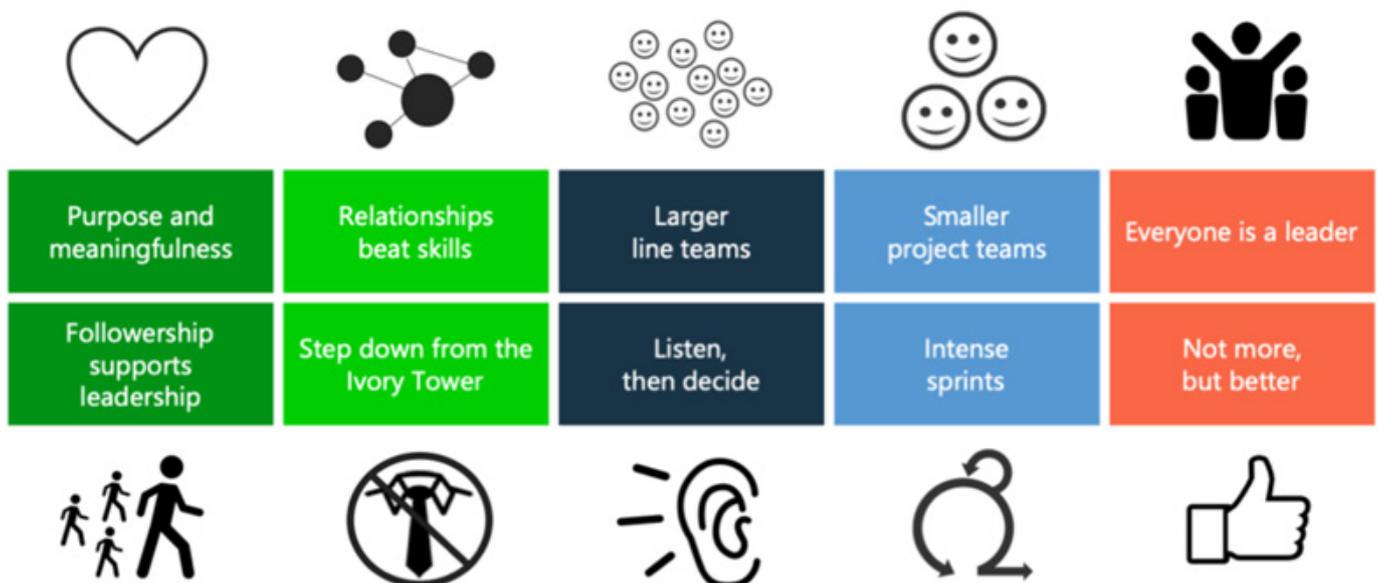## Identifying Organisational Capabilities

The rate and impact of change in the business world is unprecedented and instils an urgency of change in organisations, and in ourselves. However, it is hard to change without knowing what to change towards.

You need a guiding point. Several leadership thinkers point towards a higher focus on capabilities, your HOW, rather than your production directly, your WHAT. Therefore, the guiding point for change should be your organisational capabilities that you need for the future of work.

Erik Korsvik Østergaard identified ten capabilities in the modern workplace that will help you identify what your organisation is good at or what needs to be improved.

The Ten Characteristics in Modern Workplaces

Purpose and meaningfulness	Relationships beat skills	Larger line teams	Smaller project teams	Everyone is a leader
Followership supports leadership	Step down from the Ivory Tower	Listen, then decide	Intense sprints	Not more, but better

Introduction to the Ten Characteristics

1. Purpose and meaningfulness

The great cultures are joined with a shared cause or belief, hence the need for a business purpose and narrative. They know what they fight for, who they serve, what problem they are solving, and what value they are creating.

2. Relationships beat skills

Who you know and have a relationship with is more important for the productivity and getting things done, than skills. It is not that skills are unimportant. Relationships are just more important and pave the way for the networked organisation.

3. Larger line teams

This is in direct correlation with the networked organisation and the culture: the line teams grow larger and fewer, giving the leader a span-of-control that grows to double the amount from traditional hierarchical structures. This comes from a changed approach to (a) delivery structures, that are based on networked teams instead of the line organisation, and (b) from the relationships between the employees, which create personal attention and a sense of belonging. This changes the role of the leader.

4. Smaller project teams

Or rather, delivery teams. Teams in these kinds of organisations tend to become smaller. This both requires and nurtures a culture of relationships, trust, and transparency.

5. Everyone is a leader

Or has the opportunity to take the lead on tasks if they have the will, skill, and drive to engage in.

6. Followership is a direct consequence of making everybody leaders

Accepting that you are a follower to the person who takes the lead on a task or activity. This action and behaviour is a huge cultural driver.

7. Step down from the Ivory Tower

The modern leaders are artisans too and works both ON and IN the business. Merits and actual dialogue with problem owners shapes you as a role model.

8. Listen, then decide

The modern workplace is based on involvement and inclusion. Decisions and collaboration are based on a culture of listening to every stakeholder and employee prior to acting. This is a tough point to implement in many organisations, where involvement and listening are a major change from the traditional power distribution.

9. Intense sprints

Modern workplaces have a natural preference for working intensely in sprints, then stopping to evaluate, prior to engaging in yet another sprint. This stems from the ingrown focus on people and value-creation rather than technology and solution-provision.

10. Not more, but better

The modern workplace is driven towards results and accomplishments, but not for the sake of producing many products, but rather better products. Value-creation and purposefulness is at the centre for the culture.

How to use the assessment tool

1. Print the appendices and cut out the ten characteristics in modern organisation.

2. Gather a small group of people from different teams and departments or gather your leadership team.

3. Take one question at a time and rate each capability. It is recommended that you can use matrix 1, 2 and 3 on the following pages for this and put the characteristics one by one, rating them on the matrix.

4. Discuss why you rate as you do.

5. Discuss how you see the capabilities useful for your organisation.

6. Generate ideas about how to make interventions and experiments that can move you towards the capabilities.

Questions to ask during the session:

- Which capabilities are most important to you right now? *(See matrix 1)*

- Which capabilities can you do something about right now? *(See matrix 1)*

- Which capabilities would add the highest business value for the whole organisation? *(See matrix 2)*

- Which capabilities are easier to implement than others? *(See matrix 2)*

- Which capabilities will have a high impact on your organisation now? *(See matrix 3)*

- Which capabilities should you prioritise first? *(See matrix 3)*