avoid becoming one who uses the terminal phrase, “We have always done it this way.”

“To change any behavior, we have to slow down and act intentionally, rather than from habit and impulse.”

– Henna Inam, *Wired for Authenticity: Seven Practices to Inspire, Adapt & Lead*

Each of us has the power to change if we only build a deeper self-awareness that reveals our strengths and the areas where we welcome further development. For some, it may not be a case of nice-to-have but a case of must-have in order to guarantee professional relevancy and survival. With a simple framework and the examples of daily habits included in this report, behavioral change is available for anyone to unlock greater leadership potential and increase influence.

Why should you, as a leader, consider behavioral change?

- To help you build a better rapport with colleagues.
- To become a role model for personal growth and development.
- To tackle personal inefficiency: achieve goals, gain time, and delegate.

REFLECT

Which of your behaviors stands in the way of you being the leader you want to be? What is the smallest thing you can do differently to remove that obstacle? We will help you answer these questions.

FOUR EMERGING THEMES: LEADING WITH INFLUENCE

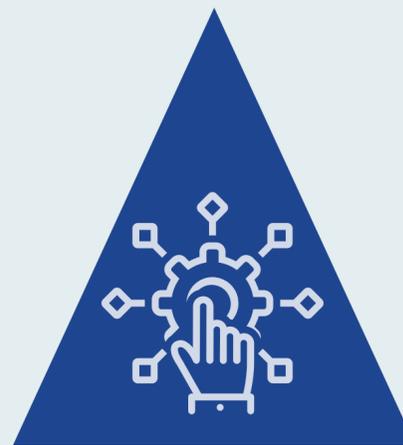
Our research pointed to four emerging themes that GCs could use to increase their influence and impact (see Figure 1: Emerging Themes). Do the following themes resonate with you? Check out the self-evaluation scale below to gauge your own level of mastery across these themes.

1. THE ROLE OF LEGAL LEADERS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Some respondents explicitly assert that they play a proactive role as change-makers: they support others in leading change or themselves reflect and seek creative ways to circumnavigate the obstacles ahead. They view their role as instrumental to managing change and identify themselves as both lawyers and business professionals. Our research shows that whether GCs perceive themselves to be change-makers is often linked to their proximity to the C-Suite/CEO, or their influencing capital, as well as the broader attitude toward change across the organizational culture, sector, and their geographic location.

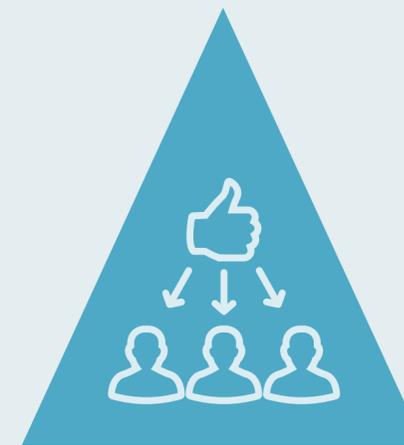
Reflect and write down your score*

* On a 1–10 scale (10 being the strongest), rate your ability to put this theme into practice.



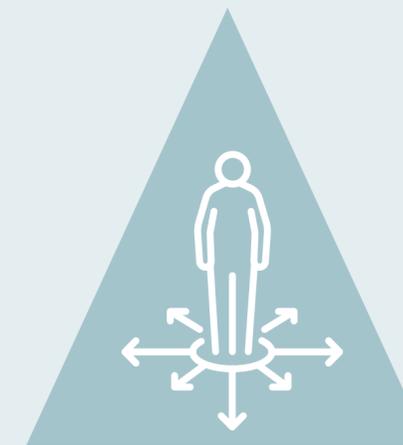
THE ROLE OF LEGAL LEADERS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

From reacting to change through transactional service to becoming a transformational leader and change agent



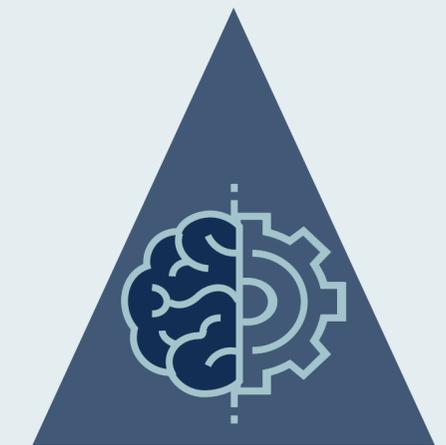
HUMANIZING OF WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS AND PRACTICES

People-first mindset; build supportive culture based on empathy, deep connectedness, lifelong learning, and humility



360° ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Adapt to stakeholders —from coaching and developing their own teams to influencing strategic C-Suite conversations



LEFT BRAIN MEETS RIGHT BRAIN

Move from an evidence-based perspective to being a creative, big-picture thinker who values curiosity, imagination, and vision

Figure 1: Emerging Themes

2. HUMANIZING OF WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS AND PRACTICES

The overwhelming majority of senior legal executives surveyed look up to world leaders, within politics and business, who actively demonstrate a “people-first” mindset. They consider those leaders with an outlook toward a sustainable, positive change on both a community and a global level as the gold standard of leadership. This marks a significant departure from the command and control leadership paradigm. Instead, GCs admire leaders who actively demonstrate holistic values, such as respect for people’s personal circumstances, deep connectedness, humility, honesty, empathy, patience, and compassion. Other leadership characteristics singled out as required include positivity, charisma, and being an inclusive leader who champions diversity and promotes practices that enable personal growth and safeguard employees’ mental health. While exemplary leaders are valued for their expertise, there is equally high appreciation for their role as coaches and mentors. It is vital for GCs to remember this and learn how to preserve their own energy and self-motivation.

