



# The Leadership Elevation Framework™

An InfoGuide for  
Leaders and Learners  
*by Robin Borough*



The Leadership Elevation Framework™—from Professional Problem Solver to Leadership Luminary...Learn How to Map Your Destiny



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## Introducing the Leadership Elevation Framework™

Developed for Leaders at Every Stage of Their Careers

For many years, my colleagues and I have recognized the need for a new leadership model; one based on a learning pathway. Today’s leaders need the hard and soft skills, tools, and strategies to lead their organizations into tomorrow’s global economic future.

Working in conjunction with numerous leadership experts and training specialists, we created the Omnikron Learning Lifecycle™, which led us to design the leadership training methodologies inherent in the Leadership Elevation Framework™.





## Current Research Regarding Training and Education

### The economic imperative for increasing educational attainment

**4/5**

Four out of five jobs lost during the recession were those requiring high school education or less. Those low-skill jobs are gone for good, replaced by jobs that require specialized training and skills.

Despite a lingering high unemployment rate, employers say that they lack qualified job applicants. By 2020, two thirds of all jobs will require postsecondary education.

**2/3**

**13<sup>TH</sup>**

Young adults are continuing to enter the labor force ill prepared. At a mere 42%, the United States currently ranks thirteenth among developed countries in college attainment rates for young adults.

### The facts about attainment equity

The postsecondary attainment rate for adults is 40 percent. But the facts about attainment are far more complex. Adults who identify as Asian are leading in attainment with 59 percent, while whites come in at 44 percent.

**40%**

**27%**

African American attainment rates are as low as 27 percent. Native American and Latino Americans complete postsecondary programs at even lower rates, 23 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

### The societal impact of higher attainment rates

There are a number of correlates with higher educational attainment that indicate overall better social, economic, and personal outcomes for citizens. Societies with higher educational attainment can expect: greater civic and social engagement, higher rates of voter participation, and volunteerism, healthier lifestyles, and less dependence on public assistance.

Source:  
<https://www.luminafoundation.org/facts-and-figures>

## The Cognitive Era Requires a New Approach to Learning and Leadership

Experts agree that the next phase of the global economy is the Cognitive, or Learning, Era. Because events affecting corporations both nationally and internationally are continuing to evolve so rapidly, there must be an entire paradigm shift in the philosophy and practice of leadership.

However, by nature, most people are creatures of habit rather than agents of change. It often takes a while for our brains to catch up with the implications of new technologies or inventions. This can mean that we end up relying on old ideas about the organization of our business, even while new technologies, ideas, and strategies are offering us the perfect opportunity to become more efficient and effective.

Consultant Josh Bersin, founder and principal of Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP, has recognized the need for “thought leaders.” From his personal experience he comments, “for many years I’ve been travelling around the world giving speeches and discussions on the future of corporate learning. One of the issues I point out is the fact that today, learning is part of economic survival for most of us. **If we don’t stay current, up to date, and continuously re-skilled in our professions (regardless of what they are), we fall behind.**”

Today, smart organizations are acting to elevate and facilitate the growth and effectiveness of their leaders. This is achieved through developing leaders who make lifelong learning a part of their core philosophy and pass this trait along to their teams, nurturing a learning lifestyle and culture throughout their organizations.



# Five Reasons Leaders Are Not as Effective as They Could Be:

After 35 years of real-world experience in the corporate arena, including hands-on career coaching, executive mentoring, high-level training, and consulting for IT and Business Transformation, we've witnessed common trends among project failures. Before revealing how our advancements in learning and leadership will prepare you and your team for the Cognitive Era, we will examine weaknesses that repeatedly lead to unsatisfactory results:

## 1. Complacency

Often organizations reach a plateau where continuing with old practices is easier than striving to reach new heights of innovation and creativity. This complacent mentality leads to lackluster performance, stagnant growth, and reluctance to compete for new contracts, customers and resources. To break through the barriers of this status quo thinking, leaders must engage themselves and their teams in new learning pathways. It's only through continuous learning that complacency is overcome, and positivity, excitement, and proactivity take its place.

## 2. Over-Control

Many leaders lack the ability to delegate appropriate levels of control and train their teams, managers, and department heads to think and act independently. This creates a culture of micromanagement that stifles independent thinking, crushes creativity, and leaves leaders practicing small picture thinking. As their organization's Thought Leaders, they should be going big! The Leadership Elevation Framework™ teaches leaders to relate active learning to the bigger picture, and empower their people to learn, think and act for themselves (which naturally benefits the organization).

