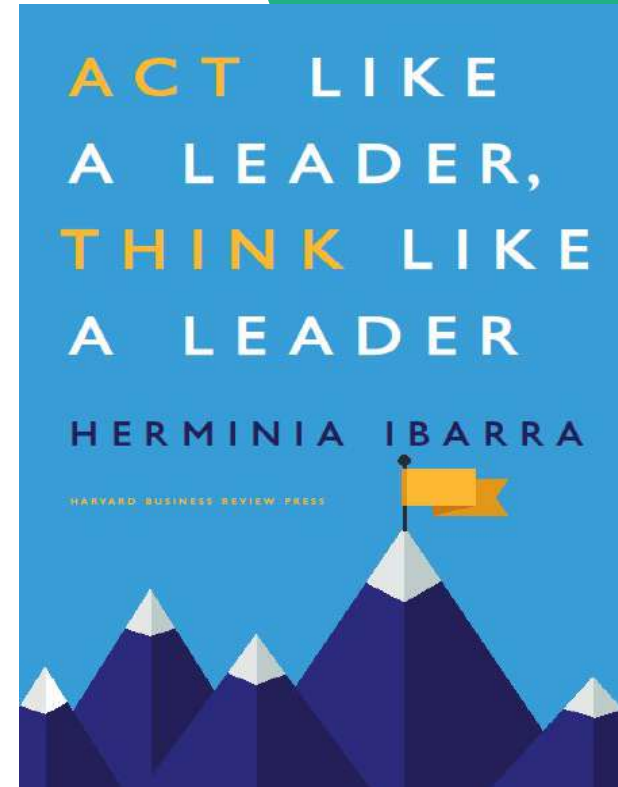


The Leadership Odyssey

Herminia Ibarra
*The Charles Handy Professor of
Organizational Behavior,
London Business School*



The triumph of “soft skills”

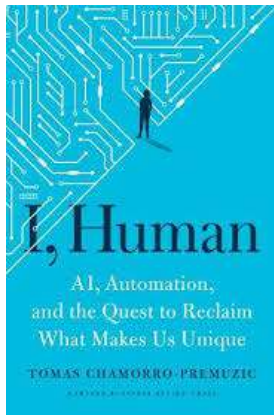


HBR'S 10 MUST READS

BONUS ARTICLE
 “You Don’t Just Need One Leadership Voice—You Need Many”
 By Amy Jen Su

On Strengthening Your Soft Skills

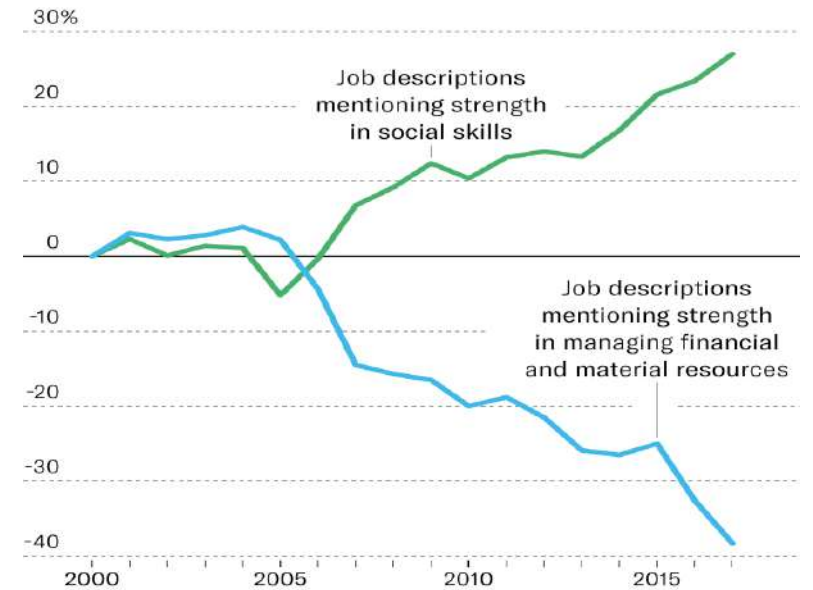
If you read nothing else on developing your interpersonal skills, read these definitive articles from **Harvard Business Review**.



