

RECEIVING FROM THE OCEAN

Doing the right things right in business

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*“Ce n’est pas un contenu que j’ai à transmettre,
je m’en garderais, chaque âme est dans une telle richesse.
Mais Il faut que cette richesse soit réveillée.
La transmission, c’est cette attention portée à une autre
qui fait qu’en lui surgit le meilleur de lui-même.”*


*“It’s not words that I want to convey,
I will refrain from that, since there is such richness in every soul.
But this richness needs awakening.
Transmission is the attention we pay to others,
bringing out the best in them.”*

Christiane Singer, French writer, essayist and novelist (1943-2007),
cited in Alvarez Céline et al. (2019). Transmettre.
Ce que nous nous apportons les uns les autres. France: L’Iconoclaste.

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The ultimate balancing act for enterprises is to keep business as usual on track, while talking and walking innovation

PREFACE

Ah! The **future!** It all starts with a dream. As a business leader, do you dream? Do you envision your enterprise thriving in a better world? Great! Then you know that change will propel your business forward. Imagine you could do this in the best possible way. Imagine you have a clear vision and priorities on how to fulfill your dream. Imagine your vision is strongly supported by your entire workforce, and that your teams are creating knowledge to build the right solutions to achieve this vision. Imagine everyone is contributing personally to fulfill your dream, and your business is progressing at the speed of light.

You can do all of this, after reading this book. We believe that you – business leaders – must grasp today’s market opportunities, while delivering tomorrow’s results and endeavoring to keep an eye on the future, the dream, your vision. In an ever more combative and unstable business environment as we know our world is today, this is the only way to stand tall and make real progress.

A New Era of Leadership

The entrance ticket to that future is called digital transformation – whatever your core business is and how people-centered it might be, enterprises that want to survive and thrive in the 21st century are all destined to become technology and software-based businesses. We have entered an era of “digital Darwinism, where technology and society are evolving faster than businesses can naturally adapt. This sets the stage for a new era of leadership and a new generation of business models [...]”

Technologies like artificial intelligence, robotic process automation and the Internet of Things not only offer huge opportunities to enable faster, more flexible, and more efficient processes to produce higher-quality goods and services at reduced cost. More importantly, these technologies enable businesses just like yours to create new sources of business value and collaboration in unprecedented ways.

It takes however strong transformational leadership skills to embrace new technologies and revolutionary thinking, and successfully execute day-to-day plans. The ultimate balancing act for enterprises is to keep business as usual on track, while talking and walking innovation.

This book is all about supporting business leaders in that quest for equilibrium, by providing them with the right leadership mindset, business architecture set-up and managerial control.

Business Excellence

'Receiving from the Ocean' is all about being able to absorb in an unbiased and unprejudiced way everything from the world around you, accepting the good in it and the bad, in order for business leaders to achieve business excellence.

Because we get lost so easily on our innovation journeys:

As a business leader, you – and your workforce – are confronted every day with dozens of high-priority messages, from superiors, shareholders, customers, suppliers, colleagues and the outside world. These often conflicting messages blur your vision and make it difficult to focus.

The rise of digital technologies is challenging traditional methods and relationships among producers, suppliers, and customers. It's no wonder that a lot of companies are having a hard time implementing them.

The digital workplace is redefining communication flows, business hierarchies and pecking orders, forcing babyboomers and generations X, Y and Z to find new ways of agreement and collaboration.

There's a skilled labor shortage and digitalization is only widening the skills gap. With the increasing speed of technology-enabled change, it's hard enough to come up with a smart vision and good strategy, and it's ten times harder to get the right people to execute on that strategy.

Managers don't think their employees are able to keep pace with future skill needs, while employees say they haven't mastered the skills they need for their current jobs.

The increasing signs of climate change and the damage to society of our current economic system are pushing many consumers, employees, investors and business leaders to become more socially and environmentally responsible and seize the momentum to contribute to solutions.

And there's simply such a thing as a rule of nature, which makes many people deeply resistant to change. When everything is in flux, we crave for an anchoring point.

