



In-Demand Skills for Today's Leaders

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From opportunity and growth to uncertainty and downsizing, our current climate has employers wondering—what's next? To keep organizations afloat, hiring organizations are seeking executives with specific core competencies. [Charlene Bergman](#) outlines the key attributes and leadership skills executives will need to stand out and be a bridge over troubled waters.

Have you ever been on a sailboat—on a calm sea where you can clearly see the horizon and your destination? As the skipper, you have to map your course, assign responsibilities to each crew member, set your point of sail, and harness the confidence to land at your destination within the time frame you've predicted.

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The key skills and experience you've called upon include planning, delegation, prediction, leadership and—as a sailor—dexterity.

Then an unexpected, substantial, squall hits and things quickly escalate. You're now tasked with a whole new set of circumstances—with a mandate to safeguard human and capital assets effectively and efficiently. Previous skills



tapped into on calm waters, have become irrelevant.

Like the skipper of the sailboat, you now have to traverse a whole new world which requires a new set of skills. Skills that the skipper had to quickly draw upon when stormy weather hit are the same skills that today's employers are looking for—ones that help navigate the unknown course ahead.

With unemployment rising and new business challenges emerging, senior leaders in transition will need to do things differently in order to grab the attention of hiring teams. There is no better way to do that than to focus on the things most important to employers during uncertain times. These include:

- **crisis management** – many of today's organizations are in crisis mode requiring quick, decisive and responsive action. Candidates will need to reassure stakeholders of a solid recovery plan while dealing with the issues thrust upon them.
- **gravitas** – [gravitas](#) can be critically important during disruption. Candidates exhibiting gravitas during a time of crisis, will provide a calming and influential presence to others in the organization—especially if things are going wrong or not as planned.
- **decisiveness** (think fast on your feet) – crisis situations require the ability to make decisions quickly and effectively, and with courage and conviction. Today's global situation is unlike any other and will require strong leadership and decisiveness for resolution in ensuring the best possible outcome.
- **clear and concise communication** – communicating an action plan in an effective and efficient manner displays clarity of thought. People have more confidence in what you say if it is clear and concise. This demonstrates you know what you are doing and what needs to be done. Effective and transparent communication will help build trust and strengthen team cohesion.
- **change management and transformation** – employees and stakeholders will be looking to senior leadership to not only make recommendations but to guide the organization through a period of transformation and [meaningful change](#).
- **emotional intelligence (EQ)** – topping the list of the most important human qualities during a crisis, is empathy and self-awareness. Leaders who are genuinely empathetic and authentic in their communications and actions will gain the trust and respect of their team and their stakeholders.
- **agility and adaptability** – stakeholders will be looking to senior leaders now more than ever to formulate and undertake an effective action plan and to promptly respond to changing circumstances.

So, why is this important to those in career transition? Hiring organizations will insist that these core competencies are prevalent with incoming senior leadership. In pursuit of a new opportunity, you will need to ensure that you're highlighting these dominant skills in your job search. Consider incorporating these attributes when:

- **crafting your resume** – [rework your resume](#) to showcase these competencies and demonstrate their application through previous experiences.
- **interviewing** – be 'interview ready' when asked to speak to your relevant and wow-provoking expertise.



Prepare with real life examples of how you have led an organization through similar crisis situations.

- **developing your digital presence (LinkedIn)** – update your LinkedIn profile to highlight in-demand skills. Ensure you are participating in thought-leadership (posting article, comments and sharing), drawing attention to your expertise in leading through adverse conditions. Make sure you're advertising yourself for the roles you want.
- **networking** – use your existing center of influence contacts to help spread the word for you, especially if they can speak to your experience leading through adverse conditions. Additionally, look for new connections who work with distressed businesses requiring the important skills that you can immediately bring to the table.

Just as organizations are re-strategizing for what's next, so must you as a leader and a job seeker. Pay close attention to what hiring organizations are now looking for and ensure you are drawing clear parallels to your own expertise. Be selective about what job opportunities you are considering, and reserve more time to offer a quality and aligned expression of your interest. By taking this approach you'll be smooth sailing with a competitive advantage!

Recommended for you:

Change is difficult for most people and a job change in turbulent times makes it even more challenging. However, now may be a better time than you think. [Find out why](#)

Our Contributors

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