Reflect and write down your score*

3. 360° ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

The majority of GCs appreciate the need to influence a diverse range of stakeholders, which may require different traits and strategies for their direct reports, peers, and senior C-Suite colleagues, including the CEO. Being able to navigate and adapt among these relationships is attributed to a GC fit for the future. This must include an ability to lead others, give direction, inspire with conviction and vision, and, at the same time, steer away from office politics and remain a trusted legal and business advisor at the strategic level. The GC should aim

* On a 1–10 scale (10 being the strongest), rate your ability to put this theme into practice.

to be a custodian of trust, a well-connected operator, and a doer. GCs acknowledge that their influence has the potential to further expand across the C-Suite and, at a strategic level, it will be crucial for them to develop their teams with a focus on self-leadership, or the ability to lead yourself to achieve your personal and professional goals and objectives, as well interpersonal skills and taking initiative, so that they, too, act as legal brand ambassadors across their organizations.

Reflect and write down your score*

4. WELL-ROUNDED LEADERS – LEFT BRAIN MEETS RIGHT BRAIN

While legal leaders’ primary contribution is, and will remain, their legal advice, our research points toward the evolution of the GC from the technical and transactional advisor toward a creative, big-picture thinker. For simplicity, this report associates the left brain with task and process, and the right brain with creativity and connectivity. Many desired attitudes are labeled as right-brain qualities, and are traditionally not associated with lawyers. Traditional lawyer traits of logic, data, reason, analytics, caution, and planning now require a balance from the right-brain characteristics of warmth, imagination, intuition, impulse, vision, emotional expression, empathy, and connecting the dots in unusual ways. This is particularly pertinent as legal training focuses on legal knowledge, prioritizing IQ (intelligence quotient) rather than teaching lawyers about social intelligence (SI), emotional intelligence (EI), and creative quotient (CQ). It is therefore crucial to invest in developing these skills as part of ongoing career development.

Reflect and write down your score*

“There has been a shift towards acknowledging the importance of softer skills. I think empathy and authenticity are now recognized and appreciated more as leadership attributes. The GC needs to be able to connect with and inspire their team and respond to change and uncertainty in order to lead effectively. This requires both emotional intelligence and creative thinking.”

– Nancy Roberts, Pearson

GAME-CHANGING COMPETENCIES

In order to dig deeper into the attributes needed for the GC of the future, the respondents completed a personality profile questionnaire to assess their competency potential in two personality snapshots: one everyday and one when under pressure. (See Figure 2.)

The senior legal executives surveyed were presented with the 16 competencies of the Lumina Competency Framework (Figure 2) and were asked to select the six that they considered most crucial for the success of the GC of the future.

Our research revealed that the top six competencies for the GC of the future include embracing both uncertainty and progress, setting a future-forward vision, and co-creating success through meaningful relationships in order to move together with others towards a bright future. As such, GCs should champion humanizing the modern workplace, become masters of coaching and developing their teams (as well as managing up and across), and fuse logic and reason with emotional intelligence in order to provide direction and a sense of possibility.

Do you agree with this definition? Would you define the role differently?