A Common Language

This book's ambition is to be a beacon for anyone in a leading role who navigates the heavy waters of business transformation. Whether you are restructuring, transitioning, rethinking or innovating, you need a common management language

to support you and your workforce in accelerating and acting with more agility whenever circumstances demand it. This book however is not about technology and machines. It aspires to provide a set of methods, tools and techniques, adding up to a comprehensive framework to help business leaders better manage change and transition, therefore particularly relying on human talent.

All it basically comes down to is to move on with **The 5**, think using **The 9**, and act with **The 6**. You'll understand soon.

Enjoy reading,

Enjoy your transformation journey,

Enjoy 'Receiving from the Ocean' and exploring what's in it for you.

Eddy Helsen
ViCre Founder



PRELUDE

A ViCre Business Transformation Manifesto

You are about to learn a new language; ViCre-language. Before we dive into it, a word about ViCre, short for Vision Creation, and what we stand for as a consultancy company focusing on innovation and operational excellence.

At ViCre, we strongly believe that the future belongs to learning organizations. Learning and transformation are two sides of the same coin, a coin called life. One can't exist without the other. Darwin's² famous quote about living organisms applies just as much to enterprises: *"It is not the strongest that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change."* Through change, business leaders enable their organization to adapt to new business environments and vice versa. To make your business grow sustainably, you must continuously feed it – with knowledge, love, and healthy, nutritious resources. It's like raising a child: It happens without pushing the transform button; an invisible, never-ending process. Business transformation should be equally imperceptible.

By learning, goals come within reach.

In order to progress, you should be able to draw lessons from the past, to anticipate the future and shape the present in the most beneficial way for your enterprise. At ViCre, we call this 'Receiving from the Ocean'. Failure is an inevitable stop on every road toward project implementation. Learning is all about humility. There are leaders with an open attitude who are happy to receive different viewpoints and ideas. And there are those who sit with their arms crossed and do nothing. So take a minute and ask yourself: Which type are you? If you are not able to handle criticism and feed yourself with fresh perspectives, how can you possibly lead an organization that is constant in motion?

People who learn empower themselves to create.

The more vantage points, insights and experiences you gather, the more you can break down multifaceted processes and head-aching conundrums into uncluttered parts. You can see the order in chaos. Once you see this, you can easily restore the balance and find room to create. As a result, even small projects might have great outcomes.

In business processes, pattern recognition is fundamental to producing better products, services and experiences

Asking questions is the key to triple-crown business transformation.

We believe uninterrupted inquiry is the ultimate instrument to define an enterprise's vision, strategy and mission. Not taking things for granted and frequent investigation is the best shortcut to better understanding the business and driving action at the speed of light. Asking questions however is an art, and we should relearn it. To make the right decisions, people need to start asking the questions that really matter. Organizations that equally master the skill of questioning and listening will be able to think and act in a single heartbeat.

We trust in the salutary effect of a positive attitude towards change.

Therefore, we focus on what's working well in organizations, rather than concentrating solely on problems, issues and obstacles.

Enterprises are dynamic economic systems.

Continuously in motion, businesses are comprised of many complex, autonomous, yet collaborating entities and processes. Business transformation therefore requires a holistic approach and systemic, simultaneous thinking and acting on multiple levels. Everything must knit together. Using ViCre-language, leaders are challenged to zoom in and out of their business, while retaining the broader picture. ViCre-tools are surgical scalpels that delve into business chaos and bring together its meaningful parts. Because "nothing exists that is not touching anything else."³ No business is exempt from that.

Innovation never happens by magic. Pattern recognition is imperative.

In life, pattern recognition is a matter of survival: If we fail to identify patterns, we might not understand what makes a plant edible and another one poisonous. In business processes, pattern recognition is fundamental to producing better products, services and experiences in an interconnected, data-driven, fast-changing world. Through process mining, we want to help organizations to detect and recognize the valid structures, essential elements and similarities in their business flows. You could call them algorithms, cemented formulas or sequences of specified actions that contribute value and add up to your company's success.

People are the purpose of business transformation.

Thriving businesses are run by people, rather than profits. Because you are an inspiring leader with a strong vision. Because you can rely on a respected workforce that is passionate about your organization. Because you deeply understand your customers, who love your product. Because your suppliers are happy to collaborate and co-create with you. Because your shareholders believe in your story. Because there is trust and connectivity, and you respectfully interact with the world.

Embrace digital disruption, don't let it master you and your workforce.

