

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LRI Research Reveals Four Critical Capabilities Leaders Need to Successfully Navigate Transformation

New white paper based on interviews with senior executives offers a framework for helping leaders thrive amid constant change

[Henderson, NV] — Leadership Research Institute (LRI) has announced the release of its latest white paper, *Transformation Capabilities: How Senior Executives Navigate Personal and Professional Change*, co-authored by Dr. Joelle K. Jay, Director at LRI, and Dr. Steve M. Rumery, Director Emeritus.

At a time when organizations face unprecedented disruption, transformation has become a business imperative. Yet despite widespread investment in change initiatives, success remains elusive. Research shows that 90% of organizations report undergoing some form of transformation, while 88% of transformation efforts ultimately fail.

The new white paper explores a critical but often overlooked factor in transformation success: the capabilities leaders need to transform themselves in order to lead transformation effectively.

Drawing on qualitative research from interviews with 37 C-suite and senior executives across industries including technology, financial services, retail, hospitality, healthcare, and aviation, the study examines how accomplished leaders successfully navigated significant personal and professional change.

“Organizations often focus on processes, structures, and systems when pursuing transformation,” said Dr. Joelle K. Jay. “Our research found that successful transformation also requires leaders to develop the personal capabilities needed to navigate uncertainty, adapt to change, and sustain performance over time.”

The research introduces LRI's Adaptive-Regenerative Cycle (ARC), a framework describing transformation as an ongoing process that alternates between periods of challenge and periods of restoration, reflection, and integration. Leaders who successfully navigate both phases develop what the authors call “transformation fluency,” the ability to adapt and grow through repeated cycles of change.

Among the study's key findings, successful leaders consistently demonstrated four interconnected transformation capabilities:

- Growth: Embracing change through curiosity, learning, openness, and reframing challenges as opportunities.
- Resilience: Adapting to uncertainty, embracing discomfort, maintaining flexibility, and persevering through setbacks.
- Authenticity: Staying grounded in purpose, values, self-awareness, and personal conviction during periods of disruption.

- Connection: Building relationships, support systems, and collaborative networks that enable both performance and recovery.

“Your brain is so adaptive...you have to keep pushing it, and that's when the growth comes,” said Eric Severson, Executive Coach and Consultant, Severson & Associates Coaching and Consulting; Adjunct Professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business; and former Chief People Officer at Neiman Marcus, DaVita, and Gap Inc.

The research identified Growth as the most universal capability among successful leaders, appearing in 100% of executive interviews.

The research also highlights a common pitfall among senior leaders: becoming overly focused on either continuous action or continuous reflection. Leaders who thrive in transformation balance both, actively engaging with difficult challenges while making time to restore, learn, and prepare for future demands.

“Transformation is no longer a stand-alone process that leaders engage in from time to time... it is an on-going and integrated facet of a person’s leadership,” said Dr. Steve M. Rumery, Director Emeritus at LRI. “Leaders who succeed in disrupted environments are not necessarily those with the most technical experience and know-how. They are the ones who develop the capacities to learn, adapt, recover, and grow through change.”

The findings have important implications for HR leaders, executive coaches, talent development professionals, and senior executives responsible for guiding organizations through periods of transformation. The white paper offers practical insights for leadership development, succession planning, executive coaching, and organizational change initiatives.

As organizations continue to confront technological disruption, evolving workforce expectations, economic uncertainty, and increasing complexity, the authors argue that transformation capabilities will become as essential as traditional leadership competencies.

Transformation Capabilities: How Senior Executives Navigate Personal and Professional Change is now available from Leadership Research Institute.

About Leadership Research Institute (LRI):

Leadership Research Institute (LRI) is a global consulting firm specializing in leadership and organizational development. We partner with leaders across a wide variety of industries, helping them to guide and transform their organizations.

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