

Ambidexterity - The Paradox as a Principle

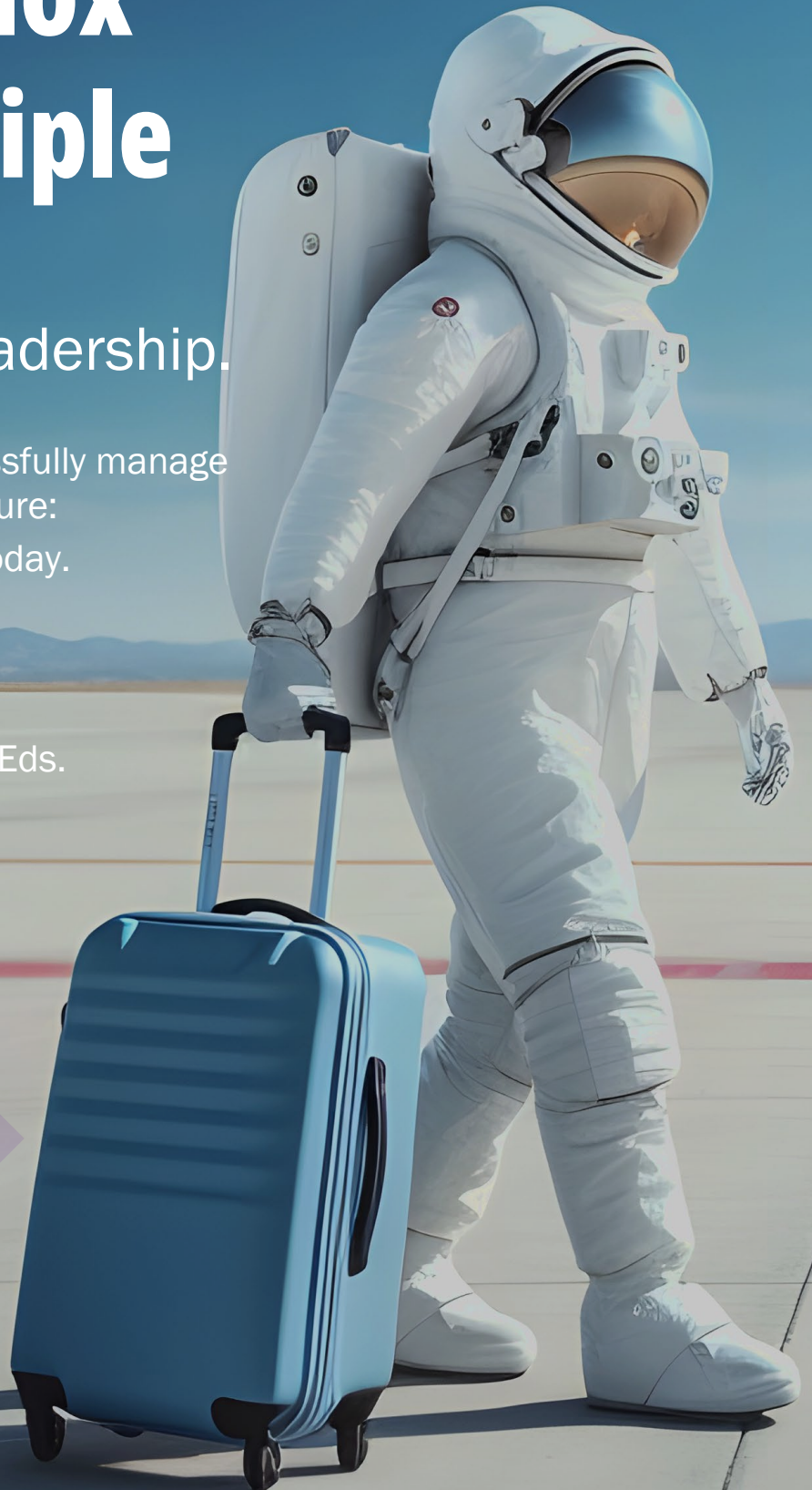
A guide to
ambidextrous leadership.

How top companies successfully manage
their core business and future:
Optimise today. Innovate today.

Ralf Komor & Peter Kuhle, Eds.

including Special

Ambidexterity Self-Assessment Tool



Why This Publication?

We live in an age in which the pace of change outstrips every plan. Strategies become outdated within months, and organisational models lose their effectiveness within quarters. What was considered best practice yesterday is routine tomorrow and irrelevant the day after. Leadership in this world no longer means creating certainty, but providing direction amid uncertainty.

How do we lead when certainty is no longer a constant?

How do we preserve stability when everything remains in motion?

This is precisely where this publication begins. It grew out of the experience of numerous transformations - in corporations and mid-sized companies, during growth and restructuring, in stability and in crisis. One pattern emerged time and again: success is not a product of chance, but the result of leadership that can sustain opposites - efficiency and renewal, control and trust, stability and change. Research calls this capability ambidexterity, and it is becoming a decisive competitive factor in an economy that continually reinvents itself.

Ambidexterity is more than a concept. It is a form of leadership intelligence that enables organisations to remain stable while in motion. It describes the deliberate management of contradictions: exploitation and exploration, structure and agility, planning and learning. Or, as Peter Drucker put it: "The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence itself, but to act with yesterday's logic."

This publication is neither a textbook nor an academic treatise. It is intended as a navigator for ambidextrous leadership in motion - a practical compass for decision-makers who guide organisations through uncertainty. Each chapter examines a different aspect of ambidextrous leadership: from self-leadership to the organisation, from culture to technology, from mindset to implementation. The contributions combine scientific evidence with practical experience, studies with corporate examples, theory with action. The aim is not to provide ready-made answers, but to open up a way of thinking - one that understands leadership anew: not as hierarchy, but as the ability to provide direction when certainty is absent. Ambidexterity is not a passing trend, but a necessity. It is becoming the benchmark for leadership that seeks to endure in a world of constant disruption.

This publication is aimed at executive board members, managing directors, C-level executives, supervisory board members, advisory board members and consultants - those who lead companies when the maps no longer apply. It invites them to reflect on their own leadership logic and develop the courage to shape tomorrow actively.

Because the future does not emerge from stability, but from movement.

The Editors

Ralf Komor & Peter Kuhle

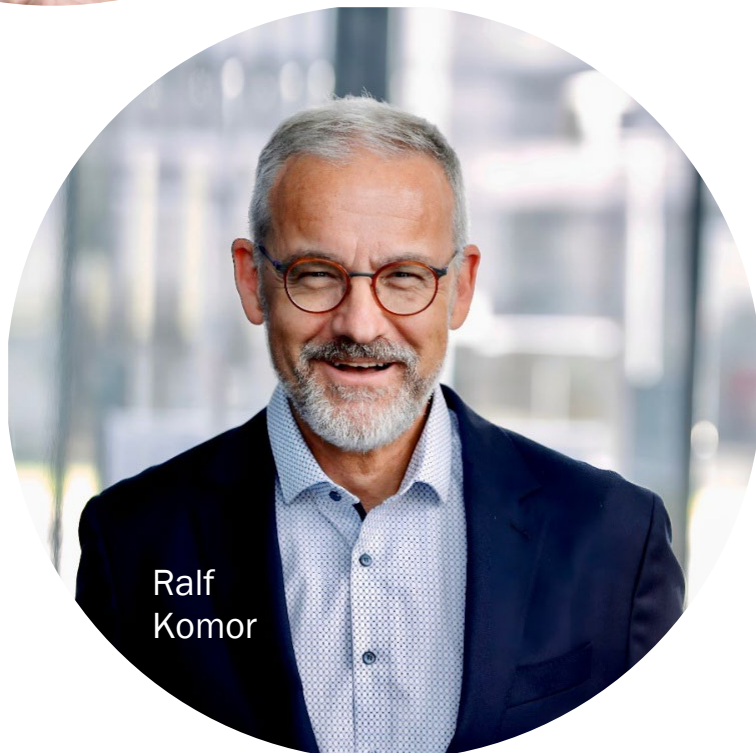
Definition: Ambidexterity

The term ambidexterity derives from Latin (ambi = both, dexter = right hand) and, in management research, describes an organisation's ability to master efficiency and renewal simultaneously - to optimise what already exists (exploitation) while creating something new (exploration). The term was first coined by Robert B. Duncan in 1976 and was subsequently developed academically by James G. March (1991) in "Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning". Since then, ambidexterity has been regarded as a central response to the defining leadership question of the 21st century: how can stability be achieved amid change?

Ambidexterity is not a method, but a leadership logic that productively connects apparent opposites: control and trust, planning and learning, structure and agility. It enables companies to safeguard their core business while shaping the future at the same time. Whereas ambidexterity describes the ability to act simultaneously in both modes, Dual Transformation (Tushman & O'Reilly, 2013) refers to the practical implementation of this logic along two paths - renewing the core business and building new business models. The two concepts belong together: ambidexterity is the leadership capability; Dual Transformation is its strategic application.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidexterity enables organisations to master today and shape tomorrow - simultaneously.

Enjoy the read!



Contents

Why This Publication	p. 2
Definition: Ambidexterity	p. 3
Editorial: The Illusion of Stability	p. 7
1 The Business Case for Ambidexterity	p. 10
2 Leading Self: Ambidextrous Self-Leadership	p. 13
3 Leading Others: Ambidextrous Team Leadership	p. 15
4 Leading the Organisation: Ambidextrous Organisational Leadership	p. 17
5 Ambidexterity & Culture: How Mindset Sustains Transformation	p. 20
6 Psychological Safety & Leadership Courage	p. 23
7 Measuring Ambidexterity: Governance & Transparency	p. 25
8 Ambidexterity & AI: The Future of Efficiency	p. 27
9 Breaking Out of the Industry Silo: Learning from the Best	p. 30
10 Common Mistakes and Success Factors in Ambidexterity	p. 32
11 Ambidexterity in Practice: The 90-Day Roadmap	p. 36
12 Conclusion & Outlook: The Future Belongs to the Ambidextrous	p. 38
SPECIAL: Ambidexterity Self-Assessment Tool	p. 40
Glossary: The Language of Ambidextrous Leadership	p. 54
The Editors	p. 55
Legal Notice	p. 56



**"We cannot solve our problems
with the same thinking we used
when we created them."**

- Albert Einstein

Editorial: The Illusion of Stability

"The future does not emerge from stability, but from movement - and from the willingness to let go of the status quo." - Peter Kuhle (2025)

The greatest danger facing companies today is not change, but the illusion of security. For decades, stability was considered synonymous with success, and planning was seen as an expression of control. Yet the data tell a different story: around 88% of the companies listed in the Fortune 500 in 1955 were no longer in the ranking by 2017 - as a result of acquisitions, insolvencies or a loss of relevance [1]. In its 2021 Corporate Longevity Forecast, Innosight shows that the average tenure of S&P 500 companies has fallen from 30-35 years in the 1970s to 15-20 years [2]. Even market leaders now have a limited shelf life.