Help Wanted: CEOs Who Are Good with People

Since 2007, companies advertising C-suite openings have increasingly emphasized the importance of social skills and deemphasized operational expertise.

Change relative to 2000



Note: Job descriptions were for nearly 5,000 C-suite positions advertised by the executive-search firm Russell Reynolds Associates. The data points were estimated in a regression model that controls for industry differences and other variables. The coefficients after 2007 are significantly different from zero across both skill clusters.

Agenda

1

What are they?

2

Do they matter in succession?

3

How do executives develop them?



What People Skills Do You Need?

Asking good questions, listening, empathizing, and empowering (in small groups and one-on-one interactions)

Collaborating and influencing (across networks)

Culture-shaping and aligning (across the organization)



**Harvard
Business
Review**

**Rid Your Organization of Obstacles That
Infuriate Everyone**

by Robert I. Sutton and Huggy Rao

From the Magazine (January–February 2024)



Culture-shaping & aligning

Empower people to spend time on high-value-added activities

Eliminate obstacles



Data & Analysis

75 CEO successions

235 candidates, large-cap companies, US & Europe, from 2009-19.

47 public companies. Correlation between CEO skills and shareholder return, revenue growth, and operating margins

In-depth interviews with a subset; insights from coaching

Who succeeds in CEO succession?

Delivering results: meet or beat goals and personally improve performance

Collaborating and influencing: work with and through others who are not under their direct control

Self-evaluation and adjustment: update your point of view and behavior on the basis of new information



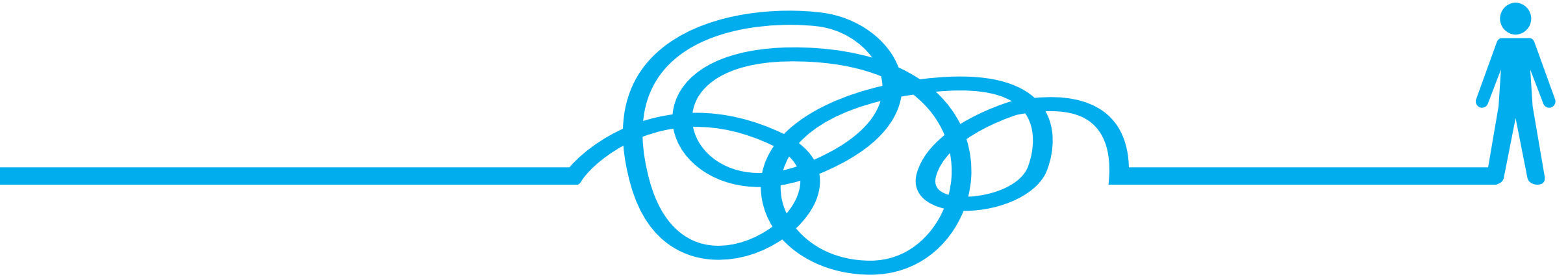
What Best Predicts Success as a CEO?

• **Collaborating and influencing** →
higher total shareholder return.

Self-evaluation and adjustment →
higher revenue growth and greater
increases in operating margins.



A 3-part Journey



Departure

Voyage

Return

The departure

Become aware of a gap between where they are and where they want to be

Not a single “aha”

Multiple experiences and conversations make them realize that their behavior is impeding **outcomes they care about**



The voyage a time of transition

Creating a new context for learning

Enlisting helpers

Persisting through (and learning from) setbacks.

