

## **Abstract: e-Skills for e-Business** **(with a focus on e-Leadership)**

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The paper discusses the e-skills required for e-Business with an emphasis on e-Leadership Skills. The role and responsibilities of an e-Leader are discussed and the need for awareness of emerging information technology is examined. Unemployment in the EU reached 10.7% by December 2012, which is an increase of 0.7% since December 2011. The number of digital jobs is growing at a rate of 3% per annum, in spite of the recession. This is a situation, which must be addressed. Any solution will require e-skills.

Technology is used in all parts of business and is accepted as being necessary for future competitiveness and innovation (EU, 2013). The combination of business skills and technological knowledge required to take advantage of ICT is often referred to as “e-Leadership”. The e-Leader is a person who can lead and also understands the benefits of using ICTs in an innovative manner.

The skills required to be an e-Leader can be found not only in ICT specialists but also in many areas of business. In fact

some people feel that the restrictive nature and disciplined approach of the academic education of ICT practitioners that they are less likely to be leaders with vision. This would indicate that for e-Leaders we might need to look for charismatic, entrepreneurial paragons and educate them to the benefits of ICT. Using technology can often involve new ways of working, a need for new skills, even a new corporate culture; this can be a major concern to all affected by such change.

Leadership can come from all levels within an organisation; the ICT user who can see how to improve the efficiency of their work is as much an e-Leader as the CIO who makes policy decisions for the same reason.

e-Leadership skills are more and more required from decision makers and leading professionals, who must be able to convince others that technology can be of benefit to them.

E-leadership skills are also required of ICT practitioners. According to ZDnet’s (2013) Strategic priorities for the CIO in 2013, “As CIO, your most important job is helping lead the business in change and innovation. If the business isn’t ready, which may be likely, then your challenge becomes helping preparing the ground for future change.”

An e-Leader should be comfortable with examining emerging Information Technology and Systems and should be able to recognise where opportunities may arise.

Amongst the major issues, at the time of writing are:

- Big Data
- Consumerization of IT
- Security
- Business value of the Cloud
- Social Media in business

What does an e-Leader look like? What skills must he or she possess? The diagram below attempts to identify the skills and knowledge areas required of an e-Leader.



**Figure 1 e-Leadership capability requirements**

The paper discusses each of the above skills and investigates the requirements for e-Leadership for competitiveness, innovation and growth in Europe, showing that such capability and skill can come from all levels and all parts of the organisation. In order to produce the required talent to meet the above objectives we recommend a number of initiatives.