All it takes is a reality check to see where humans will do a better job than machines. And yes, technology can learn today at blistering speed. Computers and robots may beat us at data crunching and coordinating complex automated processes, but humans will always be stronger and faster in the strategic application of knowledge, abstracting and problem solving. We can acquire information, power, skills, values, personal relations and interconnect them to anticipate unexpected circumstances in the most intelligent ways. So think about how machines could make your life and job easier, and do so for your entire workforce. Do this, before machines decide for you.

The more you grow as a leader, the more you will become a teacher, and a follower.

That is the circle of life. You will share your knowhow with younger generations and help them to reach new horizons. They in turn will help you to better understand the present. Together you will build your company's legacy. Leonard Bernstein, the American composer and conductor, said that teaching is, "Probably the noblest profession in the world – the most unselfish, difficult, and honorable profession, but also the most unappreciated, under-rated, underpaid, and under-praised profession in the world."⁴ Bernstein had a raging thirst for knowledge about almost everything. He just could not absorb enough information, not just music but also Shakespeare, world religions, biology, literature, astrophysics, and any places where these topics overlap. His brain was on fire with curiosity. And what he loved most was to communicate his excitement to others.⁵ It is our humble ambition to help business leaders awaken the Bernstein inside each of them and make coaching part of their leadership style.

We love to be a learning, sustainable organization ourselves.

ViCre loves to take a deep dive into enterprises to assist them with defining their vision and achieving their present and future goals. Since 2004, we have been absorbing new experiences, insights and perspectives to assist companies on their transformation journeys into more profitable, resilient and sustainable organizations. Committed to adding value by increasing customer engagement, resource optimization, employee and shareholder satisfaction, we offer our business consulting service to small, medium and large enterprises around the world; a world that we cherish. For us, building sustainable businesses is above all a story of endless renewal and reusability, of knowledge, and people reinventing themselves to respond in the most ethical and responsible ways to the challenges of our time.

So who are we? Some of our customers call us 'transformation facilitators'. Others prefer 'business trainers', 'change agents', 'solution engineers', 'enterprise therapists'. The comparison to a jester – the wise fool, who was the only courtier able to say the king isn't wearing any clothes – has been applied to us too.

As such, we would like to sincerely thank you for inviting us into your realm.

We hope you are ready to receive.

If the ocean sounds a bit too much for you, we'd be more than happy to provide you with a guiding light, every time you consult this book.

INFOGRAPHIC:

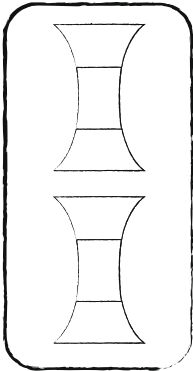
Business Transformation at a Glance with ViCre-language

THE 4 COLORS



ASSESS THE VALUE YOU DELIVER TO OTHERS NON-STOP

THE VALUE CHAIN



UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS PROCESSES AND ARCHITECTURE

THE 3 CORNERSTONES

HONOR YOUR FUNDAMENTALS, ...

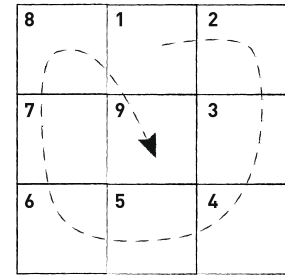
CHAOS

DREAM

VALUE

THE 9 ELEMENTS

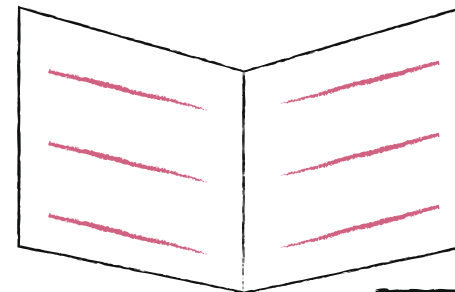
THINK BUSINESS ZOOMING IN AND OUT, ALWAYS KEEPING A COMPLETE PERSPECTIVE



THE 5 TRACKS

ENSURE PROGRESS USING AN IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM, REPETITION AND RHYTHM

THE 6 POINTS PLAN



INTERACT CONSCIOUSLY WITH CUSTOMERS RESULTING IN BALANCED, CLEAR AGREEMENTS