Belief in stability has become a cultural reflex. Managers talk about sustainability, but often mean repetition. Strategies focus on optimisation, not renewal. Yet can stable business models still exist in a world of permanent disruption? And what does leadership mean when predictability becomes an illusion?

Current studies show that 45% of CEOs [3] believe their company will not remain viable over the next ten years without fundamental reinvention. The speed of technological, geopolitical and societal change exceeds the planning cycles of traditional corporate management many times over [4]. In The State of Organizations 2023, McKinsey describes ten structural shifts that are permanently reshaping the management system: hierarchies are dissolving, knowledge is moving to the edges of the organisation, decision paths are shortening dramatically, and leadership is shifting from control to context. Organisations that continue to rely on stability and control lose responsiveness and, with it, relevance.

Accenture confirms this finding: according to the Pulse of Change 2024 Index, the average global level of disruption has risen by 183% since 2019 [5]. At the same time, BCG's study Innovation Systems Need a Reboot (2024) shows that 83% of executives rank innovation among their top three priorities, yet only 3% consider their organisation "innovation-ready" [6]. In other words, most companies know they need to reinvent themselves, but only a few are prepared to do so.

Traditional management models were developed in eras of relative stability. Their purpose was to minimise deviations. Today, however, value is created precisely through deviation - through experimentation, learning and adaptability. Efficiency remains essential, but renewal becomes both the differentiator and the strategy for survival.

Research refers to this as co-ambidexterity [7]: simultaneously mastering exploitation (today's core business) and exploration (tomorrow's business). The best leadership teams do not choose between the two; they orchestrate both.

„The basic problem confronting an organization is to engage in sufficient exploitation to ensure its current viability and, at the same time, devote enough energy to exploration to ensure its future viability.“ — James G. March (1991), Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning, Organization Science

The success stories of today - from Microsoft and Siemens to Adobe - demonstrate that transformation succeeds when companies stop viewing the tension between efficiency and innovation as a contradiction and begin to understand it as a system. Satya Nadella turned Microsoft into a showcase for ambidextrous leadership: he optimised the operating business while simultaneously having the courage to cannibalise the company's own cash-cow product, Windows, in favour of new business models [4]. Nokia illustrates the opposite: once valued at well over USD 200 billion, its market capitalisation had fallen to well below USD 10 billion by 2012 [8]. The difference between winners and losers lies not in the ability to manage, but in the willingness to question one's own logic of success before the market does.

For executive boards, supervisory boards and investors, this means that ambidexterity is not an option, but a new leadership logic. It requires leaders to stabilise and renew, optimise and explore, deliver and learn at the same time. This capability can be developed. It begins with mindset, becomes embedded in structure and matures into culture. Companies that master both achieve, on average, 20-30% higher performance and growth rates [9]. McKinsey (2023) also shows that organisations with a strong culture of trust record 3.6 times higher employee engagement and 3.9 times stronger innovative behaviour [4] - both critical levers for successfully navigating disruption.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
88%	[1]	Share of the 1955 Fortune 500 no longer in the ranking by 2017
30-35 - 15-20 years	[2]	Decline in the average lifespan of S&P 500 companies
45%	[3]	CEOs who see no future within ten years without reinvention
3.6x / 3.9x	[4]	Engagement and innovation advantage in high-trust organisations
+183%	[5]	Increase in the global level of disruption since 2019
83% / 3%	[6]	Innovation as a top priority / readiness gap
Co-ambidexterity	[7]	Simultaneous exploitation and exploration as a leadership capability
+20-30%	[9]	Performance/growth advantage in ambidextrous organisations

It is not change that puts companies at risk, but their resistance to it. Leadership in the 21st century means shaping movement, not preventing it. Ambidexterity is the key to combining stability and dynamism productively and thereby leading for future viability.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidextrous leadership makes movement manageable and stability shapeable.

1 The Business Case for Ambidexterity

"Those who master ambidexterity do not invest in change; they capitalise on it." - Ralf Komor (2025)

As the editorial has already shown, current studies confirm the economic impact of ambidextrous leadership across industries. Ambidexterity is not a theoretical construct, but a measurable competitive factor. Leading consultancies consistently show that companies which master efficiency and renewal simultaneously grow significantly faster, generate higher returns and are more resilient in crises [1]-[3].

In The 2% Company (2018), Boston Consulting Group (BCG) found that only around 2% of companies excel simultaneously in efficiency and innovation - and that they are not only more profitable, but also grow faster than their peers [1]. McKinsey (2024) confirms that organisations pursuing "efficient growth" - the combination of operational discipline and innovation - create sustainable value [2]. Bain & Company (2024) also reports that around 80-90% of large, cross-functional transformations fail [4] because companies cannot maintain the balance between stability and renewal. Ambidextrous leadership significantly and sustainably increases the probability of success in major change programmes.

BCG further demonstrates that companies with a clear "strategy-innovation linkage" generate a share of revenue from new products that is 74% higher than that of competitors [5]. Accenture (2024) refers to such organisations as "Reinventors" - companies that combine operational excellence with continuous renewal. Between 2019 and 2022, they achieved a 15-percentage-point growth advantage and are expected to widen this lead to 37 percentage points by 2026 (= a 2.4x gap) [3].

The capital markets also reward ambidextrous leadership. According to Deloitte Insights (2024), investors value companies with digitally agile operating models 15-30% higher than their peers [6], because they offer both cash-flow stability and innovation potential. Further industry analyses confirm a comparable valuation premium for digitally mature industrial companies. BCG adds that organisations with ambidextrous governance achieve a 28% higher return on innovation [5]. Ambidexterity therefore has a dual effect: it increases both performance and enterprise value.

Capital no longer follows structure, but movement. McKinsey shows that companies which regularly and deliberately reallocate resources achieve an average total shareholder return of 10%, compared with 6% for others [7]. During the COVID crisis (2019-2020), "resilient" companies delivered a 10% higher TSR than less adaptable peers [8]. Active reallocation and adaptive leadership are therefore decisive value drivers in ambidextrous organisations.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
80-90%	[4]	Transformations fail without ambidexterity
+74%	[5]	Higher share of revenue from new products
+15 pp	[3]	Growth advantage of the "Reinventors"
+15-30%	[6]	Valuation premium for digitally agile companies
+28%	[5]	Higher return on innovation through ambidextrous governance
+10% vs 6%	[7]	Higher TSR through active resource allocation
+10%	[8]	TSR advantage of resilient companies during the crisis

Ambidexterity is not a soft concept, but hard economics. It makes companies faster, more valuable and more resilient. The combination of operational excellence and continuous renewal is the only sustainable competitive advantage in an economy that constantly reinvents itself.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidexterity is the ability to lead growth and change simultaneously - and thereby convince the capital markets as well.



**"Anyone who always does
what they already know,
will always remain
what they already are."**

- Henry Ford

2 Leading Self: Ambidextrous Self-Leadership

"Anyone who wants to lead others through movement must first learn to move themselves." - Peter Kuhle (2025)

Ambidextrous leadership begins in the mind and in one's own behaviour. Ambidexterity at organisational level can succeed only when leaders master both leadership modes - the efficiency-oriented mode for stability and control, and the exploratory, open mode for curiosity, openness and learning [1].

Traditional leadership logic is dominated by the control axis. Success is measured by target achievement, deviations from plan and implementation speed. Yet in a world of permanent uncertainty, self-leadership becomes the decisive steering instrument. Anyone who wants to lead ambidextrously needs inner agility - the ability to switch between analysis and intuition, structure and improvisation, plan and experiment.

Empirical research shows that ambidextrous leadership correlates significantly with innovation performance. Leaders who combine exploratory and exploitative patterns of thought and behaviour promote creativity, adaptability and the quality of their teams' results [2]. Ambidextrous self-leadership therefore does not mean resolving contradictions, but consciously sustaining them. It requires leaders to understand tension as a source of energy - not as a disruption.

Practice shows that the greatest bottleneck in transformation is not organisational design, but the internal mindset of leadership. Bain & Company emphasises the importance of flexible leadership approaches that switch situationally between stability and renewal [3]. In practice, this means that the same leader must manage costs and processes on Monday and allow bold experiments on Tuesday. Leadership in an ambidextrous mode requires conscious switching.

Meta-analytic findings show that leaders with high learning agility possess significantly greater neural flexibility and adaptability - essential prerequisites for ambidextrous leadership. The correlation between learning agility and leadership performance is $\rho = 0.74$, and with leadership potential $\rho = 0.75$ [4].

Self-leadership is not a matter of personality, but of practice. Ambidextrous leaders develop routines that train them to manage the tension between control and renewal.

Routines for Ambidextrous Self-Leadership

- Reflection instead of reaction: Reserve fixed periods for reflection in the calendar.

- Create learning windows: Take in new impulses from outside your own field every week.

- Maintain feedback rituals: Actively seek feedback - not only after decisions, but while they are being made.

- Define an experimentation budget: Reserve 10% of your personal working time for new ideas.

Ambidextrous leadership requires emotional stability. It means tolerating ambiguity without lapsing into cynicism or escaping into operations. Amy Edmondson's research at Harvard Business School shows that teams with high psychological safety speak more openly about mistakes, share knowledge more frequently and develop significantly more new ideas. More recent meta-analyses confirm this effect quantitatively: on average, psychological safety correlates with innovative behaviour at $r = 0.43$ [5]. Emotional intelligence also contributes significantly to leadership effectiveness - meta-analyses show correlations ranging from $r = 0.38$ to 0.55 [6]. Emotional self-leadership is therefore not a "soft skill", but a measurable productivity lever.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
$\rho = 0.74$	[4]	Correlation between learning agility and leadership performance
$\rho = 0.75$	[4]	Correlation between learning agility and leadership potential
$r = 0.43$	[5]	Correlation between psychological safety and innovative behaviour
$r = 0.38-0.55$	[6]	Relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness

Correlation coefficients: $\rho = 0.70$ = very strong $r = 0.40-0.50$ = moderate to strong.

Ambidextrous team leadership is the operational heart of ambidexterity. It creates a culture in which control does not paralyse and trust is not naive. Those who understand leadership as energy work guide people not through pressure, but through direction and resonance.

Leadership Takeaway: Self-leadership in ambidexterity means consciously managing the switch between efficiency and renewal - and remaining confident in both.

3 Leading Others: Ambidextrous Team Leadership

"Teams need both clarity and trust. Clarity creates structure; trust creates energy." - Ralf Komor (2025)

Ambidextrous leadership is more than an individual balancing act. It unfolds its full impact only where leadership becomes relational - within the team. Ambidextrous team leadership means not avoiding tensions, but shaping them productively: between direction and autonomy, control and trust, stability and renewal [1].