## 3. Lack of Change Management Skills

According to the Change Management Institute, "The current level of business, technology, economic, political and social disruption requires a much faster and more agile response to change."<sup>1</sup> Yet, many 21st-century leaders don't have a clear understanding of how change impacts workers, or how best to help them deal with the chaos, stress, and uncertainty change brings. Effective change practitioners transform resistance and reluctance into resilience and enthusiasm by offering tools and strategies for overcoming negative thought processes and embracing the opportunities change brings.



## Five Reasons Leaders Are Not as Effective as They Could Be—Continued:

### 4. Assumed Collaboration Through Osmosis

True collaboration doesn't just happen. It takes a host of communication and negotiation skills to create and support a collaborative work environment between leaders, teams, third party vendors, different business units, and globally distributed groups, etc.

Unfortunately, many leaders assume that people will collaborate effectively on projects just because they are asked to work together – what we've termed "collaboration through osmosis." Omnikron's collaboration coursework includes advanced negotiation techniques, project management, understanding business relationships, Scrum, Agile, and much more. Once leaders and their teams gain proficiency in these areas, true collaborative action naturally takes place.

### 5. Innovation for Innovation's Sake

Some companies make the mistake of creating a culture of innovation for innovation's sake, when the goal should be elevation. When leaders push for innovation alone, they are pressing their people into an "innovate first/assess later" mindset. This invariably leads to failure and frustration.

To achieve truly effective advancements, leaders and their teams must first master strategic decision making, problem solving, negotiation, communication, and collaboration. Only when everyone is working together cohesively are they ready for the inevitable challenges of business transformation.



## Omnikron Learning Lifecycle™: From “Yearn” to “Burn”

Now that we’ve reviewed five leadership weaknesses that detour careers and destroy corporate innovation, here are the five stages that effective leaders and teams go through when successfully achieving their goals. We call this journey the Omnikron Learning Lifecycle™. This journey begins with the “yearn” phase. Interestingly, our behavioral research and real-world observations show us that **90% of people in today’s business population do not even make it to the “Yearn” phase**. Incredibly, most people are satisfied without “yearning” – whether it’s to reach higher goals, achieve more, do more, or be more. Read on to discover more about the Learning Lifecycle™ and how you can apply these concepts to your own leadership goals.



### Yearn

“Yearn” simply means that as a leader, you Yearn to learn and accomplish more. You see gaps or voids that others do not and are aware of problems that need your attention. You actively search for ways to improve processes, strengthen communication, and encourage open discussion.

You are not comfortable sitting back and accepting complacency in yourself or your team and recognize it is up to you as a leader to strike the Yearn spark to break out of the status quo.

You Yearn to make a difference.



### Learn

Once you yearn to fix the problems and face the challenges you’ve identified, you are ready to “Learn.” This part of the Learning Lifecycle™ is always exciting and stimulating. During the Learn phase, you begin to imagine what you will have gained once you’re finished: whether it’s skills, knowledge, a degree, a badge, a certificate, or simply a pride in your accomplishments.

However, as you drill deeper into the Learn phase, learning itself becomes more of a challenge because you are striving to master new skills and concepts. At this stage, it is important to understand how you and each individual on your team best learns and retains knowledge (hands-on? lectures? web-based? self-directed?). Then, as a leader, you can inspire and guide everyone to their path of highest achievement.

## The Learning Lifecycle™ –Continued



### Turn

“Turn” refers to the point when a challenge or struggle gets tougher. Remember, we lost 90% of the population at Yearn, and unfortunately we will lose another significant percentage of people here. However, true leaders dig in and finish strong, no matter how sharp the turn, or how steep the incline they face. A critical component of Turn is your role as a motivator, cheerleader, and champion for the people you lead. They are looking to you for guidance heading into the turn, and the newly-developed skills, tools, and strategies that you’ve mastered in the Leadership Elevation Framework™ will enable you to smoothly pull your team through the Turn.

Ideally, the Learning Lifecycle™ never ends if you, as a leader are doing your job properly. It regenerates each time you’ve finished a project, accomplished a goal, or completed a difficult task. After celebrating and enjoying victory in the “Earn” phase, then re-prioritizing in the “Burn” phase, you and your team identify a new set of gaps, tasks, or problems, “Yearn” to solve them, and then work on mastering the new skills necessary to successfully move forward through the Learning Lifecycle™ once again.



### Earn

When leaders and their teams successfully overcome the challenges of the Turn, the payoff is what they “Earn.” Although increased income is part of this Earn, we are not just talking about monetary rewards. More importantly, leaders and their teams who reach this level of accomplishment earn credibility, confidence, and competence. While money and connections may come and go, these three “C’s” grow over time and will stay with you over the course of your career.

