

# **VISIONARY LEADERSHIP IN A TURBULENT WORLD**

Thriving in the New VUCA Context

As *Visionary Business Leadership in a Turbulent World* genuinely illustrates, there is nothing certain about operating in today's ever-changing business domain. This book is a refreshing read with practical insights and applications for helping leaders to navigate its rocky terrain.

— Rob Koonce, *Founder, Can We Communicate*

The nine experts in this book impressively clarify the challenges that leaders face in an increasingly volatile, complex, and ambiguous global environment while at the same time raising critical questions. How can systems-thinking equip leaders to better respond in ambiguous situations? What mindsets transcend relativism and multi-culturalism and how can the gaps in cultural competence be bridged? What capabilities must be developed to successfully guide change? What roles do innovation, collaboration, and resilience play when navigating the twenty-first century landscape? This intriguing book serves as an indispensable guide for leader practitioners as they hone their skills to think strategically and holistically about solutions that are centered on effective leadership practices in a VUCA world.

— Donnette Noble, *Ph.D., Associate Professor, Chair — Organizational Leadership Program, Roosevelt University (College of Professional Studies)*

Visionary Leadership does what so many other books attempt but fail — it captures the dynamic and complex realities of engaging in leadership in a contemporary context. By acknowledging VUCA as inherent in business — and indeed across most disciplines and fields — the authors can offer insights and recommendations that actually make a difference in how we understand and practice leadership.

— John P. Dugan, *Associate Professor & Program Chair, Higher Education; Co-Program Chair, International Higher Education; Program Director, Undergraduate Minor in Leadership Studies, Loyola University Chicago*

# VISIONARY LEADERSHIP IN A TURBULENT WORLD

Thriving in the New VUCA Context

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

# Dedications

## **Rob Elkington**

To the five amazing women who enrich my life every day in the midst of VUCA: Rebecca, my wife. Sarah, Hannah, and Amy, my three amazing daughters, and Aliyna Haddiya, my granddaughter, whose name means "Precious Gift!"

## **Madeleine van der Steege**

To my father, a man ahead of his time, and, my mother, a quiet rebel against the establishment. To Anton and our three creative children, Arianne, Zander and Mariq who make the world even more meaningful. With endearing thanks to Prof. Dianne Bevelander for all her inspiration. To Ruth Dixon for her loyal support. To my dearest family and friends.

## **Judith Glick-Smith**

To Kieki, Jordan, and Hannah.

## **Jennifer Moss Breen**

Leadership is a challenge that helps me to learn and grow, and because I have a passion for learning, I would like to dedicate this work to my children Paige, Jacob, Trevor, and Jacqui and my students. Our collective interest in improving global collaboration teaches us to understand the perspectives of others, and ultimately, our own enlightenment.

**Noel Pearse**

I dedicate this book to my wife, Tracy, and to my sons, Joshua and Asher, in acknowledgment of their love and support.

**Bettina von Stamm**

To the networks that sustain me in the VUCA world: family and friends, in particular my husband Rod, two sons Robert and Tobias, my best friend Christine, and my wonderful ILF Wider Community, an amazing collection of innovation enthusiasts from around the globe.

**Fred T. Krawchuk**

To all the amazing people I have served with who collaborate in a VUCA world in order to alleviate suffering and make a positive impact.

**Suzanne Martin**

“In la sua voluntade e nostra pace” (In His will is our peace) from Dante’s Paradiso, found above Mary Parker Follett’s bed.

**Elizabeth A. Tuleja**

To Fath-Allah who balances my VUCA world.

# Acknowledgments

In a VUCA world one of the key skillsets and mindsets is that of collaboration. The power and strength of collaboration is modeled in the forming and completion of the book you now hold in your hands. Nine authors from different parts of the world agreed to collaborate on this project, each leveraging their area of strength and expertise, while clearly and carefully synergizing their contribution with the overall theme of the book. The process, though, was not easy. We continually faced VUCA as we attempted to pull this incredible book together for you, the reader.

*Volatility* abounded in the early days of the book when we were striving to reach consensus around the key theme/s of the book, as well as its structure. Volatility ensued when it came to several key editorial decisions and our need to sustain good relationships while protecting the quality and integrity of the book. Volatility also ensued when Rob faced a major health challenge mid-way through the development of the book and had to pull back on giving leadership to the process. It was at this junction that Madeleine, Judy, and Jennifer really stepped up to the plate and took the book to heights that none of us could have imagined! Madeleine's resilience and acuity as a leader ensured the book emerged as the wonderful artefact you now hold in your hands. It was our combined *vision* of what the book could become, and the exceptional leadership of Madeleine, Judy, and Jennifer, that ameliorated the threat of volatility at a critical stage.

*Uncertainty* abounded until the very last days of the project, because we had nothing to offer the authors other than the vision of what might be, and the *understanding* that this book is needed in the marketplace to assist business leadership in the face of the VUCA world. We didn't have a publisher committed to publishing the book, but we pressed on together because we had a shared vision, and a shared understanding, of the value of this book.

*Complexity* arose on many fronts as we each had our own understanding of a VUCA environment, and the best ways to address VUCA. We also had different ideas concerning how best to structure the book, and most of all, how each of our contributions might address VUCA. It was the editorial team, in much conversation with the authors, that brought about *clarity* to face off the complexity. As Madeleine liked to refer to it, "The Golden Thread," was the clarity that we all needed amid complexity.

*Ambiguity* dogged us initially as we tried to coalesce our common understanding of VUCA and the ways in which our individual foci might address the new VUCA context. We attempted to develop mental *agility* and hoped that this *agility* in our adaptive approach to writing about VUCA would shine through in the pages of the book and in our reflections on this new VUCA context.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge Randy Cannell of Zingovation for the amazing cover design. We also acknowledge Pete Baker of Emerald Publishers for his tireless assistance in bringing the book to publication.



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