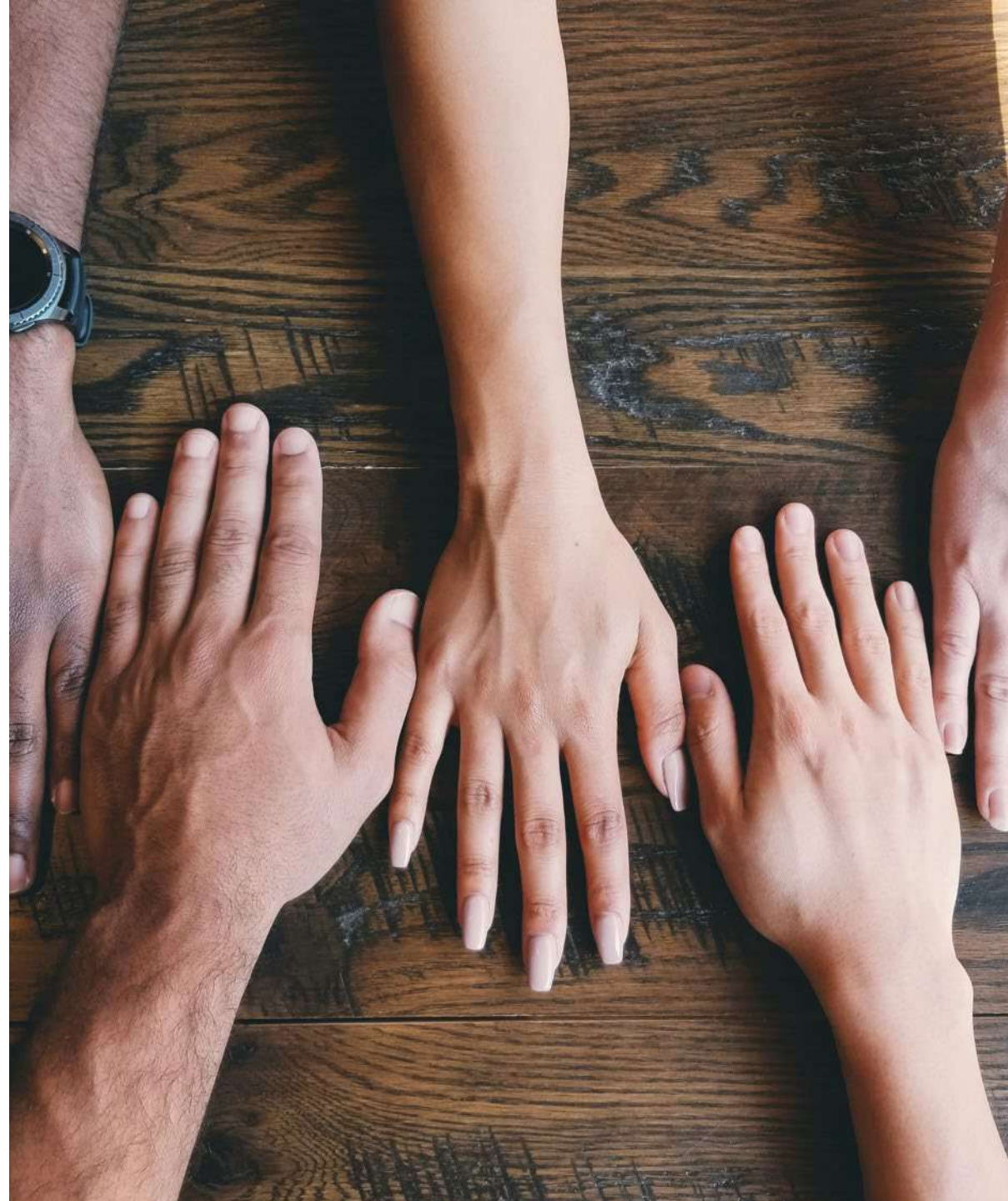


The return

See the new leadership style as a genuine reflection of themselves

Can employ it across situations & are better able to flex

Desire to share and amplify what they have learned