Studies and practice-based analyses show that teams with high psychological safety achieve significantly better results - measured, for example, in productivity, willingness to learn and innovation. Common management benchmarks [2] cite performance improvements of up to 40% compared with average teams. This figure is based on consolidated practice studies, team-based management surveys, the scientifically established relationships identified in meta-analyses [3], and empirical findings [4].

In ambidextrous organisations, this safety becomes the foundation of every performance culture. Ambidexterity requires open communication and a learning mindset that treats mistakes as data. Leaders who foster psychological safety activate their employees' neural reward systems: trust measurably increases the willingness to learn and create [5].

Ambidextrous team leadership does not mean abolishing control, but applying it situationally. McKinsey describes this as Dynamic Control Logic - an interplay between precise goal orientation and adaptive freedom [6]. Control provides direction; trust enables speed. BCG confirms that teams whose leaders set clear expectations while granting decision-making freedom increase their productivity by up to 30%, according to industry benchmarks [7]. This duality is not a weakness, but a new form of strength.

Above all, leadership in an ambidextrous mode is energy work. It operates less through instruction than through resonance. Bain & Company describes this as an energy-oriented approach to leadership - the ability to deliberately channel collective energy and emotional dynamics and translate them into execution power [8]. Studies such as the "Shared Ambidextrous Leadership" analysis by Osnabrück University and Haufe Akademie (2023) show empirically that teams with shared ambidextrous leadership achieve 12% higher performance, 26% stronger engagement and a 42% lower risk of burnout [9]. This proves that ambidextrous team leadership is not a soft-skill issue, but a business necessity.

Elements of Ambidextrous Team Leadership

Clarity of goals: Ambiguity requires direction. Goals must be understandable, achievable and translated jointly into action.

Open spaces for communication: Regular dialogue instead of monologue. Listening is a leadership discipline.

Feedback culture: Criticism is understood as a contribution to shared learning, not as an attack.

Distribute responsibility: Decision-making authority should sit where the competence is, not where the hierarchy is.

Make success visible: Learning needs reinforcement. Progress drives motivation.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
+40%	[2]-[4]	Higher performance through psychological safety (practice benchmark, supported by research)
+30%	[7]	Productivity growth through leadership with clarity and freedom
+12 % / +26 % / -42 %	[9]	Higher performance, stronger engagement and lower burnout risk with shared ambidextrous leadership

Ambidextrous team leadership is the operational heart of ambidexterity. It creates a culture in which control does not paralyse and trust is not naive. Those who understand leadership as energy work guide people not through pressure, but through direction and resonance.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidextrous teams emerge where trust does not replace performance, but enables it.

4 Leading the Organisation: Ambidextrous Organisational Leadership

"Organisations do not lose speed because they are too large, but because they are led too rigidly."
- Peter Kuhle (2025)

Ambidexterity does not end with the individual or the team - it is decided in the architecture of the organisation. Anyone who wants to lead ambidextrously must create structures that enable stability and renewal simultaneously. This requires a new understanding of leadership: less hierarchy, more dynamism; less control, more clarity; less planning, more rhythm [1].

In traditional organisations, processes, roles and KPIs stabilise efficiency - but they constrain renewal. Ambidextrous organisational leadership deliberately establishes a second logic: an exploration architecture alongside the execution architecture. John P. Kotter described this principle as a Dual Operating System - a parallel network that accelerates change and systematically enables innovation [1]. McKinsey refers to this structure as a Two-Speed Organisation - an architecture in which a stable operating system and an agile innovation system run in synchrony [2].

BCG studies show that organisations with ambidextrous or platform architectures bring products to market two to four times faster (a "two- to fourfold reduction in time to market") [3]. McKinsey adds that companies with Dual Operating Systems implement change more rapidly and improve operational performance by 10-30%, according to industry benchmarks [2]. The operating system safeguards performance; the exploratory system creates the future. Successful organisations such as Haier, Bosch and Microsoft show that ambidexterity succeeds when leadership orchestrates the interaction between both systems - not when it favours one over the other.

McKinsey studies show that leaders identify their existing organisational structure as the greatest bottleneck to innovation - industry benchmarks put the figure at 70% [4]. McKinsey also finds that fast-moving organisations implement strategies more quickly and achieve higher growth and innovation rates than less adaptable competitors - industry benchmarks indicate twice the implementation speed and rates up to three times higher [4]. Ambidextrous organisations combine stability in value creation with agility in renewal. Their strength lies not in speed, but in rhythmic leadership - the conscious alternation between efficiency and learning cycles.

What is not measured is not managed. Ambidextrous organisations broaden their governance logic: traditional efficiency indicators are complemented by learning and future-oriented metrics. These so-called ambidexterity KPIs [5] make progress in renewal visible and connect operational performance with strategic learning. O'Reilly & Tushman (2016) show that ambidextrous companies need separate metrics for exploitation and exploration in order to make change manageable - a scorecard logic that links operational excellence with innovation progress [5]. Consulting studies confirm that ambidextrous governance systems measurably increase the degree of organisational ambidexterity. According to McKinsey and BCG, companies that combine operational and exploratory KPIs achieve greater adaptability and above-average performance. Governance itself thus becomes an enabler of change.

Typical Dimensions of Ambidextrous Governance Systems

Dimension	Example KPIs	Objective
Stability (Exploitation)	EBIT, cash flow, delivery capability, customer satisfaction	Safeguarding today's success
Renewal (Exploration)	Innovation rate, learning cycles, share of new business models, exploratory investment ratio	Safeguarding tomorrow's relevance

Ambidextrous organisations do not distinguish between top-down and bottom-up, but between the cadence of stability and the cadence of innovation. In *The Wisdom of Transformations* (McKinsey 2024), CEOs describe a "Two-Speed Transformation" - a parallel governance logic that links short-term efficiency cycles with exploratory learning cycles [6]. Leadership thus becomes an orchestrated process of routines and reflection.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
2-4x	[3]	Faster time to market through ambidextrous/platform architectures
up to 5x	[2]	Faster implementation of change through Dual Operating Systems
+10-30%	[2]	Efficiency gains through modernised governance systems
70%	[4]	Leaders who see structure as the greatest innovation bottleneck
2-3x	[4]	Faster strategy implementation and higher growth rates

Ambidextrous organisational leadership means institutionalising movement. It replaces rigid control with rhythmic leadership. Success emerges when companies learn to do both at the same time: operate today's business efficiently and shape tomorrow.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidextrous organisations do not lead faster, but more consciously - combining efficiency and renewal, structure and movement, stability and change. Leadership in this system means shaping tension, not avoiding it.

5 Ambidexterity & Culture: How Mindset Sustains Transformation

"Culture is not a soft factor; it is the foundation of every transformation." - Ralf Komor (2025)

Ambidexterity cannot be led without culture. Structures can be designed, systems implemented and processes managed - yet transformation usually fails not because strategy is absent, but because mindset is. According to McKinsey, around 70% of transformation programmes still fail to achieve their objectives [1], with cultural and behavioural factors among the primary causes. The Perspectives on Transformation series (2023) shows that programmes fail less because of strategy, governance or financial resources than because of inadequate involvement, insufficient clarity and low organisational energy [1].

Culture is the operating system on which strategy, structure and leadership run. It determines whether ambidexterity is understood as a concept or lived as behaviour. Culture shapes how organisations respond to uncertainty - whether they learn or defend, open up or close themselves off.

McKinsey analyses make clear that transformation programmes fail not because of strategic deficits, but predominantly because of cultural and behavioural obstacles [1]. According to the analysis, inadequate involvement, low cultural energy, unclear responsibilities and silo thinking are among the most common barriers - far more frequently than gaps in strategy, structure or financial planning.

BCG benchmarks show that companies with a high level of digital maturity achieve up to twice the transformation success [2]. Organisations that combine digital capabilities, data-based governance and cultural openness demonstrably generate greater value from their transformation programmes.

Further McKinsey findings underline that cultural energy and participation are decisive if transformations are to deliver impact [1]. Transformation succeeds where leaders actively treat culture as a management variable. They use values not as symbolism, but as a leadership instrument.

International benchmarks from BCG, Deloitte, Gallup and Great Place to Work show that companies with strong cultures achieve greater innovative capacity, more stable engagement and faster implementation [2-5]. Purpose-oriented organisations work cross-functionally more often, make decisions faster and build trust more quickly - all essential prerequisites for ambidextrous work.

Deloitte Insights (2024) likewise confirms the qualitative relationship between a culture of ambidexterity and increased innovation and implementation speed [4]. Organisations with a high degree of ambidexterity and AI maturity achieve, on average, a 22% higher innovation rate and implement initiatives up to 1.8 times faster [4]. Companies that combine cultural and technological elements - clear values, psychological safety and data-based leadership - achieve significantly greater impact in transformation.

A culture of ambidexterity emerges when leaders sustain contradictions and create trust amid movement. They provide security through meaning, not through control. In ambidextrous organisations, culture thus becomes a decisive source of energy because it makes the tension between stability and change productive.

Tools such as the Organizational Health Index (OHI), Trust Index and purpose-alignment surveys make cultural maturity measurable. Internationally, companies with clearly defined ambidexterity values - openness, learning, reflection and trust - demonstrate higher innovation rates and faster implementation [3-5].

Openness: Share knowledge instead of protecting it.

Learning: Treat mistakes as data.

Reflection: Pause in order to regain direction.

Trust: Clarity replaces control.

These principles form the cultural framework in which ambidextrous organisations emerge. They transform energy into movement and resistance into engagement. Ambidexterity and culture are not separate issues: culture is the social architecture that makes ambidexterity possible. Without values that are lived, every structure remains hollow. Successful companies therefore manage culture with the same rigour with which they manage finances.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
70%	[1]	Share of failed transformations; causes: culture & behaviour
2x	[2]	Transformation value creation by AI/digital high performers
+34%	[3]	Higher employee retention in strong culture/engagement environments
+22%	[4]	Higher innovation rate in organisations with ambidexterity/AI maturity
1.8x	[4]	Faster implementation in high-execution cultures
24-36%	[5]	Engagement/retention uplift from a strong culture

Culture is not a matter of chance, but a leadership achievement. Those who cultivate ambidexterity do not lead processes; they lead meaning.

Leadership Takeaway: Mindset determines sustainability. Culture is the operating system of ambidextrous organisations.

**"We cannot discover
new horizons unless
we have the courage
to lose sight of
the shore."**

- André Gide



6 Psychological Safety & Leadership Courage

"Trust is not about making people comfortable - it is a principle of productivity." - Peter Kuhle (2025)

Ambidexterity succeeds only when people are willing to tolerate uncertainty and venture into the new. This willingness emerges where safety and courage do not contradict one another, but reinforce each other. Psychological safety is the prerequisite; leadership courage is its expression. Together, they form the emotional foundation of ambidextrous leadership.