Reflect and write your response

▶ Top Six Competencies of the Future-Fit GC

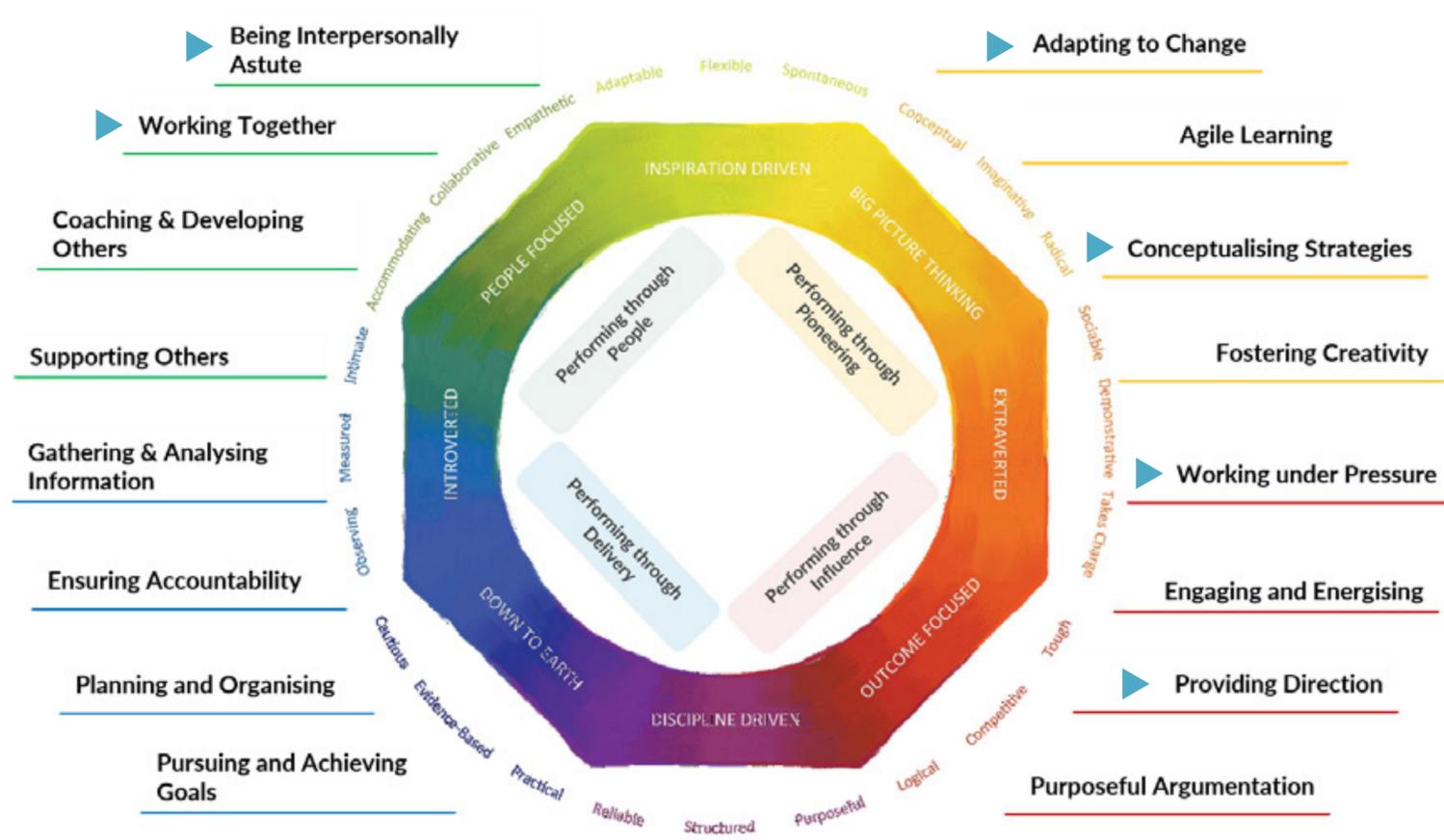


Figure 2. Lumina Competency Framework



© Lumina Learning. All rights reserved.

6

TOP COMPETENCIES OF THE FUTURE-FIT GC

ASSESS YOURSELF

In this section, we invite you to consider how you stand against the top six competencies of the future-fit GC.

We will explore which behaviors make up each competency.





DEFINITION

This competency requires a flexible approach and willingness to evolve in changing work environments.

KEY TRAITS

- TAKES CHARGE
- IMAGINATIVE
- CONCEPTUAL
- ADAPTABLE
- FLEXIBLE

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

WHY IT MATTERS?

Almost **90%** of surveyed GCs, regardless of gender, age, work experience, organizational transformation, or proximity to the board, have identified the ability to embrace change as absolutely critical. People who accept that change is part of life and those who seek out opportunities for improvement and growth in times of change tend to be more resilient, resourceful, and, overall, more successful at work and in personal life. Adapting to change may not come naturally to some, but it is a competency and a mindset that can be developed to help people move away from a threat response to a proactive and thriving mindset.

GCs who demonstrate this competency effectively will be seen as enablers, not blockers, of future opportunities, and will be considered better strategic advisors by their CEOs, for whom innovation is what keeps them up at night.

GOOD NEWS!

While lawyers are generally characterized as averse to change, our personality assessment reveals that GCs have high natural potential for being adaptable to change. Those profiled, it turns out, have a very healthy relationship with change, but are often more

comfortable with the conceptual rather than the practical side of change projects. This means that the GC often buys into change but struggles with the change management process.

“The key is change. We have to change quickly, in a second. I have never seen so many quick changes implemented in so short a time . . . I would say again, simplicity, agility and the willingness to embrace change are how the general counsel should be seen in the future.”

– Vanessa Giusti, Generali Shared Services

COMMON BLOCKS TO DEVELOPING THIS QUALITY

Too much reliance on structure, rigid planning, and becoming narrow-sighted are common behavioral patterns that can make it harder to adapt to change. By becoming aware of these stumbling blocks, GCs can develop practices and behaviors to overcome them.

TOP TIP

Focus on the big picture and what is in your control. To get a fresh perspective, seek others’ opinions, challenge the perception that uncertainty leads to negative outcomes, stay connected to people you trust, set incremental goals, and accept change.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

LOW

More skeptical and change-resistant in their approach and a general discomfort with ambiguity and uncertainty. Valuing stability and being overwhelmed by unanticipated changes.

HIGH

Having a flexible approach and a willingness to evolve in changing work environments.

OVEREXTENDED

Pursuing new ventures simply for the sake of change and variety, leaving projects unfinished. Being so adaptable they lack focus.

TEST YOURSELF: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Do you prefer to work on many projects at once, or focus on just a few in-depth? How much variability do you like in your day-to-day routine?
- When was the last time you pushed yourself outside your comfort zone at work in order to be adaptable?
- Think of a time you felt the need to be adaptable even though this may have been hard. How did that feel?



DEFINITION

This competency centers on making quick, definitive decisions and showing strong leadership and management skills.

KEY TRAITS

- TAKES CHARGE
- TOUGH
- PURPOSEFUL
- STRUCTURED
- RELIABLE

PROVIDING DIRECTION

WHY IT MATTERS?

GCs add value by stripping complexity and paving the way for clear decisions. Many GCs point to a sense of purpose and being goal-focused as key skills for coping during a time of crisis.

GOOD NEWS!

GCs surveyed displayed a very strong natural potential for providing direction, with **78%** choosing the providing direction competency within their profiles in the Lumina Spark assessment tool.

“A good leader will adapt according to the circumstances they’re facing at the time. They will give a clear vision and direction, and constantly think about what to do next, particularly when the issues and challenges are constantly evolving.”

– Rupert Hopley, Informa

COMMON BLOCKS TO DEVELOPING THIS QUALITY

The most common obstacles to effectively providing direction are becoming so adaptable that you are unfocused, having a strong underlying preference for working independently rather than in groups, and becoming consensus-obsessed and emotionally stretched.