With the credibility, confidence, and competence you gain with each successfully completed project or initiative, your worth and value to your organization increase exponentially. As a leader, the Earn phase is an exciting and rewarding representation of the energy, effort, and time you’ve dedicated to increasing your skills and guiding your team members to do the same.



### Burn

At the “Burn” phase, we tend to lose yet another percentage of the population. This is because people get complacent once the high energy and intensity of the previous cycles dissipate. So, while it’s critical to celebrate and enjoy hard-earned successes, leaders must Burn off comfort and complacency of their current state and prepare for the next challenge.



# The Leadership Elevation Framework™

Built to optimize the Omnikron Learning Lifecycle™, the Leadership Elevation Framework™ represents the learning opportunities and training/coursework that enables you to build solid leadership skills and/or create leaders in your organization.

## Calibrate

Establish your baseline with Omnikron's proprietary and industry-best-practice assessments that provide valuable insights about your learning style, problem-solving prowess, leadership, and negotiation acumen. The assessments we use include StrengthsFinder 2.0, Kolbe, Negotiation Diagnostics, and Career Mapping via the Career Accelerator.

The Calibrate stage also includes training in KEPNERandFOURIE complex problem solving and strategic decision-making. Class selections include Advanced Problem Solving, IT Root Cause Analysis, Strategic Decision-Making for High Velocity Teams, or Fast Track to the C-Suite.

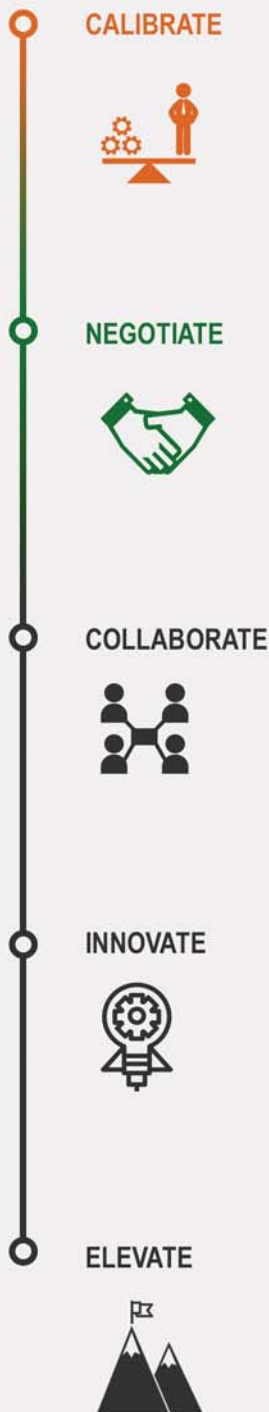
**Badge: Professional Problem Solver (PPS)**—Students who complete at least 2 Assessments and 1 KEPNERandFOURIE Class are eligible to earn the PPS Badge OR Students can take a qualification test offered by The Professional Problem Solver Institute

## Negotiate

Developing competency in negotiation tactics improves business relationships, enhances internal and external communication, and increases productivity and performance. As important as negotiation mastery is within the corporate world, few organizations offer real, best-in-class negotiation training for their people. But at Omnikron, we are proud to offer some of the most exceptional, effective negotiation skills training available to professionals today.

Effective negotiation skills are a critical component of the Leadership Framework™. Coursework at this level includes negotiation for business leaders (Based on real-world FBI hostage and crisis negotiation tactics and techniques) and advanced negotiation for teams (Enables successful negotiation of complex, multi-year deals, global business alliances, national and international transactions, and other high-level corporate contracts and arrangements).

**Badge: Change Agent (CA)**—At least 1 Negotiation Class is necessary to qualify towards the Change Agent Badge





# The Leadership Elevation Framework™—Continued

## Collaborate

Collaboration is a critical component of the leader's toolbox. Collaboration coursework includes Change Management Foundations, Project Management, Project Rescue, Agile, and Scrum training, as well as an examination of the nature of collaborative Business Relationship Management across industries and verticals.

**Badge: Change Agent (CA)**—Students qualify for the CA Badge if they have successfully earned the PPS Badge, taken at least 1 Negotiation Class, and completed 2 offerings from Collaborate

## Innovate

Most companies attempt to start with innovation—they may launch new products or apps, build new systems, create new processes, or bring on new talent and resources. But without the foundation built through Calibration, Negotiation, and Collaboration, successful long-term innovation is questionable. Leaders in this stage apply the skills they've learned in the previous stages and then focus on best practices, cutting edge technology, and strategies. Innovation electives include a growing number of exciting, relevant areas such as Big Data/Data Science, ITIL, DevOps, Agile, Cyber Security, and Enterprise Architecture.