The concept of psychological safety introduced in *Leading Others: Ambidextrous Team Leadership* [1] is explored in greater depth here. Amy Edmondson described it as a "shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking" - an environment in which employees need not fear negative consequences for openness or mistakes. Meta-analyses show that psychological safety correlates significantly with creativity, innovation and learning behaviour [2]. Leadership benchmarks suggest that teams with high psychological safety contribute around 40-50% more ideas (see [1][2]) and implement initiatives up to twice as fast [3].

BCG (2024) also demonstrates that in teams with high psychological safety, only 3% of employees plan to leave within a year, compared with 12% in teams with low safety. This corresponds to a reduction in the risk of resignation of around 75% [4]. Psychological safety therefore has a direct impact on retention, motivation and performance.

Safety alone, however, is not enough. Too much harmony leads to stagnation. Ambidextrous leadership needs both safety and courage. Leadership courage means accepting responsibility, addressing uncomfortable truths and making decisions before all the data are available. Courage is not a personality trait, but a behaviour reinforced by role models.

Bain & Company shows that leadership teams which consistently remove obstacles within one week implement projects twice as fast [3]. Courage is therefore expressed not in taking risks, but in acting despite uncertainty. According to Deloitte benchmarks (2024), organisations that combine courage and safety initiatives increase the success rate of transformation programmes by around 20-40% [5]. A joint study by Saïd Business School (Oxford) and EY (2024) provides empirical evidence that people-centred transformations which systematically promote human factors such as trust, psychological safety and courage are 2.6 times more likely to succeed [6].

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
40-50%	[2]	More ideas through psychological safety
up to 2x	[3]	Faster implementation by safe, action-oriented teams
-75%	[4]	Lower resignation risk with high psychological safety
20-40%	[5]	Higher success rate from combined courage and safety initiatives
2.6x	[6]	Probability of success for people-centred transformations

Ambidextrous leadership needs both: safety for the mind and courage for the heart. Only those who grant trust can lead movement - and only those who show courage create progress.

Leadership Takeaway: Psychological safety creates space; leadership courage provides direction. Together, they create the emotional stability that sustains transformation.

7 Measuring Ambidexterity: Governance & Transparency

"What is not measured is not managed - and what is not understood is not changed." - Ralf Komor (2025)

Ambidexterity is not merely a mindset; it is a governance logic. Ambidextrous organisations succeed only when they make progress visible and impact measurable. Transparency therefore becomes a prerequisite for leadership.

"What gets measured gets managed. Organizations need clear metrics to balance short-term performance with long-term innovation." - Peter Drucker (attributed, *The Practice of Management*, 1954)

Traditional performance measurement systems usually capture only the exploitation side - efficiency, costs and utilisation. Ambidexterity, however, requires a two-dimensional governance model that reflects both stability and renewal. Described by O'Reilly & Tushman [5] as a scorecard logic for ambidextrous companies, this concept links financial and learning-oriented metrics and measures a company's ability to deliver and learn simultaneously.

Current Deloitte benchmarks show that around 70-80% of leaders consider their reporting system inadequate for capturing innovation performance [2]. Bain & Company therefore speaks of a visibility gap - the divide between performance transparency and learning transparency [3].

To manage ambidexterity successfully, leading companies combine leading indicators and lagging indicators. Leading indicators reveal movement - measuring, for example, learning cycles, ideas implemented, cross-functional projects or time to feedback. Lagging indicators reveal impact, such as revenue, margin, EBIT or customer retention.

BCG recommends embedding these metrics in a specifically extended ambidexterity scorecard [4]. It adds a fifth dimension - renewal - to the traditional perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard (finance, customers, processes and learning). According to BCG benchmarks (2024), organisations that apply this scorecard consistently increase their strategic adaptability by 37%, innovation performance by 42% and employee retention by 28% [4].

Examples of Ambidexterity KPIs:

Financial perspective: EBIT growth, cash conversion, share of revenue from new products

Customer perspective: Net Promoter Score, time to value, cross-selling rate

Process perspective: Project speed, cycle times, error rates

Learning perspective: Training hours, feedback frequency, retrospectives

Renewal perspective: Number of new business models, exploratory investment ratio, return on innovation

Organisations that apply this system consistently increase their strategic adaptability by 30-40%, their innovation performance by 35-45% and employee retention by 20-35% [4].

Bain & Company found that companies with regular feedback cycles and open-performance systems are approximately twice as likely to achieve their strategic objectives [3]. Transparent governance is not a reporting instrument, but a learning system.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
70-80%	[2]	of leaders consider innovation measurement in reporting inadequate
30-40%	[4]	greater adaptability through ambidexterity scorecards
35-45%	[4]	stronger innovation performance through ambidexterity scorecards
20-35%	[4]	higher employee retention through enhanced transparency
~2x	[3]	higher target achievement through feedback and dialogue systems

Measuring ambidexterity means understanding impact. Leadership thus shifts from a control system to a learning system - and transparency becomes the basis for trust.

Leadership Takeaway: Measuring means leading, and in ambidexterity, leading means making learning progress visible.

8 Ambidexterity & AI: The Future of Efficiency

"Artificial intelligence is not a tool; it is a second operating system for leadership." - Peter Kuhle (2025)

Ambidexterity and artificial intelligence (AI) are natural allies. Both follow the same principle: preserve and renew simultaneously. AI makes visible what was previously hidden and thereby creates transparency, speed and learning capacity - the central levers of ambidextrous organisations [1].

According to consulting benchmarks (including McKinsey 2023/2024, Deloitte 2024 and BCG 2023), companies that systematically integrate AI into their leadership and innovation processes achieve 20-40% higher productivity [1], react to markets 1.5-2 times faster [1], [2], and realise EBIT effects of 5-15% through data-driven efficiency levers [1]. McKinsey benchmarks indicate that leaders who view AI as a cognitive partner make decisions up to 40% faster [1] and foster 20-30% more innovation [5].

Modern approaches to leadership are increasingly evolving towards an expanded, technology-enabled form of leadership. This is not about replacing human decision-making capabilities with algorithms, but about enhancing them deliberately. Artificial intelligence assumes the role of a precise analytical tool that makes operational efficiency potential transparent while using pattern recognition to reveal new strategic options. The true leadership contribution lies in combining these machine-generated insights with experience, intuition and ethical judgement to achieve a new quality of decision-making [1].

In ambidextrous organisations, AI becomes a cognitive partner. It filters signals from floods of data, recognises patterns and identifies opportunities as well as risks. According to Deloitte benchmarks (2024), companies with high levels of ambidexterity and AI maturity achieve up to twice the success rate in transformation programmes [4]. Leaders who actively integrate AI into decision-making processes make decisions, on average, 40% faster [1] and foster 20-30% more innovation [5]. AI is changing how ambidexterity is practised - from governance to culture:

In exploitation: AI optimises processes, reduces complexity and increases efficiency.

In exploration: AI generates ideas, simulates scenarios and inspires new business models.

In leadership: AI creates a factual basis, reduces bias and strengthens confidence in decisions.

Yet AI creates value only in organisations that combine trust in technology with responsibility in leadership. Leadership remains the human filter that decides when data are sufficient and when judgement and conviction are required.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
+20-40%	[1]	higher productivity through AI integration
1.5-2x	[1], [2]	faster market response through data-based leadership
+5-15%	[1]	EBIT effect from AI efficiency levers
2x	[4]	higher transformation success rate with AI/ambidexterity maturity
+40%	[1]	faster decisions through AI-enabled leadership
+20-30%	[5]	higher innovation rate through human-AI collaboration

Together, ambidexterity and AI form the foundation of a new era of leadership: rational, capable of learning and data-based - yet grounded in human responsibility.

Leadership Takeaway: AI is the new backbone of ambidextrous leadership - it expands thinking, accelerates learning and creates transparency for better decisions.

**"Change happens only when
the pain of staying the same exceeds
the pain of changing."**

- Tony Robbins



9 Breaking Out of the Industry Silo: Learning from the Best

"Those who think only within their own industry will remain confined to it." - Ralf Komor (2025)

Ambidextrous organisations do not emerge from repetition, but from a change of perspective. The future takes shape where companies have the courage to look beyond industry boundaries - learning from the automotive industry how platforms scale, or from the software sector how iterative development works. In this context, ambidexterity means learning from other industries without losing one's own identity.

The latest McKinsey analyses (2024) show that high-performance organisations (top performers) use cross-industry benchmarks significantly more often to adapt new innovation principles and thereby learn faster [1]. The crucial factor is the shift in perspective - deliberate learning from systems, markets and models of thought that differ structurally.

McKinsey (2024) also finds that these top performers are 63% more likely to open up new growth fields outside their core business [2]. This means that companies which learn systematically from other industries expand both their playing field and their opportunities - growth no longer emerges solely within the existing market, but at the interfaces with others.

Industry consensus and benchmarks reinforce this effect: organisations that actively conduct cross-industry benchmarking achieve significantly higher returns on innovation, with some studies (BCG, 2024) [3] observing a 1.5-fold increase in growth rates in the context of digital and AI innovation.

Deloitte (2024) adds that organisations which deliberately and actively learn from other industries accelerate their transformation cycles while measurably strengthening organisational resilience [4]. Industry circles cite values between 20% and 30%. Learning capability thus becomes a strategic accelerator and a prerequisite for organisational health.

Research also confirms this effect: Harvard Business Review reports that cross-industry knowledge spillover leads to greater originality and novelty in patents [5]. The greater the technological distance of the learning source, the stronger the innovation effect. Cross-industry innovation is in fact regarded as a central success factor in modern corporate development, as confirmed by a ScienceDirect meta-analysis (2023) [6]. The deliberate transfer of principles, methods and technologies across industries demonstrably increases creativity, problem-solving capability and speed - and is therefore not the copying of best practice, but the conscious translation of other industries' success logics into one's own system.

Practical examples reinforce this finding as well: by introducing agile leadership principles and shortening decision paths, a leading German technology company reduced its product cycles by 25% [7]. The result was based on consistent learning transfer from the technology sector.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
+63%	[2]	Growth outside the core business
1.5x	[3]	1.5-fold increase in growth rates (ROI)
+20-30%	[4]	Acceleration of transformation cycles and stronger resilience
empirically confirmed	[5][6]	Cross-industry innovation increases creativity and speed
+25%	[7]	Shorter product cycles through cross-industry leadership principles

Studies and practice show that those who look only at their own industry lose speed, while those who learn from others gain direction. Cross-industry learning broadens the field of ambidexterity. It proves that progress does not emerge in silos, but through exchange - and that looking beyond one's own boundaries becomes a decisive success factor for sustainable transformation.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidexterity means learning where others are already ahead - and translating those insights into movement.