TOP TIP

Use SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed), assign tasks appropriately, and have regular progress-checks against each goal. Understand the wider needs of the organization to help you set a direction that’s right for the entire ecosystem to avoid goals being set in silos.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

LOW

Preferring to self-direct or follow rather than lead others. Less motivated to direct the activities of others.

HIGH

Making quick, decisive decisions and showing strong leadership and management skills.

OVEREXTENDED

Finding it hard to take a back seat. Can themselves be quite a challenge to manage. Coming across as pushy and controlling.

TEST YOURSELF: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What personal experiences have you had that have helped you to take charge?
- Have you ever encountered resistance in a team? How did you overcome this?
- How would you inspire your team members on a shared project? Give an example.



DEFINITION

Showing understanding of others, building rapport, and managing emotions effectively.

KEY TRAITS

- EMPATHETIC
- ACCOMMODATING
- COLLABORATIVE
- INTIMATE
- SOCIABLE

BEING INTERPERSONALLY ASTUTE

WHY IT MATTERS?

To get their job done, legal leaders need to get along with all kinds of people. In times of crisis and environments where pressure runs high, the GC can add huge value by remaining calm and empathetic with others. This requires the ability to read others well enough to assess how to build rapport fast and authentically, even when faced with a challenging or tense situation. As leaders of teams and advisors to the executive team, GCs will greatly benefit from understanding group dynamics and how to build trust. This is especially important in a remote working environment.

“Influential leaders possess the courage to challenge the status quo and the ability to inspire others to collaborate to drive positive change. They bring humility and empathy to each interaction and encourage their teams to embrace diverse

perspectives to solve problems more creatively and holistically.”

– Aine Lyons, VMware

COMMON BLOCKS TO DEVELOPING THIS QUALITY

If you can't see things from another person's perspective, you are likely to feel frustrated. Others may perceive your desire to get your point across and get the job done as insensitive, seeking conflict, being argumentative, or even wanting to win at all costs.

TOP TIP

Empathy enables us to see things from other people's perspective. The ability to ask helpful and insightful questions, practice deep listening skills, and engage in coaching can help develop empathy. Ask yourself what is important for the other person? Empathizing with others is the first step to adjusting your communication. Be known for being approachable. Accommodate difference. Strive to always be at your best and course-correct any negative interpersonal challenges. When speaking to people, allow a few minutes for building that relationship; be intentional about how you greet the other person.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

LOW

Finding it hard to see things from others' perspectives and being more inclined to believe their way is best.

HIGH

Showing understanding of others, building rapport, and managing emotions effectively.

OVEREXTENDED

Difficulty maintaining objectivity in challenging situations. Difficulty handling situations where they need to have difficult conversations or take a tough approach.

TEST YOURSELF: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is it important to you to always express your true feelings, or do you prefer to hold back at times? Why?
- Have you ever felt the need to adapt your personal style for someone else's benefit?
- What is the best way to confront someone over an issue?



DEFINITION

Being resolute and composed in stressful situations. Being tenacious when faced with challenges to keep objectives on track. Having the ability to maintain focus and showing resilience in the face of adversity as well as taking a direct approach in the handling of conflict.

KEY TRAITS

- TAKES CHARGE
- PURPOSEFUL
- TOUGH
- RELIABLE
- CONCEPTUAL

WORKING UNDER PRESSURE

WHY IT MATTERS?

While working under pressure is an area where GCs had substantial grounding and training, they continue to recognize the need for this skill to be at its best during increasingly uncertain times. Even before the pandemic, many organizational psychologists expressed concerns at extremely high levels of burnout and mental health issues. The inability to handle pressure leads to health problems, errors, workplace conflict, and regretful overreactions. The wide-ranging impact of COVID-19 and working from home has further exacerbated the fragile emotional state of many executives and their ability to effectively lead their employees.

GOOD NEWS!

Working under pressure was the competency in which the surveyed GCs displayed the second-strongest competency potential score. Lawyers are historically good at working under pressure, as from their early days as an associate, much is expected of them.

“GCs can’t just sit on their laurels. Things move quickly—there’s a lot they need to do. Since the .com boom, the role has been evolving quicker and quicker. They need to evolve and be comfortable in their own skin. It shouldn’t just be a pathway to more (as it is increasingly in the U.S., becoming a pathway to CEO). The GC needs a good knowledge of the law, they need to take advice from firms but make it presentable and palatable for the company, they need to therefore be a good storyteller and communicator, and they need to have the human touch.”

– Richard Harris, Robert Walters

COMMON BLOCKS TO DEVELOPING THIS QUALITY

Unhelpful behaviors that inhibit the ability to work under pressure include chaotic responses and being too adaptable and unfocused to building trust too slowly, which may undermine teamwork and lead to conflict.

TOP TIP

The emphasis on emotional intelligence and the human side of professional life will help leaders to remain mindful of the entirety of their own and their employees’ work and life experiences.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

LOW

Lacking responsiveness and a sense of urgency to deal with the pressures they face. Lacking the focus and tenacity to persevere under pressure.

HIGH

Having the ability to maintain focus and showing resilience in the face of adversity as well as taking a direct approach in handling of conflict.

OVEREXTENDED

Becoming goal-fixated and finding it hard to detach and let go of focus.

TEST YOURSELF: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What situations do you find most challenging or stressful?
- Think about a time when you fell short of your own expectations. What did you learn?
- Think of an example of a time when your work was criticized. How did you react?
- How would others describe your response to stress?



DEFINITION

Having a broad vision aligned to a keen strategic mind. Being able to detect patterns and shifts in the market as well as having the capability to plan towards accomplishing long-term goals.

