BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Executive Leadership Masterclass: Leading National and Enterprise Transformation Course



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Introduction:

Executive leadership masterclass training on leading national and enterprise transformation covers how senior leaders set direction, mobilise coalitions and make high-stakes decisions so that a whole organisation or public system changes how it works. This 2-week course serves chief executives, board members, heads of government entities and state-owned enterprises, transformation directors and rising senior leaders; each delegate leaves with a Transformation Leadership Case and Personal Leadership Plan. It is taught at executive, conceptual level through documented cases and a simulated board session, drawing on adaptive leadership, a Harvard Kennedy School model separating technical problems from those requiring learning.

Course Objectives:

- Distinguish adaptive challenges from technical problems and apply the right leadership response to each in a live transformation
- Compare authority with leadership and select the coalition members, sponsors and champions able to carry change at scale
- Interpret the signs of cognitive bias in executive decisions and apply pre-mortem, red team and decision rights tools to reduce it
- Apply culture, talent and succession levers to sustain a transformation beyond the first wave of results
- Distinguish crisis leadership from crisis management and justify decisions to boards, top teams, political stakeholders and media
- Justify a Transformation Leadership Case and a Personal Leadership Plan before a simulated board under challenge

Target Audience:

- Chief executives and C-suite members accountable for enterprise results, deciding when and how far to transform the organisation
- Board members of companies, government entities and state-owned enterprises, judging whether a transformation and its leaders deserve support
- Heads of government entities and state-owned enterprises leading public system change, choosing how to balance reform pace with service stability
- Transformation and strategy directors who run change portfolios, deciding which coalition, culture and talent moves to put before the top team
- Senior leaders and high-potential executives preparing for top roles, judging which leadership habits to build before taking a larger mandate



Course Outline:

Day 1: Foundations: Transformation, Complexity and the Executive Role

- Transformation vs Incremental Change: Discontinuous Shifts in Purpose, Model and Capability
- Adaptive vs Technical Challenges: Problems Expertise Solves Compared With Problems Requiring Learning
- Cynefin Framework: Clear, Complicated, Complex and Chaotic Domains for Executive Judgement
- Systems Thinking for Leaders: Feedback Loops, Delays and Unintended Consequences at Scale
- Why Transformation Efforts Fail: Recurring Executive Errors Identified in Kotter's Research

Day 2: Frameworks: Adaptive Leadership, Kotter's Eight Steps and the Dual Operating System

- Adaptive Leadership Practices: Getting on the Balcony and Regulating Organisational Distress
- Kotter's Eight Steps: Urgency, Guiding Coalition, Vision and Anchoring Change in Culture
- Hierarchy vs Network: Kotter's Dual Operating System for Speed Alongside Stability
- Authority vs Leadership: Formal Power Compared With Mobilising People Around Hard Problems
- Holding Steady Under Pressure: Containing Conflict and Giving the Work Back to Teams

Day 3: Setting Direction and Building Guiding Coalitions for Change at Scale

- Transformation Narrative: Case for Change, Destination Picture and Non-Negotiable Choices
- Guiding Coalition Design: Selecting Members by Position Power, Expertise and Credibility
- Sponsor vs Champion: Executive Accountability Compared With Distributed Change Leadership Roles
- Power and Influence Map: Allies, Blockers, Undecided Groups and Hidden Veto Holders
- Short-Term Wins Portfolio: Visible Early Results That Build Momentum and Credibility

Day 4: Decision Tools: Executive Judgement, Cognitive Bias and Choices Under Pressure

- Cognitive Bias in Executive Decisions: Overconfidence, Anchoring, Sunk Cost and Groupthink
- Pre-Mortem Review: Imagining Failure in Advance to Expose Hidden Plan Weaknesses
- Reversible vs Irreversible Decisions: Matching Speed and Evidence to the Stakes Involved
- Decision Rights Matrix: Clarifying Who Recommends, Agrees, Decides and Executes Each Choice
- Red Team Challenge: Structured Dissent That Tests Assumptions Before Executive Commitment

Day 5: Case Study: Week-One Integration on Documented Large-Scale Transformations

- Microsoft Culture Shift Case: From Know-It-All to Learn-It-All Under New Leadership
- IBM Turnaround Case: Reintegrating a Fragmenting Enterprise Around Customer Solutions
- Enterprise vs Public-Sector Transformation: Mandate, Accountability and Time Horizons Compared
- Case Coalition Diagnosis: Judging Whether the Leadership Team Could Carry the Change
- Week-One Leadership Log: Draft Inputs for the Transformation Leadership Case



