

NEXUS LEADERSHIP: Rules For a World Without Rules

Developed by Julio M. Ottino and Bruce Mau

INTRODUCTION

The demands on leadership in our era of unprecedented change are profoundly different than in previous times.

It is the difference between relying on a map or a compass to find your way. In a stable landscape, a map will do. But if that landscape is on fire, everything you know about it is in a state of flux and you need a compass to advance. Cultivating the NEXUS Leadership mindset will help you navigate complexities, balance competing forces, leverage diverse strengths, and set a successful, sustainable course forward in our rapidly changing world.

Based on the book *THE NEXUS: Augmented Thinking for a Complex World – The New Convergence of Art, Technology, and Science*, the NEXUS Leadership framework combines insights from periods of great transformation across the domains of art, science and technology to empower you to approach leadership in a new way and build a compass for yourself and your organization.

FOUNDATIONAL NEXUS ELEMENTS

Vision + Communication + Execution

Vision

Use a wide lens to explore the broadest context of creation, invention and discovery to define the simplicity amidst complexity.

Communication

Distill the essence of ideas into a core narrative and leverage both traditional and new technologies to inspire and galvanize action.

Execution

Prepare for all possible outcomes and have both the discipline to stay on the chosen path and the flexibility to evolve as needed.

NEXUS leaders should excel in two of the Foundational Elements and have strong support in the third. They must understand each Element well enough to make informed, confident decisions about building and guiding a team that performs all three functions.

CRITICAL NEXUS COMPETENCIES

1. Working and innovating at the intersection of Art, Technology, and Science (creation, invention, and discovery)
2. Thinking exponentially — beyond conventional limits — and synthesizing ideas and information across boundaries
3. Understanding and applying the core ideas of systems thinking
4. Resolving and leveraging conflicting views
5. Evaluating and balancing action and reflection strategically
6. Mastering the ability to see simplicity in complexity and complexity in simplicity
7. Embracing and using constraints and challenges as a vital source of creative motivation
8. Building and leading collaborative NEXUS teams
9. Developing and implementing a culture of continuous learning (and perhaps unlearning)
10. Framing and communicating inspirational core narratives

Built on a Values-Based Foundation

Nexus Leaders are guided by an individual compass anchored on ability to self reflect, balance, and an inner confidence that is unafraid of externalizing limitations.

WHO WE ARE

Julio M. Ottino is an academic thought leader, author, artist, and internationally recognized researcher whose work in chaos and complexity has been featured in *Nature*, *Science*, and *Scientific American*. Ottino is a Guggenheim Fellow, former dean at McCormick School of Engineering, and professor at Kellogg School of Management. He is the founding co-director of Northwestern University's Institute on Complex Systems.

Bruce Mau is a designer, innovator, educator, and author who has worked on a broad spectrum of projects in collaboration with the world's leading brands, institutions, governments, entrepreneurs, and renowned artists. He applies a life-centered design approach to solving problems of any kind, at any scale. He is co-founder and CEO of Massive Change Network, a design consultancy based in the Chicago area.