10 Common Mistakes and Success Factors in Ambidexterity

"Ambidexterity rarely fails because of the idea - it fails because of inconsistent execution." - Peter Kuhle (2025)

Ambidextrous leadership is not a concept that can simply be "introduced"; it is a system that must be practised consistently. Many companies underestimate how profoundly ambidexterity changes the way they think, decide and lead. In *The Execution Trap*, Roger L. Martin (Harvard Business Review, 2010) explains that up to 67% of strategic initiatives fail in execution - usually because of cultural and structural tensions between strategy and implementation [1]. The same patterns apply to ambidexterity programmes when the balance between stability and renewal breaks down. The most common mistakes can be grouped into four dimensions: leadership, structure, governance and people.

1. Leadership Mistake: Courage Is Replaced by Control

In *The State of Organizations 2023*, McKinsey describes how leaders in transition phases frequently fall back into old efficiency logics [2]. Instead of allowing uncertainty, they respond with micromanagement and control. Yet ambidextrous leadership requires trust in learning processes, not the illusion of complete control. Harvard Business Review calls this the "execution trap" - companies optimise what already exists until they block themselves [1].

„Success breeds failure. The more successful an organization becomes, the more likely it is to focus on exploitation at the expense of exploration.“ — Clayton M. Christensen (1997), *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Harvard Business School Press

Success factor: The courage to accept imperfection. Leadership must sustain contradictions, make uncertainty visible and provide direction through meaning - not through perfection.

2. Structural Mistake: Two Speeds, but Only One System

Many organisations establish agile units or innovation labs, but assess them using traditional KPIs. The new system is suffocated by the old one. In *An Ecosystem Approach to Governing Innovation Hubs* (2023), BCG shows that more than 85% of business ecosystems fail, with governance problems as the primary cause [3]. This highlights the importance of clearly separated governance and decision-making structures for exploitation and exploration.

Success factor: Two systems, one strategy. Leadership orchestrates rather than integrates. The operating system delivers stability; the exploratory system creates the future.

3. Governance Mistake: Progress Remains Invisible

Many companies fail because they do not make ambidexterity measurable. Deloitte (2024) shows that companies which manage their digital transformations with clear KPI systems achieve 25-40% higher success rates, according to Deloitte benchmarks (2024) [4]. Where transparency is absent, mistrust arises - and leadership responds with control instead of learning.

Success factor: Measurable duality. Progress becomes visible when organisations manage renewal as rigorously as efficiency.

4. The Human Factor: Too Much Concept, Too Little Mindset

In The Boss Factor, McKinsey (2020) found that employees in teams with psychological safety are 47% more likely to report successful transformations [5]. Ambidexterity therefore works only when leadership creates an environment in which learning matters more than avoiding mistakes.

Success factor: Culture before structure. Ambidexterity thrives on trust, openness and role-model behaviour.

Conclusion: Success Through Mindset and Consistency

The best organisations differ not in their structures, but in the consistency of their implementation. Ambidexterity requires leadership that sustains tension, connects systems and models the desired behaviour.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
67%	[1]	Strategic programmes fail because of cultural and structural contradictions
85%	[3]	Business ecosystems fail; governance is the main reason
25-40%	[4]	higher implementation success through targeted KPI systems
+47%	[5]	higher success rates with psychological safety

Ambidexterity succeeds where leadership demonstrates conviction, structure provides support and governance creates transparency.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidexterity is not a question of concept, but of character - it rewards the courageous, not the perfect.

**"If the direction is wrong,
speed is irrelevant."
- Mahatma Gandhi**



11 Ambidexterity in Practice: The 90-Day Roadmap

"Transformation does not begin with a plan, but with the first step - and the determination to take it." - Ralf Komor (2025)

Ambidexterity is not a project, but a practice. It creates impact when concepts are translated into routines. Many organisations underestimate this step: they define strategies, but no cadence for implementation. The result is that ambidexterity remains a statement of intent. McKinsey describes the transition from planning to implementation as the execution gap - the point at which success or failure is decided [1]. Closing this gap requires a structured 90-day roadmap that makes change tangible, measurable and manageable.

Phase 1: Orientation (Days 1-30)

The objective of this first phase is clarity. Ambidexterity begins with an honest assessment of the current position:

Diagnosis: How ambidextrous is the organisation today? Which structures promote or obstruct renewal?

Leadership check: Which capabilities, routines and cultural patterns shape management behaviour?

Ambition: What does ambidexterity mean specifically for our business model, our markets and our leadership?

BCG shows that organisations which define clear levels of ambition in this phase increase the probability of transformation success by 42% [2].

Phase 2: Activation (Days 31-60)

The focus now shifts to energy and direction. The organisation experiences ambidexterity not as a concept, but as movement:

Select pilot areas: Two or three teams or business units in which ambidexterity is tested.

Make quick wins visible: Small, measurable advances create momentum.

Establish communication: Leadership explains the why - and listens.

Deloitte shows that, according to current Deloitte benchmarks (2021), visible early successes increase confidence in change by 30-40%, while internal resistance falls by 20-30% [3].

Phase 3: Integration (Days 61-90)

In this phase, ambidexterity is embedded systemically:

Establish rituals: Introduce regular learning and reflection cycles.

Embed scorecards: Expand KPI systems to include ambidexterity indicators.

Leadership training: Integrate ambidextrous capabilities into development pathways.

Sustain communication: Make success stories and learning processes visible.

McKinsey found that transformations managed in short, iterative 90-day cycles are significantly more likely to achieve sustainable success than traditional programmes [4].

Making Success Visible

A successful 90-day roadmap does not end - it starts again. Ambidexterity depends on permanent iteration and continuous learning. Each phase generates new knowledge that feeds into the next cycle. Bain & Company calls this the "Continuous Reinvention Logic" - a principle originally formulated in the context of supply-chain transformation (Bain, 2022) and applied here to ambidexterity [5].

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
+42%	[2]	higher probability of success with a clearly defined ambition
+30-40%	[3]	greater confidence through visible early successes
-20-30%	[3]	lower resistance through communication
90 days	[4]	more sustainable transformation success with a 90-day cadence

Ambidexterity is not planned; it is practised. The difference between intention and impact lies in action. A 90-day roadmap creates the cadence in which organisations learn, change and stabilise - simultaneously.

Leadership Takeaway: Ambidextrous leadership needs rhythm - because movement emerges only when it is led.

12 Conclusion & Outlook: The Future Belongs to the Ambidextrous

"The future emerges where stability is not treated as an end in itself, but as a springboard for renewal." - Peter Kuhle (2025)

Ambidexterity is more than an organisational principle; it is a new leadership paradigm. In a world that is accelerating and destabilising at the same time, future viability depends on the ability to operate simultaneously in both modes. Those who lead ambidextrously do more than safeguard efficiency; they make renewal a systemic capability.

In The State of Organizations 2023, McKinsey describes how companies with structural ambidexterity - the ability to optimise the core business while exploring the new - are significantly more likely to rank among successful innovators [1]. In addition, companies with the highest organisational health, a concept closely linked to ambidexterity, generate three times the total shareholder returns of the market average [2]. Bain & Company underlines the need for ambidextrous leadership and shows that outstanding leadership must master exploration and exploitation simultaneously [3].

Ambidextrous leadership requires three dimensions:

Clarity of thought: Ambidexterity begins in the mind - it requires the ability not to resolve contradictions, but to lead them.

Consistency in action: Ambidexterity does not fail because of concepts, but because of half-hearted implementation. Execution is mindset in action.

A culture of movement: Change must not be an exceptional state, but part of the organisation's identity.

In the 2025 Global Human Capital Trends, Deloitte shows that organisations which successfully balance stability and agility ("stagility") achieve higher innovation rates and stronger employee retention than their competitors [4]. Ambidexterity is therefore not a future issue, but a leadership imperative of the present.

The future belongs to those who do not defend stability, but transform it into movement. Ambidextrous leaders create companies that renew themselves - continuously, deliberately and humanely.

Key Metrics Overview

Metric	Source	Significance
()	[1]	Higher probability of being a successful innovator (qualitatively supported by structural ambidexterity)
3x	[2]	Higher total shareholder returns in companies with strong organisational health
supported by evidence	[3]	Leadership requires ambidexterity (exploit and explore simultaneously)
()	[4]	Higher innovation rates through balancing stability and agility ("stagility")
()	[4]	Stronger employee retention through "stagility"

Ambidexterity is not an episode, but a shift of era. It changes how companies think, decide and lead. The ambidextrous organisation is not the destination; it is the path on which the future emerges.

Leadership Takeaway: The future belongs to the ambidextrous - the leaders who safeguard stability, shape change and embody courage.

including Special

Ambidexterity Self-Assessment Tool

SPECIAL

Ambidexterity Self-Assessment Tool

© Ralf Komor & Peter Kuhle, 2025.

Ambidexterity Self-Assessment

"Self-awareness is the first step towards mastery." - Ralf Komor (2025)

Current Position: Where Do You Stand Today?

How ambidextrously do you already lead?

Take the Self-Assessment

You have explored the central dimensions of ambidextrous leadership - from self-leadership and team dynamics to organisational architecture. But what about your own leadership practice? Where are your strengths, and where does untapped potential still lie?

The Ambidexterity Self-Assessment helps you evaluate your personal maturity across four key dimensions. It is not a test that you pass or fail, but a mirror that shows where you stand today and which next steps you can take in your development.

The Four Dimensions of the Assessment:

Self-Leadership (Leading Self) - How consciously do you direct your own attention between optimisation and innovation?

Team Leadership (Leading Others) - Do you create the right balance between direction and freedom for your team?

Organisational Leadership (Leading the Organisation) - Do you embed ambidexterity structurally in your organisation?

Culture & Mindset - Do you live a culture that legitimises both reliability and renewal?

Time required: approx. 10 minutes

Benefit: A clear assessment of your current position and specific recommendations for your next steps

How the Assessment Works

Rate each of the 20 statements honestly on a scale from 1 to 5:

1 = does not apply

2 = mostly does not apply

3 = partly applies

4 = mostly applies

5 = fully applies

This assessment is intended for personal reflection. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers - only honest evaluations that reveal your development potential. The quality of your insights depends on the honesty of your responses.

Self-Leadership (Leading Self)

Ambidextrous leadership begins with you. How consciously do you manage your attention, energy and time between operational excellence and strategic renewal? Self-leadership is the foundation of every ambidextrous organisation - without internal flexibility, there can be no external agility.

