

# Developing Leadership Skills – LFMA

Top 10 Leadership Skills Accountants Need (2025–2030)  
Skill, Value, and Future Relevance




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# Leadership Objectives

-  **Strategy**
  - 1. Strategic Thinking, 2. Tech & AI, 3. Storytelling
-  **Execution**
  - 4. Change, 5. Collaboration, 6. Adaptability
-  **Human Factor**
  - 7. EQ, 8. Ethics, 9. Influence, 10. Talent



# Reality and Johari

	Known to Self	Unknown to Self
Unknown to Others	<b>Open Area (Public Knowledge)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership Style</li><li>• Work Preferences</li><li>• Strengths &amp; Skills</li><li>• Values &amp; Goals</li><li>• Communication Style</li></ul>	<b>Blind Area (Revealed by Feedback)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tone in Emails</li><li>• Team Impact</li><li>• Unintended Biases</li><li>• Leadership <u>Blindspots</u></li><li>• Body Language Cues</li></ul>
Unknown to Others	<b>Hidden Area (Private Insights)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Career Aspirations</li><li>• Personal Stressors</li><li>• Past Failures</li><li>• Political Views</li><li>• Disengagement Signs</li></ul>	<b>Unknown Area (Untapped Potential)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hidden Talents</li><li>• Crisis Response</li><li>• Future Leadership</li><li>• Innovation Capacity</li><li>• Unconscious Beliefs</li></ul>

Accept that this is the new normal. Things will never be as slow as they are now. Change isn't temporary, so leaders need to adjust their mindsets to accept constant change as the new normal. (From LinkedIn Author)

# Johari Window for Business Leaders and Teams

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# 1. Strategic Thinking & Business Acumen



**Skill to Master:** Understanding and supporting business strategy with financial insights.

**Why it Matters:** Businesses want CFOs and controllers to be partners, not just historians.

**Future Focus:** Scenario planning, market trends, and strategic forecasting.

**Quote:** “Strategy is about making choices, trade-offs; it’s about deliberately choosing to be different.” — Michael Porter

# Strategic Thinking & Business Acumen – How to Develop It

- Align financial goals with mission outcomes.
- Use dashboards to show how budget impacts community results.
- Join strategic planning sessions outside finance.
- Perform 'what-if' analyses for major funding changes.



## 2. Tech Savviness & AI Literacy



**Skill to Master:** Understanding how AI, automation, and analytics transform accounting.

**Why it Matters:** Efficiency and innovation hinge on leveraging new tools.

**Future Focus:** Leading AI-integrated finance functions and guiding ethical tech adoption.

**Quote:** “The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do.”—  
B.F. Skinner



# Tech Savviness & AI Literacy – How to Develop It

- Pilot low-risk AI tools (e.g., invoice scanning, budget forecasts).
- Attend NFP-specific tech webinars or join TechSoup.
- Partner with IT to audit systems and explore automation.
- Lead a cross-functional committee on digital transformation.





# 3. Data Storytelling & Communication



**Skill to Master:** Explaining complex financial data in a compelling narrative.

**Why it Matters:** Stakeholders need clarity and direction, not just numbers.

**Future Focus:** Visual storytelling with tools like Power BI, and presenting insights with impact.

**Quote:** “Numbers have an important story to tell. They rely on you to give them a clear and convincing voice.” — Stephen Few

# Data Storytelling & Communication – How to Develop It

- Convert financial data into visual impact (graphs, infographics).
- Link data stories to donor trust and grant outcomes.
- Use real-life stories to humanize budget impacts.
- Practice presenting financials to non-finance audiences.



# 4. Change Leadership



**Skill to Master:** Driving transformation and navigating uncertainty.

**Why it Matters:** Regulatory, tech, and business model shifts are constant.

**Future Focus:** Being the calm, credible force during change initiatives.

**Quote:** “The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence—it is to act with yesterday’s logic.” — Peter Drucker



# Change Leadership – How to Develop It

- Start with small pilots and communicate wins.
- Be transparent about reasons for change.
- Share stories of successful transformation.
- Provide space for staff feedback and learning.



# 5. Cross-Functional Collaboration



**Skill to Master:** Partnering with operations, marketing, HR, and IT.

**Why it Matters:** Finance is no longer siloed — it's embedded in all departments.

**Future Focus:** Leading cross-functional strategic projects.

**Quote:** “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” — Helen Keller

# Cross-Functional Collaboration – How to Develop It

- Sit in on meetings with programs, HR, and fundraising.
- Develop shared scorecards or KPIs with other departments.
- Encourage joint planning and budgeting exercises.
- Offer finance workshops for non-financial leaders.





# 6. Adaptability & Growth Mindset



**Skill to Master:** Learning fast, pivoting when needed, and embracing feedback.

**Why it Matters:** Static skill sets are obsolete in dynamic business environments.

**Future Focus:** Lifelong learning and curiosity as professional assets.

**Quote:** “The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.” — Albert Einstein

# Adaptability & Growth Mindset – How to Develop It

- Ask: 'What's one thing we could do better this month?'
- Set the tone by sharing what you're learning.
- Encourage experimentation with new processes.
- Celebrate improvements even if imperfect.



# 7. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)



**Skill to Master:** Self-awareness, empathy, and managing relationships.

**Why it Matters:** Accountants are leading teams, influencing stakeholders, and building trust.

**Future Focus:** Hybrid work environments require stronger human connection skills.

**Quote:** “Leadership is not domination, but the art of persuading people to work toward a common goal.” — Daniel Goleman



# Emotional Intelligence (EQ) – How to Develop It

- Do regular check-ins with your team.
- Reflect after difficult conversations.
- Attend leadership retreats or EQ workshops.
- Use 360-feedback tools to grow self-awareness.



# 8. Ethical Leadership



**Skill to Master:** Upholding integrity and modeling ethical decision-making.

**Why it Matters:** As complexity grows, so do gray areas.

**Future Focus:** Championing ESG initiatives and responsible governance.

**Quote:** “In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don’t have the first, the other two will kill you.” — Warren Buffett



# Ethical Leadership – How to Develop It

- Create safe spaces to discuss ethical dilemmas.
- Reinforce a “speak-up” culture.
- Lead by example in stewardship and transparency.
- Ensure finance policies align with core mission values.





# 9. Influence Without Authority



**Skill to Master:** Leading through persuasion and credibility rather than hierarchy.

**Why it Matters:** Many accountants work in matrixed or project-based roles.

**Future Focus:** Influencing boards, executives, and external stakeholders.

**Quote:** “As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.” — Bill Gates

# Influence Without Authority – How to Develop It

- Build trust by consistently showing up and adding value.
- Frame recommendations in terms of impact and mission.
- Identify informal influencers and gain their support.
- Share credit and celebrate team wins.





# 10. Talent Development



**Skill to Master:** Coaching, mentoring, and developing high-performing teams.

**Why it Matters:** Attracting and retaining accounting talent is a growing challenge.

**Future Focus:** Creating cultures of learning, flexibility, and empowerment.

**Quote:** “Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” — Jack Welch



# Talent Development – How to Develop It

- Mentor junior staff or high-potential leaders.
- Create stretch projects across departments.
- Offer internal training on finance for non-financial managers.
- Encourage job shadowing and cross-functional growth.



# Questions, Comments & Follow-up

Takeaways- Strategic, AI,  
Storytelling, Change, EI

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