KEY TRAITS

- CONCEPTUAL
- TAKES CHARGE
- IMAGINATIVE
- RADICAL
- COMPETITIVE

CONCEPTUALIZING STRATEGIES

WHY IT MATTERS?

Leaders must create a strategy for the business that ensures growth and sustainability. As trusted advisors to CEOs, GCs have a responsibility to anticipate and to understand future trends and their impact on the business and organization. With constant shifts in the market, deregulation, price wars, and rising domestic and international tensions, GCs have to see around corners and propose changes to take advantage of opportunities and protect against risk in future scenarios. They need to ask the right questions related to vision, strategy, and risk in order to provide strategic input and ideas relevant for the future.

“The ones who are able to do everything will be successful in the 21st century. Flexible, adaptable, creative, think outside the box—think in new and different ways. The old days of sitting in the ivory tower waiting for people to come to you for advice

and then pontificating about law are dead and buried. You’re a business person who happens to be qualified as a lawyer.”

– Angus Haig, Cox Automotive

COMMON BLOCKS TO DEVELOPING THIS QUALITY

Being too cautious and change-resistant will prevent GCs from taking a broader view. Relying only on practical solutions may curtail the ability to create a compelling vision as they become too narrow-sighted. Those who are naturally highly adaptable might become too unfocused as a reaction to stress, or lost in details if they only make decisions based on strong evidence and facts.

TOP TIP

Learn to think in multiple timeframes, and build a diverse network to gain a broad perspective. Be organizationally savvy. Reframe threats and problems as opportunities. Connect vision with action. Demonstrate your big-picture thinking but set measurable and aggressive steps to achieve strategic goals.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

LOW

Lacking the ability to take a broader view and getting too caught up in smaller details and focusing on the here and now. Potentially lacking a broader focus and being too risk averse in their strategic objectives.

HIGH

Having a broad vision aligned to a keen strategic mind. Being able to detect patterns and shifts in the market as well as having the capability to plan toward accomplishing long-term goals.

OVEREXTENDED

Thinking too long-term, overlooking more immediate prioritization and strategic planning. Jumping too quickly into new solutions without developing others to their full potential. Driven and ambitious but unfocused strategy.

TEST YOURSELF: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What’s the biggest strategic risk you have taken? How do you feel about taking risks?
- How often do you set long-term strategic goals at work? How often do you assess if you are on track to meet these goals?
- What specifically have you done (or not done) to realize your strategic plans?
- How do you spot new business opportunities?



DEFINITION

Team work and collaborating with colleagues as well as showing organizational commitment.

KEY TRAITS

- COLLABORATIVE
- PURPOSEFUL
- EMPATHETIC
- ACCOMMODATING
- RELIABLE

WORKING TOGETHER

WHY IT MATTERS?

A critical part of the GC's role is to provide advice and strategic input for their stakeholders. The greater their understanding of their organization, and the stronger their reputation for being fair and trustworthy and inclusive within their team, department, and across all functions, the greater their chance of adding value. For GCs to help solve problems and open opportunities, people have to feel comfortable coming to them for advice and counsel. If GCs are known for accommodating interests of certain groups but not others, they will inadvertently support the existence of silos and diminish organizational transparency, creativity, and innovation.

“In my view the 21st century GC should serve their teams to empower them, invest in development, encourage ambition and curiosity, listen to feedback and help navigate obstacles. A profound interest in developing the next generation of GCs and being proactive in future-proofing the legal profession is vital.”

– Caroline Griffin Pain, Colt Technology

COMMON BLOCKS TO DEVELOPING THIS QUALITY

The main block is anything that risks losing trust of others, which could include being competitive to the point of winning at all costs, failing to be inclusive, being too tough, or seeking out conflict. Equally, if under stress the person adopts a chaotic approach to situations and problems, people may perceive them as someone who breaks promises and disregards formal plans and obligations towards other people.

TOP TIP

Build trust by connecting with people on a human-to-human level by being fully present, supportive, and approachable. Prove that you are reliable and consistently deliver what you said you would. Strive to be credible, demonstrating that you have the ability to say what you can do. Finally, empathize with others' needs, whether short, medium, or long-term.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

LOW

Focusing more on pursuing their own interests rather than building win-win relationships. Less inclined to adapt their work-style for others' benefit and being stubborn and uncompromising at times.

HIGH

Working and collaborating with colleagues as well as showing organizational commitment.

OVEREXTENDED

Focusing too heavily on consensus and finding it difficult to say “no” to requests from others.

TEST YOURSELF: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What do you think your colleagues would say is the best thing about working with you? And the worst?
- What do you do to foster inclusivity in your team and organization?
- Give me an example of a time where you and a colleague had opposing views on approaches. How did you overcome this?
- What would you say is your ideal balance of working with others versus working independently?
- What frustrates you most when working with others?

THE GC PERSONALITY SNAPSHOT

As human beings, we respond differently to different scenarios. Our research outlines how GCs generally respond to their situations through different “personas”: their everyday self, and their overextended self (which is how they react under stress). Being aware of these behavioral patterns can supercharge the GCs’ effectiveness, rapport-building ability, and influencing skills.

EVERYDAY PERSONA OF GCs

STRENGTHS

Collaborative, conceptual, demonstrative, tough, and logical. This paints a picture of a personality that is supportive of others, usually prioritizing in favor of the group’s best interests, trustworthy, objective, and rational, as they use the power of reason to persuade and are able to argue their position and voice their opinions.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

GCs scored low across the blue part of the mandala that includes qualities such as being cautious, evidence-based, practical, measured, and intimate (e.g., active listening skills). This could potentially decrease influencing impact with stakeholders who value accuracy and precision, who need time to reflect before committing to an answer, and who like attention to detail for a more accurate final result.

