

# The Four Qualities Technology CEOs Need in the Age of Innovation

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by Eric Anderson



No technology company is so dominant that it doesn't have to worry about keeping its innovative edge or fending off upstart rivals. We have worked with many technology and technology-related organizations in finding the leaders they need – including TAG itself, for whom we helped recruit its new CEO, Larry Williams – and our experience has shown that technology CEOs who can successfully foster innovation often share the following traits:

1. **Comfort with ambiguity, complexity and shifting risks.** These uncertainties are not viewed as temporary obstacles but rather as a permanent part of the landscape. Successful technology leaders embrace this fact and provide the framework for others to do so.
2. **Natural communication and influencing ability.** These key competencies allow a CEO to set the organization on the path to its destination rather than leading the troops on a forced march.
3. **Exemplary mentoring.** Current and potential employees increasingly judge organizations by the opportunities they offer for personal growth and for contributing to society at large. CEOs thus need to promote professional development that connects with an individual's values and priorities.
4. **A strong moral compass.** As disruptive as recent times have been, there is more to come as emerging developments like artificial intelligence and genetic modification raise fundamental societal questions. Technology CEOs will need to lead their organizations in navigating these uncharted territories.

As organizations strive for innovation in today's complex and ambiguous environment, the old command-and-control leadership skills are of little use. Technology company boards and CEOs who invest in leaders and build succession plans that identify and develop these new qualities will achieve a distinct advantage in an unpredictable world.

For more information contact:

**Eric Anderson**

Global Head, FinTech Practice

Eric.Anderson@egonzehnder.com

+1 404 836 2925