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I consciously schedule time for strategic reflection and create learning windows outside my field of expertise (at least 10% of my weekly working time).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I am able to switch consciously between an operational "execution mode" and a creative "exploration mode" (cognitive ambidexterity).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I actively seek feedback on my leadership behaviour - not only after decisions, but while they are being made (at least once per quarter).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I am prepared to make decisions under uncertainty and tolerate ambiguity without escaping into operational activity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I consciously learn from other industries and regularly place myself in uncomfortable situations to increase my learning agility.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subtotal Self-Leadership: ____ / 25 points

DIMENSION 2: Team Leadership (Leading Others)

Ambidextrous team leadership means clarity about goals and trust in execution. Control provides direction; trust enables speed. How well do you achieve this balance between leadership and freedom?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
6	My team feels psychologically safe: mistakes can be discussed openly and are treated as learning data, not as deficiencies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	We have established fixed rituals for reflection and learning (e.g. retrospectives, learning sessions, dialogue instead of monologue).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	I give my team clear expectations AND decision-making freedom in execution (Dynamic Control Logic).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	I reward not only results, but also make learning progress and willingness to experiment visible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	I understand leadership as energy work: I consciously direct collective focus and emotional dynamics (Leadership Energy Management).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subtotal Team Leadership: _____ / 25 points

DIMENSION 3: Organisational Leadership (Leading the Organisation)

Ambidexterity must be embedded structurally. Ambidextrous organisations create parallel structures - an operating system for performance and an exploratory system for the future. How systematically do you manage this duality?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
11	Our organisation has a Dual Operating System: we measure not only efficiency, but also learning and innovation progress (ambidexterity KPIs).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	We have dedicated resources (time, budget, people) for exploratory projects - at least 15-20% are reallocated each year.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Decisions are made where the knowledge is - not necessarily where the hierarchy is (decision transparency and distribution).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	Our strategy deliberately balances the optimisation of what exists with the development of what is new (strategy-innovation linkage).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	We have two-speed governance: the operating system is managed in fixed cycles, while the exploratory system follows learning intervals (sprint, review, retrospective).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subtotal Organisational Leadership: ____ / 25 points

DIMENSION 4: Culture & Mindset

Culture is the operating system of transformation. It determines whether ambidexterity is understood as a concept or lived as behaviour. Mindset before structure - this is the principle of ambidextrous organisations.

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
16	In our organisation, mistakes are seen as learning data, not as deficiencies. We have clear ambidexterity values: openness, learning, reflection and trust.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	Leaders model courage and authenticity: they openly share their uncertainties and learning processes (Courage Cycle).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18	We actively use culture as a leadership instrument and measure it systematically (e.g. Organizational Health Index, Trust Index, Purpose-Ambidexterity Scores).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	Trust is more important than control in our leadership logic. We replace control with clarity and context.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	Our organisation learns systematically across industries and uses cross-industry learning as a leadership method (strategic borrowing).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subtotal Culture & Mindset: _____ / 25 points

Your Evaluation

Total score: _____ / 100 points

What Your Result Means

Score	Maturity Level	Interpretation
85-100	Ambidexterity Champion	You already practise ambidextrous leadership consistently. You achieve greater resilience, stronger innovative capacity and higher profitability than the market average. Your focus should now be on scaling, thought leadership and continuous development.
70-84	Ambidexterity Practitioner	Strong foundations are in place. You already achieve above-average results. Now focus on systematising learning and innovation processes and establishing a Dual Operating System. The step up to Champion lies in the consistency of implementation.
55-69	Ambidexterity Beginner	Awareness of ambidexterity is present, but systematic implementation still has room for improvement. Your focus should be on building rituals, strengthening psychological safety and consciously allocating resources to exploration. You are on the right path.
40-54	Efficiency Dominance	A strong orientation towards exploitation is evident. You are in the "execution trap" - operational excellence without sufficient renewal. Risk: 88% of the 1955 Fortune 500 no longer exist because they prioritised efficiency over renewal. Your focus must be on consciously allocating resources to exploration and changing the culture.
< 40	Ambidexterity Blind Spot	Urgent action is required. Ambidexterity has not yet been institutionalised. A large proportion of ambidexterity programmes fail because they lack cultural and structural anchoring. Your focus: top-management alignment, awareness-building and initial quick wins in psychological safety. Seek external support.

Your next steps - specific and actionable see the following pages.

You Are an Ambidexterity Champion (85-100 points)

Establish Thought Leadership

- Share your practices internally as best practice and develop case studies
- Present your ambidexterity successes externally and become a role model
- Develop an internal coaching programme for other leaders

Scaling and Institutionalisation

- Transfer your best practices to other areas of the company
- Establish communities of practice for ambidextrous leadership
- Embed ambidexterity KPIs as a permanent part of your governance

Continuous Development

- Seek new challenges outside your comfort zone
- Connect across industries with other ambidexterity champions
- Use AI and new technologies as cognitive partners for ambidextrous governance

You Are an Ambidexterity Practitioner (70-84 points)

Systematise Through a Dual KPI Framework

- Implement an ambidexterity scorecard to measure exploitation AND exploration regularly

- Define clear leading indicators (learning cycles, ideas implemented) and lagging indicators (revenue, margin)

- Establish quarterly review rituals for both dimensions

Embed Exploration Capacity Structurally

- Allocate at least 15-20% of resources explicitly to exploratory projects

- Create a formal exploration architecture alongside the execution architecture

- Implement two-speed governance: fixed cycles for operations, learning intervals for innovation

Deepen Cultural Change

- Introduce culture pulse checks and measure psychological safety systematically

- Explicitly reward learning progress and willingness to experiment, not only results

- Establish cross-industry learning as a regular leadership practice

You Are an Ambidexterity Beginner (55-69 points)

Establish Rituals and Structures

Define three specific ambidexterity rituals (e.g. weekly reflection time, monthly innovation sessions)

Block out 10-15% of your calendar time for strategic reflection and learning

Establish fixed feedback cycles and team retrospectives

Build Psychological Safety

As a leader, consciously share your own uncertainties and learning processes

Establish failure-learning formats (e.g. learning sessions after unsuccessful experiments)

Explicitly reward courage and willingness to experiment - even when initiatives fail

Train Cognitive Ambidexterity

Develop conscious routines for switching between execution and exploration modes

Find a sparring partner (peer, coach, interim manager) for reflection

Regularly place yourself in uncomfortable situations outside your comfort zone

Efficiency Dominance (40-54 points)

Immediate Measures for Exploration

- Deliberately stop one or two purely efficiency-driven projects and launch exploratory initiatives

- Allocate at least 10% of budget and time to projects without an expected ROI

- Create protected spaces for experimentation with their own governance

Top-Management Alignment on Ambidexterity

- Conduct an ambidexterity workshop with the leadership team

- Jointly define what "success" in exploration means (not efficiency)

- Explicitly embed ambidextrous leadership in the corporate strategy

Initiate Cultural Change

- Establish formats that legitimise mistakes as learning data (e.g. "What We Learned" sessions)

- Communicate clearly that experiments are not only permitted, but encouraged

- Measure culture systematically (e.g. Organizational Health Index) and make progress visible

Ambidexterity Blind Spot (< 40 points)

Build Awareness and Use External Expertise

- Contact Ralf H. Komor or Peter Kuhle for a strategic ambidexterity assessment

- Read this publication thoroughly and use it as a basis for discussion within the leadership team

- Analyse systematically why innovation and renewal have not taken place to date

Cultural Change Before Structural Change

- Prioritise cultural work: establish the four ambidexterity values (openness, learning, reflection and trust)

- Start with small, protected experiments carrying limited risk

- Publicly celebrate initial learning progress - regardless of the outcome

Leadership Development as the Starting Point

- Invest in your own development: cognitive ambidexterity, courage and tolerance of ambiguity

- Engage an executive coach or interim manager as a sparring partner

- Begin with your own self-leadership (Leading Self) - then the team, then the organisation

Leadership Takeaway: Self-awareness is the first step towards mastery. Those who know where they stand can consciously decide where the journey should lead.

Would You Like to Complete the Assessment Online?

Advantages of the Online Version:

- ☐ Automatic real-time evaluation
- ☐ Graphic presentation of your ambidexterity profile
- ☐ Personalised development recommendations
- ☐ Benchmark comparison with other leaders (anonymised)
- ☐ Export as a PDF for your records

For further information, please contact us:

Ralf H. Komor

SALES CAPTAIN. INTERIM.®

+49 (0)173 148 6843

ralf@komor.de

Peter Kuhle

Interim Manager & Senior Advisor

+49 (0)151 5858 0808

info@peterkuhle.com

Ambidexterity Self-Assessment Tool

© Ralf Komor & Peter Kuhle, 2025.

All rights reserved. Use within the scope of this publication or the official online version is permitted.

Any reproduction, distribution or integration into third-party systems requires the written consent of the rights holders.

Glossary: The Language of Ambidextrous Leadership

This glossary explains the central concepts of the publication "Ambidexterity - The Paradox as a Principle". It serves as a navigator for leaders, enabling them to understand and apply the new logic of future viability quickly.

Ambidexterity: An organisation's strategic capability to master efficiency and renewal simultaneously - optimising the existing business (exploitation) while creating something new (exploration).

Ambidexterity KPIs / Scorecard: A two-dimensional governance system that measures both operational performance (e.g. EBIT, delivery capability) and progress in renewal (e.g. innovation rate, learning cycles).

Cognitive Ambidexterity: The mental flexibility of leaders to switch between analytical and creative thinking.

Cross-Industry Learning: Deliberately learning from the success principles of other industries in order to achieve leaps in innovation.

Dual Operating System: The structural model of ambidextrous organisations, comprising a stable line organisation for the core business and an agile network structure for innovation.

Execution Trap: The trap of over-optimisation - operational excellence without strategic renewal.

Exploitation / Exploration: Two learning logics of successful companies - leveraging what exists and exploring what is new.

The Paradox as a Principle: A mindset that does not seek to resolve opposites, but uses them productively - treating stability and change as equally important success factors.

Psychological Safety: A concept coined by Amy Edmondson describing a team culture in which openness, feedback and willingness to experiment are possible.

Dynamic Control Logic: A leadership principle that combines clear goals with freedom in execution.

Courage Cycle: A cycle in which trust enables courage and demonstrated courage strengthens trust.

Note: The terms exploitation and exploration go back to James G. March (1991). They describe the two learning logics of successful companies: leveraging what exists and exploring what is new. Ambidexterity combines both into an integrated leadership capability.

The Editors and Authors

Ralf H. Komor ("Sales Captain") from Ladenburg holds a degree in industrial engineering and has more than 35 years of experience in B2B sales. As an Executive Interim Manager and certified board advisor, he supports companies through transformation, turnaround and growth phases. He heads the Sales, Marketing & Service specialist group within the German Association of Interim Management (DDIM) and received the Interim Management Excellence Award - Digitalization.

Komor stands for systematic, data-based sales strategies that combine efficiency with market dynamics. As the author of seven specialist books published by Springer, operator of the B2B Sales Institute with more than 250 articles, white papers and online tools, and publisher of a LinkedIn newsletter, he shares knowledge that sales organisations can apply immediately.

His expertise ranges from developing new business models and optimising complex sales processes to revitalising stagnant teams - particularly in mechanical and plant engineering and the software industry.

His credo: "Resulting statt Consulting® - because results count."

