

They Won't Solve It the Way You Did. That's the Leadership Opportunity.

A conversation about digital problem solving, experience, judgement, and how work is changing.

**What becomes possible when digital fluency, experience,
judgement, and human insight are allowed to work together?**

1 HOW ARE PEOPLE ACTUALLY SOLVING PROBLEMS NOW?

What do people search, connect, test, automate, prototype, or ask before they seek formal approval or expert help?

2 WHERE IS DIGITAL FLUENCY ADDING VALUE?

Where are speed, networks, experimentation, AI, or new tools helping us see or do something differently?

3 WHERE MIGHT FLUENCY BE MISTAKEN FOR COMPETENCE?

What judgement, critical inquiry, cybersecurity, responsibility, or contextual knowledge still needs to be developed?

4 WHAT DOES EXPERIENCE KNOW THAT THE TOOL DOES NOT?

Which histories, relationships, consequences, and patterns need to be transferred rather than assumed?

5 WHICH LEGACY PROCESSES DESERVE TO BE QUESTIONED?

Where are we protecting a process because it is familiar rather than because it still creates value?

6 WHAT IS LEADERSHIP HERE TO ENABLE?

What tools, boundaries, autonomy, feedback, and role modelling would help people solve problems responsibly?

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

One form of experience we need to preserve
and transfer

One process we should allow people to
question

One experiment that could teach us something

Experience knows why. Digital fluency asks why not.

Give the Problem Before You Give the Process.

A 20-minute practice for seeing how people solve the same problem differently.

Start with the outcome and genuine constraints - not the inherited method.

1 BRING A REAL PROBLEM

Choose a live challenge where there is more than one plausible path to a useful result.

2 NAME THE OUTCOME + NON-NEGOTIABLES

What must be accomplished? Which safety, ethical, legal, policy, or quality boundaries are real?

3 LET PEOPLE SHOW THEIR APPROACH

Before teaching the established process, ask individuals or small groups: How would you solve this?

4 NOTICE THE PROBLEM-SOLVING MOVES

What did people search, connect, test, automate, prototype, ask, or discard? What did they see that others did not?

5 ADD EXPERIENCE + JUDGEMENT

Now introduce history, context, consequences, professional judgement, and why some constraints exist.

6 DECIDE WHAT TO KEEP, CHANGE, OR TEST

Which established practices still add value? What newer approach is worth trying? What will you monitor?

DEBRIEF

Ask: What did the digitally fluent approach make easier or faster? What did experience help us see? Where did judgement change the answer? What should the organization learn from the difference?

Learning from different approaches is more valuable than rewarding imitation.

FROM THE BLOG

They Won't Solve It the Way You Did.

THAT'S THE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY.

A growing workforce is solving problems in new ways.
Leadership connects digital fluency with experience,
judgement, and human insight.



SEARCH

Find information
and explore
possibilities

CONNECT

Tap networks,
expertise, and
diverse
perspectives

TEST

Experiment,
prototype,
and try
ideas

ADAPT

Learn, adjust,
and refine
based on
what works

LEARN

Capture insights
and build
for what's
next

Digital problem solving is rarely a straight line.

LEADERSHIP ADDS:



CONTEXT

Understand the
situation and
what matters



JUDGEMENT

Evaluate options
with experience
and discernment



PURPOSE

Stay aligned
with values
and goals



RESPONSIBILITY

Consider impact
and act with
integrity



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FROM THE BLOG

Experience knows why. Digital fluency asks *why not.*

The strongest organizations bring them together—
experience, judgement, and digital problem solving—
to create better solutions for the future.



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Innovative Ideas for an Inspired Future

What Does the Research Say About Digital Problem Solving?

Five findings for leaders working across generations, technologies, and changing forms of expertise

The research does not support a simple digital-native story. Familiarity with technology is not the same as deep digital competence. At the same time, younger adults often demonstrate strong adaptive problem-solving proficiency, while employers increasingly need combinations of technological literacy, analytical thinking, creativity, adaptability, and human judgement. The leadership opportunity is to connect these capabilities rather than force one form of expertise to replace another.

1 Digital native does not mean digitally competent.

A large scoping review of 230 studies found that frequent technology use should not be assumed to produce critical information skills, privacy and security knowledge, self-regulation, or sophisticated digital judgement.

Source: Kreuder et al. (2024)

2 Adaptive problem solving is a meaningful workforce capability.

OECD Survey of Adult Skills data show younger adults performing strongly on adaptive problem solving across many participating countries. This is an age pattern, not proof that technology or generation alone caused it.

Source: OECD (2024)

3 Digital skill is multidimensional.

A validated workplace framework includes technology use, cybersecurity, content management, communication and collaboration, critical inquiry, responsibility, wellbeing, and identity and development.

Source: Audrin et al. (2024)

4 Leaders need digital competence too.

Leader digital competence is not about mastering every tool. It includes the ability and inclination to choose, promote, and enable appropriate use of digital media and technology among employees.

Source: op 1 Roodt et al. (2025)

5 The future of work requires hybrid capability.

Employers increasingly identify analytical thinking, technological literacy, creative thinking, adaptability, curiosity, leadership, social influence, and lifelong learning as important workforce capabilities.

Source: World Economic Forum (2025)

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LEADERS

Do not confuse fluency with judgement.

Tool use can be fast and sophisticated while critical inquiry, responsibility, and contextual understanding still need development.

Transfer experience, not just procedures.

Make institutional history, consequences, relationships, and professional judgement visible to newer problem solvers.

Let processes be questioned.

Explain which constraints are essential and which are merely inherited habits.

Enable responsible experimentation.

Provide tools, boundaries, autonomy, feedback, and space to test without requiring every first attempt to be perfect.

Design intergenerational learning.

The strongest organization combines adaptive digital practices with context, experience, and human insight.

The question is not who has the better approach. It is how each makes the other better.

*Experience + digital fluency.
Better judgement.
Better solutions.*

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From the Blog

Experience Knows Why. Digital Fluency Asks Why Not.

The leadership work is to create the conditions where both forms of intelligence can contribute.

PRESERVE + TRANSFER

- Context: why this situation is different from another one.
- Pattern recognition: what experienced people have seen before.
- Relationships: who needs to be involved and why.
- Consequences: what a technically elegant answer may miss downstream.
- Professional judgement: when the rule does not fully fit the situation.
- History: why an existing process or policy was created in the first place.

INVITE + ENABLE

- Search: find information, examples, and alternative approaches quickly.
- Connection: draw on networks and distributed expertise.
- Experimentation: prototype and test before building the whole solution.
- Iteration: use feedback and revise quickly.
- Automation: remove low-value manual work where appropriate.
- Challenge: ask whether yesterday's method still serves today's purpose.

ONE USEFUL LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Give the problem before the process. State the outcome and real constraints, then let people show how they would approach it. Only afterward add institutional history, judgement, and context. The differences reveal both what should be preserved and what may be ready to change.

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