**Badge: Innovation Architect (IA)**—Students qualify for the IA Badge if they have successfully earned their CA Badge and taken 4 offerings from Innovate

## Elevate

Once you reach the Elevation stage, you will have accomplished an enormous amount of personal and professional growth, gained a wealth of new tools, techniques, and strategies, and become a leader others believe in, trust, and want to follow.

In this stage, you will become fully well-rounded by finishing one final assessment and also taking one governance class in addition to completing your capstone project. You and your team may choose to finish this stage by either producing an RLO (Reusable Learning Object) based on successfully applying what you've learned to elevate others, or by completing a customized optimization project selected by you and approved and guided by our training staff.

**Badge: Leadership Luminary (LL)**—Students who have successfully earned their IA Badge, taken 1 Governance Class, 1 final Assessment, and completed a capstone project will achieve the prized honor and credentialed badge of Leadership Luminary!



## Omnikron Open Badges

As individuals move through the Leadership Elevation Framework™, they have the opportunity to earn digital open badges signifying proficiency, knowledge, and credentials in each area. Omnikron's instruction is on par with coursework taught in any institution of higher education. In fact, many of our trainers are (or have been) academic educators as well. Once earned, these badges represent the learning dedication and rigorous coursework you've undergone, and are a digital and verifiable emblem of your skills and achievements.

### Calibrate



#### Professional Problem Solver (PPS)

**To Qualify for PPS:**  
2+ Assessments, plus  
1 Problem Solving Class

### Negotiate/Collaborate



#### Change Agent (CA)

**To Qualify for CA:**  
PPS Badge, plus  
1 Negotiate Class, and  
2 Collaborate Classes

### Innovate



#### Innovation Architect (IA)

**To Qualify for IA:**  
CA Badge, plus  
4 Innovate Electives

### Elevate



#### Leadership Luminary (LL)

**To Qualify for LL:**  
IA Badge, plus  
1 Governance Class,  
1 Final Assessment, and  
Capstone Project

## Did You Know:

### Employers: <sup>2,3</sup>

U.S. Competitiveness is being threatened by the skills mismatch between employers' critical, in-demand skills and availability of those skills in workers.

According to the Lumina Foundation "High-quality learning is the pathway to increase employers' ability to compete..."



Companies show 39.2% - 129% ROI from their Tuition Assistance / Reimbursement programs



Productivity, Innovation, Branding and Morale increase with training programs that fill current and future gaps



### Professionals: <sup>2,3</sup>

Many companies invest in their own workforce to develop in-demand skills needed now and in the future.

Professionals who take advantage of company-sponsored Tuition Assistance programs earn more and get promoted more often!



Individuals get Wage Increases of up to 43%



3.7% to 10% get Promotions



4.2% to 7.5% get Good Transfers or Retention Offers







## The Cognitive Era and Lumina Foundation's Strategic Education Plan: Goal 2025

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation working to increase the proportion of Americans with degrees, certificates, and other high-quality credentials.

"Lumina Foundation's Goal 2025 seeks to increase the proportion of Americans with degrees, certificates and other high-quality credentials to 60 percent by 2025, defined as those that are based on transparent learning outcomes and that lead to further education and employment.

There is growing recognition that credentials must stand for high-quality learning and skill development; that several key steps are needed to advance the creation of a more transparent, connected credentialing system in the U.S.; and that we must not advance these actions in silos. Rather, progress requires partnerships and collective action. That's the only way to achieve our shared vision and leverage resources for the long journey ahead."<sup>4</sup>

Omnikron shares The Lumina Foundation's ongoing education goals, credentialing initiatives, and belief in educational/learning outcomes as a means to strengthen leaders, teams, individuals and the corporations and companies they work for.

### Join Us and Begin Your Journey!

From Yearn to Burn and everything in between, leaders who join us will gain skills, knowledge, and competence in a host of critical areas. We are confident that leaders who engage in our program today will evolve quickly as leaders of tomorrow's successful organizations, spearheading initiatives, and taking the actions necessary to achieve sustainable growth economically, environmentally, and socially.

## Additional Sources

<sup>1</sup> The Change Management Institute, [www.change-management-institute.com](http://www.change-management-institute.com)

<sup>2</sup> Talent Investments Pay Off, Cigna Realizes Return on Investment from Tuition Benefits  
<https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/talent-investments-pay-off-cigna-full.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Talent Investments Pay Off, Large Communications Technology Company Realizes Returns for Investments in Tuition Assistance,  
<https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/talent-investments-pay-off-large-commtech.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The Emerging Learning System, report on the recent convening and new directions for action, June, 2016, The Lumina Foundation

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