OVEREXTENDED PERSONA – A REACTION TO STRESS

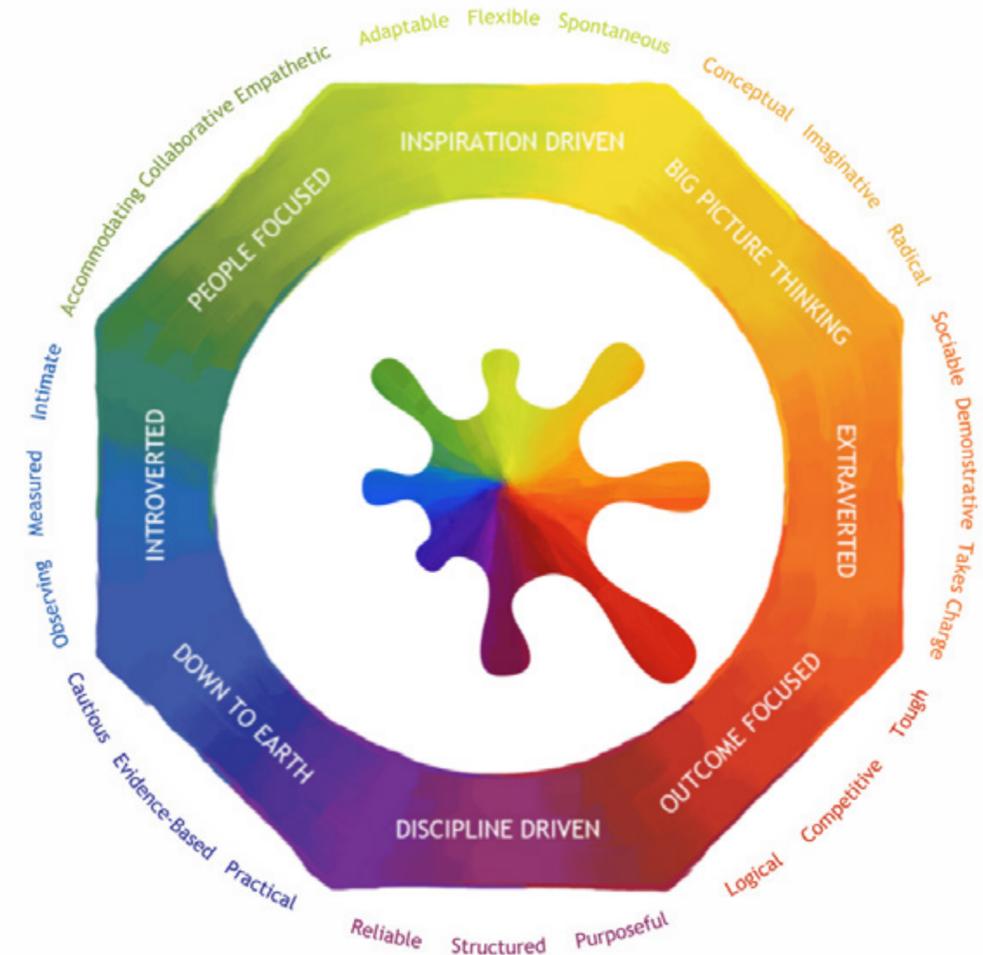
REPUTATIONAL AND RELATIONSHIP RISK

All individuals default into overextensions. In times of stress and when there’s a lot at stake, GCs might be seen as controlling, seeking conflict, wanting to win at all costs, and argumentative. Critically, these lower trust and can negatively impact the psychological safety necessary for teamwork and innovative thought.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

For the possible overextensions that GCs risk experiencing, we recommend developing deep listening skills and interpersonal patience, adopting an empathy lens (WIFT – “What’s in it for them?”), increasing practical and evidence-based thinking, and communicating regularly.