Peter Kuhle is an Executive Interim Manager and Senior Advisor from Bad Honnef. He supports companies during business-critical phases of growth, change and restructuring. His areas of focus are sales, service, transformation, performance and efficiency, as well as integrations.

With more than 15 years of experience in leadership roles in corporations and mid-sized companies, he combines operational execution strength with strategic foresight. His mandates range from international transformations and sales and service offensives to complex post-merger integrations. His leadership stands for clarity, speed and impact.

Kuhle publishes regularly in leading business media and is the editor of several specialist publications on transformation, ambidexterity and modern leadership. His work combines practical relevance with analytical depth - with one clear objective: to make companies and leadership teams fit for the future.

His credo: "Making things better together."

Legal Notice

Media Owners & Editors

Ralf H. Komor
SALES CAPTAIN. INTERIM.®
Executive Interim Manager & Certified Board Advisor
Jahnstraße 13
68526 Ladenburg
Germany
+49 (0)173 148 6843
ralf@komor.de
komor.de

Peter Kuhle
Interim Manager & Senior Advisor
Im Gier 34
53604 Bad Honnef
Germany
+49 (0)151 5858 0808
info@peterkuhle.com
peterkuhle.com



Image Credits

Cover: Art Gallery, Adobe Stock, generated with AI
Page 4: Photos by Detlef Szillat
Page 6: Daniel Roberts, Pixabay
Page 12: Alexa, Pixabay
Page 22: Hamsterfreund, Pixabay
Page 29: Laci Döme, Pixabay
Page 35: Kevin, Pixabay
Page 40: Gerd Altmann, Pixabay
Back cover: Art Gallery, Adobe Stock, generated with AI

References

Note: Some figures and frameworks are based on publicly communicated industry sources (e.g. keynotes, specialist blogs, AI-assisted meta-analyses or insight platforms). The content comes from officially published communication formats; some specific datasets are no longer, or are not fully, publicly accessible. Where references cite primary studies or consulting benchmarks, the quantitative values may be derived from averages, ranges or conceptually closely related metrics collected using different methodologies.

Editorial: The Illusion of Stability, pp. 7-9

- [1] Perry, M.J. (2017). Fortune 500 Firms 1955 v. 2017: Only 12 Percent Remain – Thanks to the Creative Destruction that Fuels Economic Prosperity. American Enterprise Institute. Available at: <https://www.aei.org/carpe-diem/fortune-500-firms-1955-v-2017-only-12-remain-thanks-to-the-creative-destruction-that-fuels-economic-prosperity/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] Innosight (2021). 2021 Corporate Longevity Forecast: Creative Destruction is Accelerating. Available at: https://www.innosight.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Innosight_2021-Corporate-Longevity-Forecast.pdf (eingesehen am: 27.10.2025)
- [3] PwC (2024). 27th Annual Global CEO Survey – Winning Today's Race While Running Tomorrow's. Available at: <https://www.pwc.de/de/ceosurvey/2024/pwc-27th-global-ceo-survey.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] McKinsey & Company (2023). The State of Organizations 2023: Ten Shifts Transforming Organizations. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-state-of-organizations-2023> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [5] Accenture (2024). Pulse of Change 2024 Index. Available at: <https://d110erj175o600.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/15113529/Accenture-Pulse-of-Change-2024-Index-Executive-Summary.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [6] Boston Consulting Group (2024). Innovation Systems Need a Reboot. Available at: <https://media-publications.bcg.com/innovation-systems-need-a-reboot-layout.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [7] Boston Consulting Group (2023). Why Ambidexterity in Business Needs to Evolve. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2023/why-ambidexterity-in-business-needs-to-evolve> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [8] Wired (2012). Finnish Government Hangs Up on Nokia. Available at: <https://www.wired.com/2012/06/finnish-government-hangs-up-on-nokia/> (accessed: 27.10.2025) (paywalled article); CompaniesMarketCap (2024). Nokia Market Capitalization 2000–2012. Available at: <https://companiesmarketcap.com/nokia/marketcap/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [9] Jansen, J. J. P., Simsek, Z., & Cao, Q. (2019). Ambidexterity and Performance: A Meta-Analysis and Extension. Journal of Management Studies, 56(1), 118–161. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12408> (accessed: 27.10.2025).

1 The Business Case for Ambidexterity, pp. 10-11

- [1] Haanaes, K., Reeves, M. & Wurlod, J. (2018). The 2% Company: Excellence in Innovation & Efficiency. Boston Consulting Group. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/2-percent-company> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] McKinsey & Company (2024). How Efficient Growth Can Fuel Enduring Value Creation in Software. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/how-efficient-growth-can-fuel-enduring-value-creation-in-software> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Accenture Strategy (2024). Reinvention in the Age of Generative AI. Available at: <https://www.accenture.com/content/dam/accenture/final/accenture-com/document-2/Accenture-Reinvention-in-the-age-of-generative-AI-Report.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] Bain & Company (2024). 88% of Business Transformations Fail to Achieve Their Original Ambitions; Those That Succeed Avoid Overloading Top Talent. Press Release, 15 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.bain.com/about/media-center/press-releases/2024/88-of-business-transformations-fail-to-achieve-their-original-ambitions-those-that-succeed-avoid-overloading-top-talent/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [5] Boston Consulting Group (2025). How CEOs Can Conquer Traditional Innovation Tradeoffs. BCG Henderson Institute. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2025/how-ceos-can-conquer-traditional-innovation-tradeoffs> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [6] Deloitte Insights (2024). Tech Investment Shifts in 2024: Focusing on the Foundation. Deloitte Center for Integrated Research, 14 October 2024. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/digital-transformation/where-are-organizations-getting-the-most-roi-from-tech-investments.html> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [7] McKinsey & Company (2016). How Nimble Resource Allocation Can Double Your Company's Value. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-nimble-resource-allocation-can-double-your-companys-value> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [8] McKinsey & Company (2023). The State of Organizations 2023: Ten Shifts Transforming Organizations. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-state-of-organizations-2023> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

2 Leading Self: Ambidextrous Self-Leadership, pp. 13-14

- [1] Deloitte (2025). Ambidextrous Leadership and the CEO. Deloitte Insights. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/leadership/ambidextrous-leadership-ceo-traits-in-digital-era.html> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] Zacher, H. & Rosing, K. (2015). Ambidextrous Leadership and Team Innovation. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 36(1), 54–68. Available at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/LODJ-11-2012-0141/full/html> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Bain & Company (2019). Scaling Your Digital Transformation. Available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/scaling-your-digital-transformation/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] De Meuse, K. P. (2019). A Meta-Analysis of the Relationship between Learning Agility and Leader Success. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 19(1), 25–34. Available at: <https://articlegateway.com/index.php/JOP/article/view/1088> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [5] Zhu, Y., Lv, H. & Feng, L. (2022). The Effect of Psychological Safety on Innovation Behavior: A Meta-Analysis. *ICHEMSS 2022*, Atlantis Press. Available at: <https://www.atlantispress.com/article/125971563.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [6] Mills, L. B. (2009). Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 3(2), 22–38. Available at: <http://www.joci.ecu.edu/index.php/JoCI/article/view/36> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

3 Leading Others: Ambidextrous Team Leadership, pp. 15-16

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2024). Breaking Operational Barriers to Peak Productivity. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/operations/our-insights/breaking-operational-barriers-to-peak-productivity> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] ZestMeUp (2024). Psychologische Sicherheit – Der Schlüssel zur Leistungssteigerung Ihrer Teams und Ihres Unternehmens. Available at: <https://zestmeup.com/de/blog/psychologische-sicherheit-der-schluesel-zur-leistungssteigerung-ihrer-teams-und-ihrer-unternehmens/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A. & Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological Safety: A Meta-Analytic Review and Extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113–165. Available at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/context/management_fac_pubs/article/1018/viewcontent/Klinger_2017_PsychologicalSafetyAMetaAnalytic.pdf (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amy_Edmondson/publication/243774322_Psychological_Safety_and_Learning_Behavior_in_Work_Teams/links/02e7e52f6765b44dee000000.pdf (accessed: 27.10.2025) (paywalled article)
- [5] Rock, D. (2009). Managing with the brain in mind. *NeuroLeadership Institute Whitepaper*. Available at: [https://hub.neuroleadership.com/hubfs/Corporate%20Membership%20Content/Managing%20with%20the%20brain%20in%20mind%20\(1\).pdf](https://hub.neuroleadership.com/hubfs/Corporate%20Membership%20Content/Managing%20with%20the%20brain%20in%20mind%20(1).pdf) (accessed: 28.10.2025)
- [6] McKinsey & Company (2024). A New Operating Model for People Management: More Personal, More Tech, More Human. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/a-new-operating-model-for-people-management-more-personal-more-tech-more-human> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [7] Boston Consulting Group (2024). Innovation Systems Need a Reboot. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/innovation-systems-need-a-reboot> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [8] Bain & Company (2023). How to Run a Transformation That Creates More Energy Than It Consumes. *Forbes Insights*. Available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/how-to-run-a-transformation-that-creates-more-energy-than-it-consumes-forbes/> (accessed: 28.10.2025).
- [9] Haufe Akademie & Universität Osnabrück (2023). Shared Ambidextrous Leadership Study. Available at: https://www.haufe.de/personal/neues-lernen/studie-zu-shared-ambidextrous-leadership_589614_611866.html (accessed: 27.10.2025)

4 Leading the Organisation: Ambidextrous Organisational Leadership, pp. 17-19

- [1] Kotter, J. P. (2014). *Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World*. Harvard Business Review Press. Available at: <https://store.hbr.org/product/accelerate/R1211B> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] McKinsey & Company (2014). Running Your Company at Two Speeds. PDF report. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/McKinsey%20Digital/Our%20Insights/Running%20your%20company%20at%20two%20speeds/Running%20your%20company%20at%20two%20speeds.pdf> (eingesehen am: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Boston Consulting Group (2024). Innovation Systems Need a Reboot. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/innovation-systems-need-a-reboot> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] McKinsey & Company (2023). The State of Organizations 2023. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-state-of-organizations-2023> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

- [5] O'Reilly, C. A. & Tushman, M. L. (2016). Lead and Disrupt: How to Solve the Innovator's Dilemma. Stanford University Press. Available at: <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/books/lead-disrupt-how-solve-innovators-dilemma> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [6] McKinsey & Company (2024). The Wisdom of Transformations: How Successful CEOs Think About Change. Verfügbar unter: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/transformation/our-insights/the-wisdom-of-transformations-how-successful-ceos-think-about-change> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

5 Ambidexterity & Culture: How Mindset Sustains Transformation, pp. 20-21

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2023). Perspectives on Transformation. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/transformation/our-insights/perspectives-on-transformation> (accessed: 03.12.2025).
- [2] Boston Consulting Group (2023). The New Blueprint for Corporate Performance: Unlocking the Power of AI. Verfügbar unter: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2023/the-new-blueprint-for-corporate-performance> (accessed: 03.12.2025).
- [3] Great Place to Work (2024). Unlocking the Secrets of Employee Retention. Interner Retention-Report auf Basis der Great Place to Work Workforce Study 2023 (keine globale Sammelpublikation 2023/2024). Available at: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com.ng/images/reports/Mastering-Employee-Retention.pdf> (accessed: 03.12.2025).
- [4] Deloitte Insights (o.J.). Leadership – Insights Collection (including articles on ambidextrous leadership and performance). Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/leadership.html> (accessed: 03.12.2025).
- [5] Gallup (2023). State of the Global Workplace 2023. Available at: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx> (accessed: 03.12.2025).
- [6] Gallup (2024). State of the Global Workplace 2024. Available at: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/645758/state-of-the-global-workplace-2024-press-release.aspx> (accessed: 03.12.2025).