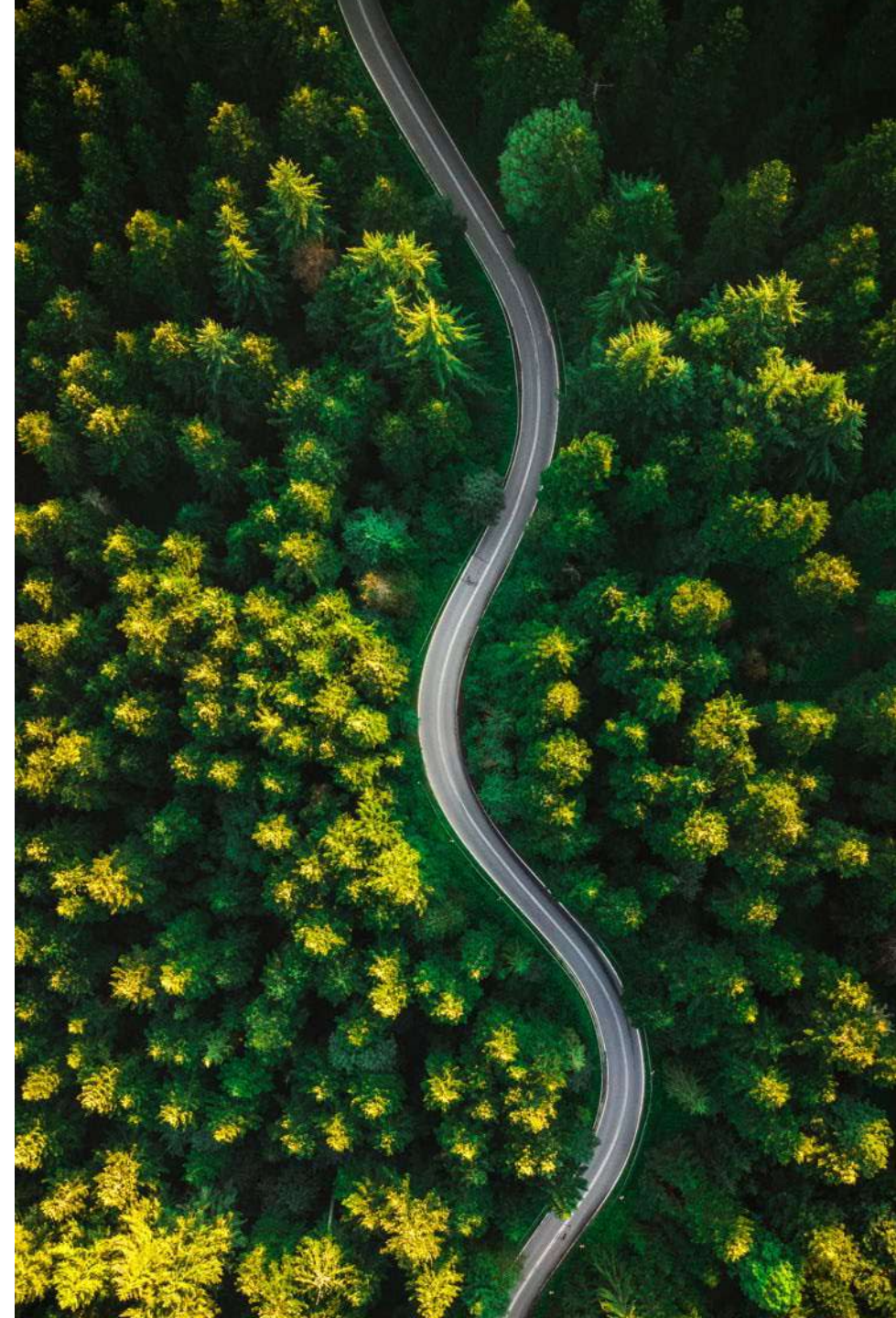
Some Implications

- 1 Understand it's a journey

- 2 Consider the context for learning

- 3 Promote helping relationships

- 4 Look for evidence of culture shaping



Questions



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