



Adapting your managerial practices to the digital age

The challenge

The increasing power of digital is leading to a disruption of business practices. Information flows much more rapidly and meets fewer barriers. Market creativity demands an increasing attentiveness to the environment and greater reactivity. Everyone is increasingly encouraged to share new ideas and to communicate on new platforms freely accessible by all. This in turn generates a greater expectation of autonomy among staff members. This context strongly affects the management's operating conditions. How can you best handle the dramatic changes brought by the digital age?

Four major changes

YESTERDAY	TODAY	IMPACT ON THE MANAGER'S ROLE
Management controlled information. It was a source of authority.	Information is more readily available and flows cross-functionally.	▶ Redefine your role in the information flow management. Selecting what information to communicate to whom has long been part of management added value. Losing this monopoly over information can be destabilizing. Rather than holding onto it, identify what new forms of added value you can bring: • Bring meaning to the multiple sources of information your team is exposed to. • Structure, prioritize and channel the information flows, which could otherwise become overwhelming for your staff. • Facilitate the dissemination of the most useful information.
The strategy was devised in annual action plans. It remained unchanged over this lapse of time.	The strategy must be constantly adapted to ongoing changes.	▶ Encourage agile project management. Beware of excessive planning: by the time the plan is finalized, the context may have changed... More so, a very detailed plan is difficult to adjust and can lead to inertia. • Remind your teams that turbulences and uncertainty are inevitable. • Outline the long term vision of their efforts, but only engage in a first phase that directly brings benefits. • Structure the execution so that each new phase not only constitutes progress but also a source of teachings to better meet objectives..
The manager's role was to lead the implementation of the action plans.	Team members must also contribute to adapt the organization to the evolutions of the environment.	▶ Provide your teams with the necessary tools to better analyze the context. They must have the reference points that will enable them to identify the important change markers for the company and to react appropriately: • Foster communication and dialogue on the fundamental values that must guide the behaviors. • Do the same for the enterprise fundamentals in economic and strategic terms. E.g.: what categories of customers are supposed to prefer us to the competition? For what reasons? What are the key factors to achieve a profitable result? ▶ Encourage initiative. Clearly identify the room for maneuver of each team member and the degree of 'trial & error' that is acceptable. ▶ Prompt your teams to look outwards and to share their ideas and observations.
Teams were grouped geographically.	Teams are increasingly dispersed and function remotely.	▶ Try to compensate for the remoteness. A community feeling is less likely to develop and grow when people don't meet physically. E.g.: Plan for meeting opportunities to enable the people to better know one another; nourish a team identity by celebrating joint achievements or by developing a team newsletter. ▶ Foster clear communication. Misunderstanding becomes more likely and is more difficult to resolve when working remotely. E.g.: Communicate over and over again the objectives and satisfaction criteria; define standards to improve communication effectiveness (shared files, systematic meeting minutes). ▶ Let go on daily execution or number of worked hours.