Figure 3. GC Personality Profile



EVERYDAY PERSONA OF GCs

5 TOP QUALITIES:

- Conceptual
- Demonstrative
- Tough
- Logical
- Collaborative

5 BOTTOM QUALITIES:

- Adaptable
- Intimate
- Measured
- Evidence-Based
- Practical



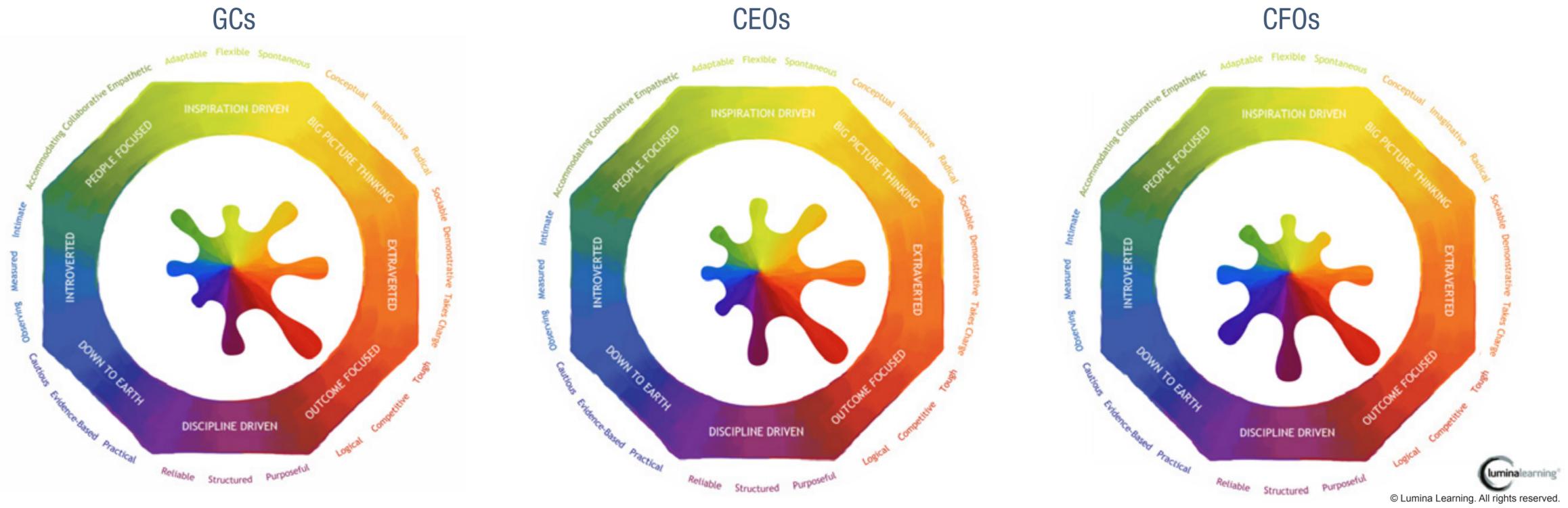
© Lumina Learning. All rights reserved.

GC VERSUS THE C-SUITE

“I think the GC is one of the few roles that has the ability to see the situation at the 34,000-foot level, as the CEO does. They see the entire thing as an ecosystem of customers, employees, the community at large, and stakeholders. But the unique GC is the one who can combine that functional requirement with the innate ability to say ‘Ok, where is the opportunity here?’ They can look through the eyes of the CEO and say, ‘How can we reframe what success looks like?’”

– Damien Atkins, Hershey

This section reveals the comparison between GCs, CEOs, and CFOs. For ease of reference, we will draw on insights from combined personalities of GCs, CEOs, and CFOs using the four dimensions from the Lumina Spark framework: Performing through Pioneering, Performing through Influence, Performing through Delivery, and Performing through People.



5 TOP QUALITIES	Logical Tough Demonstrative Conceptual Collaborative	Reliable Logical Takes Charge Demonstrative Sociable	Tough Logical Reliable Practical Collaborative
5 BOTTOM QUALITIES	Practical Evidence-Based Measured Observing Adaptable	Evidence-Based Measured Accommodating Empathetic Adaptable	Imaginative Radical Adaptable Empathetic Accommodating

PERFORMING THROUGH PIONEERING

GCs display a high level of synergy with CEOs in the Performing through Pioneering competencies. This big-picture view, the ability and inclination to strategize, is a skill many GC recognize that they share with the CEO. It is possible, however, that GC hold themselves back from ascending to further leadership positions by not embracing a natural potential for creativity, and accepting the need to be more radical as leaders. One might suggest that they need to become more comfortable with seeing themselves as true change-makers, leaders who can redefine the direction of an organization—and not just as a lawyer protecting the company against risk.

ARE YOU LEADING WITH INFLUENCE?

- Could you bring more creativity and radical thinking to your role?
- Can you connect more ideas from outside of legal to what you do?
- Can you use creative problem-solving techniques?

Reflect and write your response

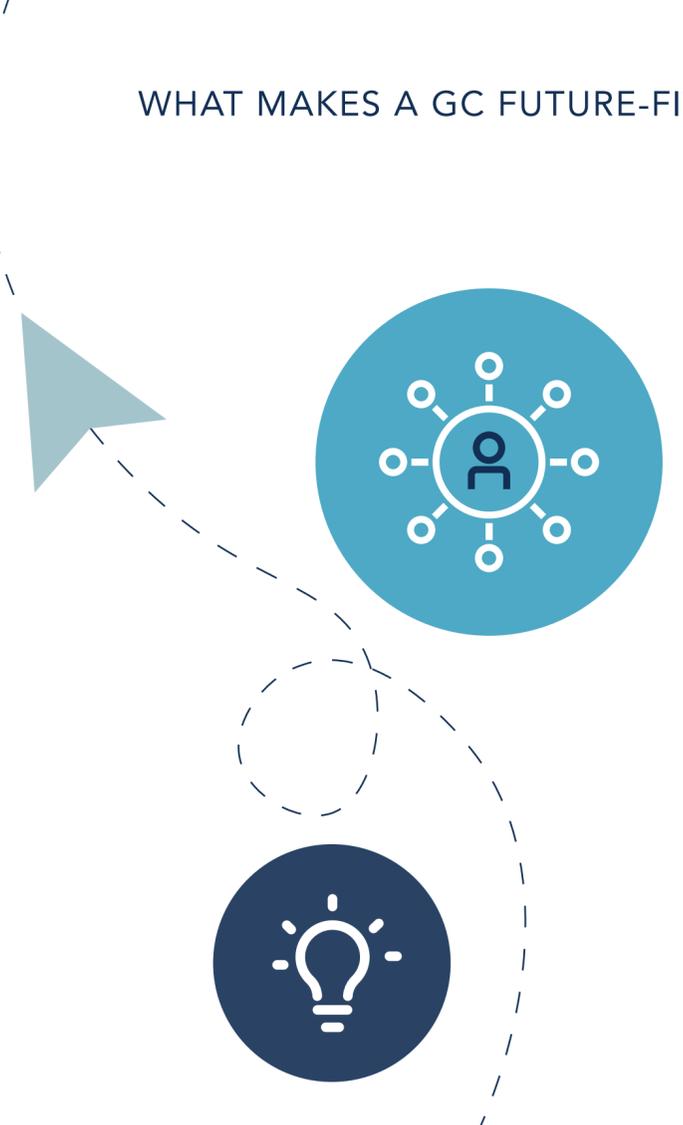
PERFORMING THROUGH INFLUENCE

Being outcome-focused tends to be a strong area of focus for all leadership roles in the C-Suite. There is a very strong alignment among CEO, CFO, and GC. This is certainly a key quality of successful senior leaders. The watchout would be that all players should be aware of this in situations when opposing views collide and strong personalities may lead to conflict and ego overplay, in favor of reflection and empathetic approaches through which win-win solutions can also be found.

