

# Integrated Leaders: Redefining Success at Work and Home

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ThirdPath Institute has developed a number of groups that include male and female leaders committed to living an “integrated life” – one where they can be successful at work while also intentionally creating time for their lives outside of work. From these groups we have developed a deeper understanding of the unique skills these “Integrated Leaders” bring to their organizations. Through trial and error, Integrated Leaders have figured out what it takes to rethink how to accomplish both their personal and work goals. The skills they use to achieve this are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; we’ve also learned these skills are teachable to others.

Time and again Integrated Leaders look for ways to minimize what often feels like a “win-lose” equation - success at work or success in creating time for life. Instead of capitulating to the either/or choice of demanding work or a scaled back career to make time for life, these leaders took the more challenging path of holding on to both their career and life goals. By repeatedly making this choice, it led to the development of skills that enabled them to meet both their personal and professional objectives.

## Integrated leadership takes unique skills

21<sup>st</sup> century skills are differentiators. The combination of setting priorities, being more efficient, increasing the level of interdependence, and setting effective boundaries is what makes Integrated Leaders so competent. In fact, it is their desire to live the ‘and’ of work and life that gives them the impetus to learn the skills required to achieve this balance.

These leaders didn’t arrive with these skills already developed and the skills didn’t magically

appear. Instead, it took the motivation to have both success at work and success in their lives to get them over the hurdles that arose along the way. And as you will see, not only did these skills benefit the leader, they also benefited the leader’s organization.

## 21<sup>st</sup> century skills defined

What are 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills? From our work with Integrated Leaders, we’ve identified twelve essential skills that facilitate this effectiveness. They fall into two categories:

1. Getting the ‘right’ things done in a timely manner. Integrated Leaders are constantly seeking ways to prioritize tasks and work more efficiently – both at work and at home.
2. Fostering cooperation and interdependence to develop others and collectively share the workload. Too often people get caught by a belief that they must do it all themselves. In contrast, Integrated Leaders quickly learn that the key to their own work/life balance is developing interdependence to create an environment primed for successful collaboration and delegation.

Integrated Leaders develop these skills to achieve their own goals, but the business also benefits.

Take technology. Technology is an enabler. At face value, it helps one be available regardless of location and time and gives one greater control over work tasks – precisely the type of flexibility that increases job satisfaction.<sup>i</sup> But, it also requires ‘finding the right balance to achieve optimal outcomes;’<sup>ii</sup> that is, one has to decide not to be ‘on’ 24/7 simply because the

<b>Understanding the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill set: Getting the right things done in a timely manner</b>	
Skill	Definition
1. Self-Discipline. (fundamental)	An ability to focus on the present moment and get work done despite distractions. It allows you to focus on your most important work, even if it isn't your favorite work. It enabled leaders to keep on reaching for their goals, even when the encountered challenges along the way.
2. Plan and prioritize.	Deciding among competing priorities, finding win/win solutions wherever possible, planning steps to achieve long term goals and identifying which short term goals may have to be let go using objective criteria. Tradeoffs are inherent in senior level jobs. One needs to understand and directly communicate these tradeoffs to those involved, including spouse and children. Shifting from the short-term 'emergency focus' prevalent today to a longer horizon allows one to move away from reaction into responsiveness. It enables making investments today for longer term benefits.
3. Anticipate the future.	Anticipating events that impact either life or work, planning long-term to manage these events pro-actively, and balancing these plans with others on the team. It also includes making strategic investments and setting up structures that can be leveraged over time to create win-win flexibility both internally and externally and to prepare the leader for the next stage of their career.
4. Create quiet focused work time.	Scheduling specific times in one's calendar to enable reflection and to think more strategically v. being hyper-focused on 'getting things done'. Quiet time is highly creative and allows for rejuvenation, and contemplation. Requires the self-discipline to not book this time with short-term 'urgencies' and to avoid checking email and answering the phone. Building this routinely into one's schedule fosters motivation by increasing control over use their time.
5. Use technology strategically.	Using technology as a means to pro-actively manage workflow. Provides flexibility in accessibility through the use of an administrative assistant, voice mail and email. Enables checking in at set times v. constantly. Allows for managing remotely and sharing information across physical boundaries. Requires the ability to turn technology off and create time at work for focused work time or time away from work with minimal disruptions.
6. Set personal boundaries.	Defining clear boundaries by saying no, going slow and saying yes to the areas that one can manage effectively. This is one of the most important but also challenging skills. It requires one to be assertive and state one's own needs while also considering the needs of the whole or thinking outside the box. It requires one to figure out how to get the work done in other ways (leading to the next set of skills – leveraging interdependence and fostering cooperation)]

