

Future-proof yourself and your career

The last ten years have seen unprecedented changes in the world of work. For my clients and their organisations, this is undoubtedly true. The impacts of global supply chains, mobility, technology, big data, teleworking, different attitudes to where work is done and how organisations drive agile transformation with *more for less* consequences to deliver *faster, better, and cheaper* to customers. Add more onerous regulation in some industries and new forms of not-seen-before competition in others and the cocktail of the future is VUCA!

VUCA is a management acronym that stands for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous or in plain English 'It's crazy out there'. Harvard Business Review digs deeper with this excellent paper [What VUCA Really Means for You](#).

It's no wonder researchers say it's not possible to visualise the future with any certainty. So, how do we prepare for an even uncertain future?

I found the ideas in a StratX infographic titled *Future-Proofing Your Leaders for 2030 & Beyond* helpful in considering my clients and how we work together (you can download the short white paper by clicking on this [link](#)).

Here's what the StratX authors propose:

- ✓ **Critical thinking.** As information proliferates and is shared widely, leaders have to sharpen their critical thinking. Sifting the facts, sorting the wheat from the chaff and building evidence-based scenarios of possible futures, leaders to be pathfinders into the future, not blinded by the past.
- ✓ **Curiosity and innovation.** Looking into a future where no one has gone before requires leaders to be curious about possibilities and adventurous in thinking differently. These leaders need to have their antennae on 'high receive' and synthesise emerging trends, for example, in how customers buy or products are developed.
- ✓ **Emotional intelligence.** Leaders for the future need high order EI skilled in collaboration and cross-functionality. Structures will flatten further and teams will form and re-form faster. Knowledge and interpersonal skills will surpass seniority in the rapidly diminishing hierarchies.
- ✓ **Tech-savviness.** Leaders who think all being tech-savvy requires is the capacity to the Office suite and post on LinkedIn, best think again. Being tech-savvy already means knowing what transformation through digitalisation and digitisation (yes, [there is a big difference!](#)) means to your organisation and your role now and into the future.

Food for thought as we go into 2020

To help my clients future-proof themselves and their careers, in addition to their immediate needs, I will focus them on the knowledge and skills underlying the four big trends outlined by the StratX authors.

Together we will use experiences and reflection to help them strengthen their emotional intelligence, collaborative and creative skills. I intend to remind my clients and myself at every opportunity of the words of [William Gibson](#) "The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed".



And on that note, I wish you all happy holidays and safe travels

Margaret