6 Psychological Safety & Leadership Courage, pp. 23-24

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2024). A New Operating Model for People Management: More Personal, More Tech, More Human. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/a-new-operating-model-for-people-management-more-personal-more-tech-more-human> (accessed: 27.10.2025) (reference to source [6] from Leading Others)
- [2] Newman, A., Donohue, R. & Eva, N. (2017). Psychological Safety: A Systematic Review of the Literature. Safety Science, 104, 61–78. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1053482217300013> (accessed: 27.10.2025) (paywalled article) (figures based on industry consensus.)
- [3] Bain & Company (n.d.). Building a Better Transformation (Infographic). Available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/building-a-better-transformation-infographic/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] Boston Consulting Group (2024). Psychological Safety Levels the Playing Field for Employees. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/psychological-safety-levels-playing-field-for-employees> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [5] Deloitte Insights (2024). Courage Meets Safety – The Human Side of Change. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [6] Saïd Business School (Oxford) & EY (2024). The Future of Transformation is Human. Available at: <https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/ey-the-future-of-transformation-is-human-report.pdf> (eingesehen am: 27.10.2025)

7 Measuring Ambidexterity: Governance & Transparency, pp. 25-26

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2024). The Dual KPI Framework – Measuring Dual Performance. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/in-the-spotlight-performance-management-that-puts-people-first>, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/insights-store> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] Deloitte Insights (2024). Visibility and Value – The Next Generation of Metrics. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/global/en/issues/digital/measurements-that-matter-for-calculation-digital-transformation-roi.html>, PDF: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/7895_visibility-transformation-metrics/DI_Visibility_and_value.pdf (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Bain & Company (2024). The Visibility Gap – Why Organizations Fail to Learn. Available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/the-visibility-gap-why-organizations-fail-to-learn/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] Boston Consulting Group (2024). The Ambidextrous Scorecard – Measuring Dual Performance Beyond Traditional KPIs. BCG Henderson Institute. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/the-ambidextrous-scorecard> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [5] O'Reilly, C. A. & Tushman, M. L. (2016). Lead and Disrupt: How to Solve the Innovator's Dilemma. Stanford University

Press. Available at: <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/books/lead-disrupt-how-solve-innovators-dilemma> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

8 Ambidexterity & AI: The Future of Efficiency, pp. 27-28

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2023). The Economic Potential of Generative AI: The Next Productivity Frontier. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/tech-and-ai/our-insights/the-economic-potential-of-generative-ai-the-next-productivity-frontier> (accessed: 03.12.2025)
- [2] McKinsey & Company (2020). Global AI Survey: AI Proves Its Worth – but Few Scale Impact. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/artificial-intelligence/global-ai-survey-ai-proves-its-worth-but-few-scale-impact> (accessed: 03.12.2025)
- [3] Boston Consulting Group (2023). Where's the Value in AI? PDF available at: <https://media-publications.bcg.com/BCG-Wheres-the-Value-in-AI.pdf> (accessed: 03.12.2025)
- [4] Deloitte (2024). Transformation Towards an AI-Driven Business. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/de/de/issues/innovation-ai/AI-driven-business.html> (accessed: 03.12.2025)
- [5] MIT Sloan Management Review & Deloitte (2020–2023). Future of the Workforce / Digital Future Research Series. Landing page: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/big-ideas/future-of-the-workforce/> (accessed: 03.12.2025)

9 Breaking Out of the Industry Silo: Learning from the Best, pp. 30-31

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2024). Fostering Workforce Resilience and Adaptability. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/developing-a-resilient-adaptable-workforce-for-an-uncertain-future> (accessed: 27.10.2025).
- [2] McKinsey & Company (2024). How Top Performers Use Innovation to Grow Within and Beyond the Core. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-top-performers-use-innovation-to-grow-within-and-beyond-the-core> (accessed: 27.10.2025).
- [3] Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (2024). BCG's Annual Global Innovation Survey 2024 – Innovation Systems Need a Reboot. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/innovation-systems-need-a-reboot> (accessed: 27.10.2025).
- [4] Deloitte (2024). Global Human Capital Trends 2024 – Thriving Beyond Boundaries. Press release: „Leistung in der neuen Arbeitswelt: Menschliche Qualitäten messbar machen.“ Munich, 12 February 2024. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/de/de/about/press-room/Global-Human-Capital-Trends-2024.html> (accessed: 27.10.2025). (figures based on industry consensus.)
- [5] Conti, A.; Peukert, C.; Wandhöfer, T. (2022). Cross-Industry Knowledge Spillover and Innovation Novelty. Harvard Business School Working Paper 21-024 (Rev. 2022). Available at: https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/21-024rev2-11-22_4cf1fb54-e60b-41e6-8611-985031c999ba.pdf (accessed: 27.10.2025).
- [6] Afuah et al. (2023). Cross-Industry Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review. Technological Forecasting & Social Change, Vol. 189, Elsevier. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497223000548> (accessed: 27.10.2025).
- [7] Magennis, T. (2014). Actionable Metrics at Siemens Health Services. Agile Alliance. Available at: <https://agilealliance.org/resources/experience-reports/actionable-metrics-siemens-health-services/> (accessed: 27.10.2025). (Die Reduktion des Produktzyklus um 25 % ist die strategische Größe [vgl. Branchenkonsens]. Die operative Basis liefert Magennis et al., die eine Verkürzung der Feature-Zykluszeit von 71 auf 41 Tage (ca. 42 % Effizienz) bei Siemens Health Services dokumentieren.)

10 Common Mistakes and Success Factors in Ambidexterity, pp. 32-34

- [1] Martin, R. L. (2010). The Execution Trap. Harvard Business Review, 88(7–8), 64–71. Available at: <https://harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/The-Execution-Trap.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] McKinsey & Company (2023). The State of Organizations 2023: Ten Shifts Transforming Organizations. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/spcontent/bspoke/state-of-org/pdf/mck-soo-accessible-web.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Boston Consulting Group (2023). An Ecosystem Approach to Governing Innovation Hubs. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2023/ecosystem-governance-for-innovation-hubs> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] Deloitte (2024). Measuring value from digital transformation. Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/global/en/issues/digital/maximizing-value-using-digital-transformation-kpis.html> (eingesehen am: 27.10.2025)
- [5] McKinsey & Company (2020). The Boss Factor: Making the World a Better Place Through Workplace Relationships. McKinsey Quarterly, 4/2020, 22 Sept. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-boss-factor-making-the-world-a-better-place-through-workplace-relationships> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

11 Ambidexterity in Practice: The 90-Day Roadmap, pp. 36-37

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2019). Bridging the Gap Between a Company's Strategy and Operating Model. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Bridging%20the%20gap%20between%20a%20company's%20strategy%20and%20operating%20model/Bridging-the-gap-between-a-company's-strategy-and-operating-model-vF.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] Boston Consulting Group (2021). How Companies Can Manage a Successful Transformation. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2021/how-companies-implement-successful-transformation> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Deloitte Insights (2021). State of AI in the Enterprise – 4th Edition. Available at: https://runwise.co/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/DI_CIR_State-of-AI-4th-edition.pdf (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] McKinsey & Company (2023). Organization – Culture and Change. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/people%20and%20organizational%20performance/our%20insights/mckinsey%20on%20organization/mckinsey-on-organization-culture-and-change.pdf> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [5] Bain & Company (2022). Reinventing Your Supply Chain. Bain Playbook. Enthält das Prinzip der „Continuous Reinvention Logic“ („Continuous reinvention is the new logic for companies that embed learning in their operating system.“). Konzeptuell auf Ambidextrie übertragen. Available at: https://www.bain.com/contentassets/e61f6311c6ee4aa28643709b084568b2/bain_playbook_reinventing_your_supply_chain_final_aug27.pdf

12 Conclusion & Outlook: The Future Belongs to the Ambidextrous, pp. 38-39

- [1] McKinsey & Company (2023). The State of Organizations 2023: Ten Shifts Transforming Organizations. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-state-of-organizations-2023> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [2] McKinsey & Company (2014). The Hidden Value of Organizational Health – and How to Capture It. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-hidden-value-of-organizational-health-and-how-to-capture-it> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [3] Bain & Company (n.d.). Management Tools – Disruptive Innovation Labs (section on "Ambidexterity"). Available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/management-tools-disruptive-innovation-labs/> (accessed: 27.10.2025)
- [4] Deloitte Insights (2025). Stagility: Creating Stability for Workers for Organizations to Move at Speed (2025 Global Human Capital Trends). Available at: <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/human-capital-trends/2025/organizational-agility-and-creating-stability-at-work.html> (accessed: 27.10.2025)

Legal Notice

© Ralf H. Komor & Peter Kuhle, 2025. All rights reserved.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

You may copy and redistribute this work in any medium or format provided that the following conditions are met: Attribution - appropriate credit must be given to the authors, a link to the licence must be provided and any changes must be indicated where applicable; NonCommercial - the material may not be used for commercial purposes; NoDerivatives - the material may not be edited, altered or distributed in modified form.

Recommended citation:

Komor, R. & Kuhle, P. (2025). Ambidexterity - The Paradox as a Principle. A Guide to Ambidextrous Leadership. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>
Licence link: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de>

(legally binding full text: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>)

Note on Creation

This publication was created with the support of artificial intelligence (AI). AI was used for research and developed the structure, line of argument and wording on the basis of current studies and empirical sources. Responsibility for the content, final editorial review and approval rests with the authors and editors.

Disclaimer

The editors, authors and media owners make no warranty as to the timeliness, accuracy, completeness or quality of the information provided. Liability claims against the editors, authors and media owners relating to material or non-material damage caused by the use or non-use of the information presented, or by the use of incorrect or incomplete information, are generally excluded unless wilful intent or gross negligence can be proven.

All content is subject to change and is non-binding.

The editors, authors and media owners expressly reserve the right to modify, supplement or delete parts of the document or the entire publication without separate notice, or to suspend publication temporarily or permanently.

**"Those who refuse to change
will also lose
what they seek to preserve."**

- Gustav Heinemann



Act.

komor.de | peterkuhle.com