Day 6: Advanced Topics: Culture, Talent and Succession for Transformation

- Culture vs Climate: Deep Shared Assumptions Compared With Day-to-Day Working Experience
- Culture Shaping Levers: Leader Behaviour, Rituals, Symbols, Stories and Reward Systems
- Critical Role Mapping: Identifying the Positions That Make or Break a Transformation
- Succession Slate Design: Ready-Now and Ready-Later Successors for Top Leadership Roles
- Talent Redeployment for Transformation: Moving Scarce Leaders Onto Priority Initiatives

Day 7: Risk and Governance of Leadership: Crisis Leadership, Ethics and Trust

- Crisis Leadership vs Crisis Management: Meaning-Making Compared With Operational Response Coordination
- Crisis Leadership Team Rhythm: Briefing Cycles, Decision Logs and Escalation Thresholds
- After-Action Review: Structured Learning From Crises and Transformation Setbacks
- Ethical Dilemma Analysis: Weighing Duties, Consequences and Integrity in Executive Choices
- Trust Repair After Failure: Acknowledgement, Accountability and Visible Corrective Action

Day 8: Stakeholders: Boards, Top Teams, Political Navigation and Strategic Communication

- Board vs Executive Roles in Transformation: Oversight, Challenge and Delivery Accountability
- Top Team Effectiveness: Shared Agenda, Collective Accountability and Productive Conflict Norms
- Political Navigation: Working With Ministers, Regulators, Unions and Shareholders Across Interests
- Media Engagement Under Scrutiny: Message Discipline, Spokesperson Roles and Interview Preparation
- Executive Presence: Gravitas, Storytelling and Adapting Messages to Senior Audiences

Day 9: Measurement: Transformation Health, Leadership Impact and Legacy

- Leading vs Lagging Indicators: Early Signals Compared With Final Transformation Results
- Benefits Realisation Tracking: Linking Initiatives to Measured Financial and Public Value
- Transformation Health Check: Pace, Energy, Adoption and Leadership Alignment Signals
- Leadership 360 Feedback: Multi-Rater Evidence on Executive Behaviour and Its Impact
- Institutionalising Change: Embedding Results So They Outlast the Current Leadership Team

Day 10: Simulation: Board Defence of the Transformation Leadership Case

- Personal Leadership Plan: Applying Adaptive Leadership and Bias Insights to Own Role
- Transformation Leadership Case Pack: Applying Coalition, Culture and Talent Analysis
- Simulated Board Session: Applying Decision Rights and Crisis Questions Under Challenge
- Board Approval vs Conditional Approval: Recording Verdicts, Conditions and Follow-Up Actions
- Transformation Leadership Case: Final Assembly, Board Defence and Peer Challenge



Skills You Will Gain:

- Adaptive Leadership
- Systems Thinking
- Guiding Coalition Design
- Executive Decision Quality
- Crisis Leadership
- Succession Planning
- Stakeholder and Political Navigation
- Executive Presence

Why Attend This Course:

- From treating every transformation problem as a technical fix to recognising when people must learn and change before results follow
- From relying on positional authority to building guiding coalitions that carry change across units, sectors and political interests
- From making high-stakes calls on instinct to using pre-mortems, red teams and clear decision rights to test judgement under pressure
- From an untested change idea to a Transformation Leadership Case and Personal Leadership Plan defended before a simulated board

Conclusion:

Leading transformation at national or enterprise scale means holding a large system steady while asking it to learn new ways of working, and doing so in public, under scrutiny and with incomplete information. The course makes three distinctions clear: adaptive challenges versus technical ones, authority versus leadership, and crisis leadership versus crisis management. It suits executives already accountable for, or about to inherit, a major transformation who need judgement and coalition-building rather than another change toolkit, and who want to test their own leadership case before a demanding board.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should delegates bring to an executive leadership course on national and enterprise transformation?

Delegates should bring a real or anticipated transformation they lead, sponsor or oversee, with enough context to discuss its stakeholders, culture and top team. Senior management experience is expected; no technical preparation or prior framework knowledge is required before the first day.



How does this executive leadership transformation course differ from a change management or strategic planning course?

It focuses on the leader rather than the plan or the change process. Change management courses teach methods for moving people through a defined change, and strategic planning courses teach how to set objectives; this course addresses executive judgement, coalitions, culture, crisis and board leadership during transformation.

Why do large-scale transformations often fail even when the executive leadership strategy is sound?

Most fail because leaders treat adaptive challenges as technical ones, declare victory early, or never build a strong enough guiding coalition. Culture, talent and political resistance then reverse early gains, which is why the course gives these leadership issues more weight than plan design.

What do delegates take back to work from the executive leadership transformation course?

Delegates take back a Transformation Leadership Case defended before a simulated board, a Personal Leadership Plan, a coalition and influence map, and a set of decision tools such as pre-mortems and decision rights matrices that apply directly to their own transformation.