<b>Understanding the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill set: Increasing effectiveness by leveraging interdependence and fostering cooperation</b>	
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>7. Build strong relationships.</b>	Building relationships across the hierarchy provides options to get work done effectively and offer opportunities for creative problem solving. Creates opportunities for mentoring and role modeling of skills. Requires one to move beyond the 'I need to do it all myself' mentality and include others in the process. Building an internal and external network creates support for work and life goals and provides a sounding board for problem solving and during challenging times.
<b>8. Create a sense of reciprocity.</b>	Mutual support greases the wheels. It enables one person to cover for another when an unexpected issue arises. Creates a reinforcing loop creating stronger relationships based on trust and helps to develop resilience within the organization as employees learn to rely on each other. At home it enables one spouse to support the other during challenging times.
<b>9. Develop win-win delegation.</b>	Understanding the skills and areas of development for oneself and one's junior employees enables effective delegation of work. Requires understanding of priorities, requirements, and development goals. Done effectively, leaders have more time to focus on strategic work they are uniquely qualified to do and offers an opportunity to develop the skills of more junior employees. Requires an upfront time investment which yields significant back-end, long-term benefits.
<b>10. Manage expectations.</b>	Defining performance, setting clear expectations, and ensuring that these are mutually understood reduces unnecessary effort and the chance of over promising. Pro-active expectation setting helps maintain a motivating environment and ensures that the 'right' work is done in the 'right' amount of time. Reduces conflict by ensuring expectations are understood clearly from the start of the task.
<b>11. Be flexible.</b>	Flexibility empowers others to meet expectations while being creative in how to achieve the goal. Flexibility is mutual: it's a manager allowing for the unexpected personal issue or it's the individual allowing for the late night client call. Flexibility allows the leader to adjust mid-stream when expectations can't be met due to unforeseen situations. It opens doors to new opportunities and new information.
<b>12. Set collective boundaries.</b>	Determining as a team the priorities, the essential requirements, the areas that can be slowed down or ignored, and the areas that require more focus. Negotiating this across and within the teams develops buy-in, reduces conflict, and builds relationship skills within the team. Enables the team to work at a higher level of performance as they enforce and reinforce the boundaries that have been collectively negotiated.

technology allows it. Integrated Leaders decide when and how to use technology, whether it's scheduling specific times to check email each day or working from home one day a week to maximize efficiency. The space provided by the strategic use of technology allows Integrated Leaders to be more responsive because they are not reacting but taking time to think, creating uninterrupted work time, and prioritizing the 'in box' thus creating better client outcomes.

Through the development of these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, both businesses and individuals benefit. When individuals learn how to make these types of decisions, it develops skills in self-discipline, planning, prioritizing, setting expectations and boundary setting. Businesses gain effectiveness, efficiency and even increased creativity.

These 12 skills are precisely the skills that make effective leaders. In fact, according to IBM's 2008 Global CEO Study, the Enterprise of the Future 'is home to visionary challengers – people who question assumptions and suggest radical, and what some might initially consider impractical, alternatives.'<sup>iii</sup> Integrated Leaders are visionary challengers.

Want to learn more about these skills? The second part of this article highlights three law partners who applied these skills as they became equity partners responsible for business development in their firms.

In each case, the individual goal of living a life that included success at work and success at home led to creative experiments helping them develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Over time they learned how to be responsive to clients, develop new business, delegate effectively and have time and energy for their lives outside of work.

Each solution was different, one case describes a female partner in a small firm, the other two describe a male and female partner who work in large firms. But each story shares the same important thread: an unwavering commitment to both their work and life goals.

Our work with Integrated Leaders is showing us there is a way to have success at work and time for your life outside of work, but to do so requires a new approach at work and at home. You too can take steps to develop a more collaborative and effective workplace; and doing so will not only benefit you, it will also benefit your workplace.

ThirdPath is developing a community of leaders -- **Whole Life Leaders** – who take these skills three steps further. They: work with their teams to support multi-dimensional lives; initiate progressive conversations at home to share in the care of their families; and promote changes at their workplaces (and beyond) so others can follow in their footsteps.

Want to learn more? Contact us at:

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<sup>i</sup> Golden, Timothy D, Applying Technology to work: toward a better understanding of telework. Organization Management Journal; Winter2009, Vol. 6 Issue 4, p241-250

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> IBM Global CEO Study: The Enterprise of the Future. An annual study based on conversations with over 1,000 CEOs and public sector leaders worldwide. 2008. IBM.