ARE YOU LEADING WITH INFLUENCE?

- Are you listening to colleagues enough before you try to persuade?
- Are you ensuring that you are not so outcome-focused that you will win at any cost?
- Are you reflecting on your body language and tone to ensure you remain influential?

Reflect and write your response



“The exceptional GCs are the ones who maintain a breadth of humanity; focus on diversity, inclusivity, managing their team and getting the best out of them, and outside of the company tries to drive that in the profession as well.”

– Paul Ferguson, Bloomberg

PERFORMING THROUGH DELIVERY

GCs and CFOs diverge in this section. CFOs are naturally highly evidence-based, cautious, and practical, while GCs have scored low across these qualities. This could lead to frustration on both sides, unless there is a strong positive working relationship. In the absence of rapport and mutual understanding, GCs may experience a lower influencing capital with this group of stakeholders. It may be worth GCs considering their interactions with those who are highly driven by data, tried and tested methods, and rationale, who prefer to build trust over time and appreciate being given space to reflect on discussions before committing to an answer.

ARE YOU LEADING WITH INFLUENCE?

- Do you know what you don't know and have a good strategic overview of how these aspects are being delegated and delivered on?
- As businesses become more digital, how do you get familiar with data? How do you leverage it to develop strategic insights?
- How do you develop a big-picture view to enable you to build your profile as a leader?

Reflect and write your response

PERFORMING THROUGH PEOPLE

As leaders, GCs demonstrate a higher score across this domain than CEOs and CFOs, giving them a good chance to model a more holistic style of leadership in their organization. Leading through people and leaning on informal influence rather than command and control will be key in the future as people are looking for transformational, purpose-driven leaders who see them as human beings, not just human doings. Given the GC's proclivity to be outcome-focused and display an extroverted style of leading, understanding these "intimate" skills will be even more critical as the world of work changes.

ARE YOU LEADING WITH INFLUENCE?

- Do you listen enough to your team? Are you fully present when listening to others?
- Are you able to understand the wider context in which they work and who they are as people?
- Can you claim to be known as a genuine collaborator who people are excited to work with and feel at ease with, able to express their thoughts and ideas?

Reflect and write your response



“I think as a leader in the current environment, empathetic skills, really listening to your team, understanding your team, and spending time with your team is so important. Communication skills are more important than ever because there is so much uncertainty. You can't really over-communicate.”

– Mark Maurice Jones, Nestle

CONCLUSION

The Leading with Influence study sought to identify the most desired competencies for GCs as they move forward into the future.

We learned that legal leaders must be a source of technical expertise as well as a source of influence. Influence will expand as GCs model the six crucial competencies: adapting to change, providing direction, being interpersonally astute, working under pressure, conceptualizing strategies, and working together.

In addition, research revealed emerging legal leadership themes, which we encourage you to consider and incorporate into your professional development plans. These include your role in organizational change, humanizing workplace relationships, role modeling, rapport-building with a variety of stakeholders, and encouraging merging technical knowledge with creative thinking.

GCs who participated in the research appear to be well-equipped in playing an active role in steering the future of the organizations they serve. It is now up to you to determine where you currently sit on the scales of success, and where you have unique learning opportunities to advance your skills across these crucial competencies.

“Leadership success depends on how leaders attend to and adapt in the constant interplay of contexts and interactions.”

– Alex Lazarus, Lazarus and Maverick

Inspired by the science of behavioral change and the art of personal agility, this report fuses research with practical suggestions on how to become stronger in the areas that matter most to today’s legal leaders. To help leaders self-assess their competency potential, we have laid out examples of behaviors that can curtail and accelerate their success in each competency. We encourage you to return to this part of the report and conduct the self-analysis periodically to capture improvement and progress.

Remember that personal agility means adapting rapidly, remaining resilient, connecting better with people, and disrupting your own and others’ inefficient thinking. When a leader demonstrates to their team that they are open to reflection and change, they model the humility, authenticity, and commitment to lifelong learning that builds a sense of agency and resourcefulness for all.

By contrast, those that chose not to overcome their inability to manage change within themselves risk

being imprisoned in their yesterday identity in a new world. As they gain a reputation for being inflexible and are seen to detract from shaping the future, these aspiring legal leaders hit the proverbial corporate ceiling earlier, or are left in their comfort zone where nothing new or exciting happens.

That’s why Leading with Influence focuses on the power to influence yourself, your responses, and your overreactions, as well as the ways you can influence others. In our world, where legal leaders will continue to be accountable to multiple stakeholders, how you increase your behavioral agility will bring you closer to your best self and make you ready for the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With particular thanks to our researchers and authors:

Alex Lazarus, Lazarus & Maverick
Julie Ensor, Lumina Spark

Thank you too to our contributing editors:

Rhiannon Van Ross, GLL
Abigail Harris, GLL
Francesca Ffiske, GLL
Catherine McGregor, GLL Ambassador