

PASSION FOR PROJECTS 2026

STOCKHOLM

The Art of Adaptive Leadership

Leading projects through uncertainty and change



Welcome

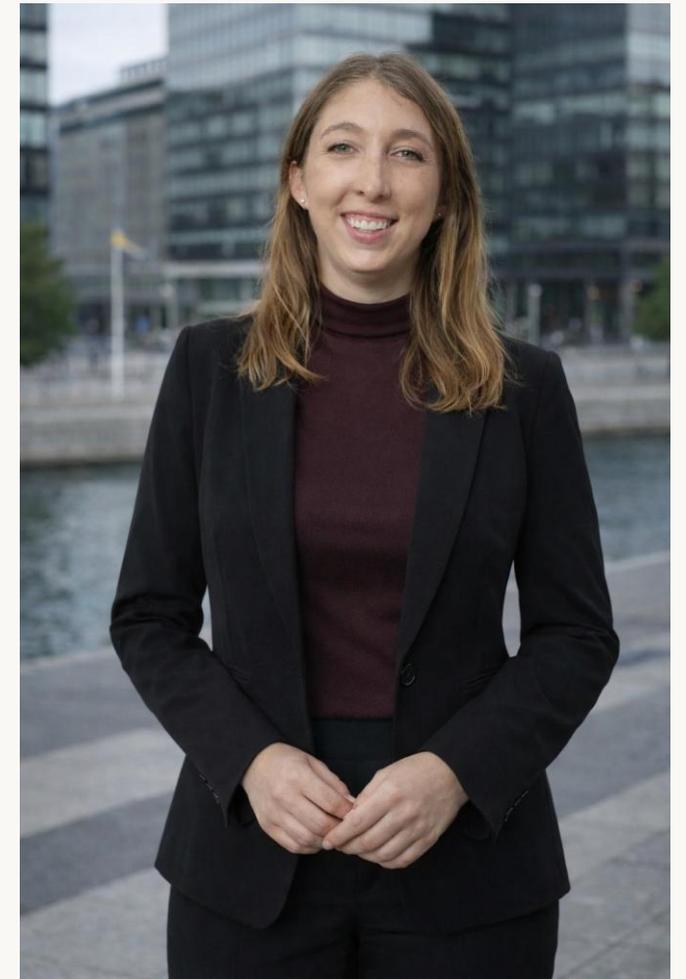
Giulia Morello, R&D PMO Manager and Transformation & Integration Leader @Horse Powertrain Limited

Worked with 10+ different countries
in different continents

Passionate about changes

Experienced in guiding
organizations through complex
change, from company carve-outs
and digital transformations to
multinational mergers

2023 winner of the PMI
Changemaker Awards in Leadership
category



WHY NOW

**"The world keeps
changing faster
than our leadership
habits."**



The Challenges Leaders Face Today

Uncertainty & Ambiguity

Plans shift mid-stride, and strategic directions leave teams questioning what "done" really means.

Emotional Resistance

Leaders need to face different degrees of emotional resistance when leading through changes.

The impact of changes

Changes may impact projects in financial, legal and technical aspects.

Cultural & Context Differences

Diverse teams and global projects require adaptations to maximize results and deliver.

Conflicting Values & Priorities

Changes require to adapt and values may clash. Priorities become unclear and foggy.

Influence Without Authority

You need to mobilize teams and drive results without formal control, leading through trust and vision.

What Is Adaptive Leadership?

Adaptive leadership is leading projects when the plan can't be fixed, helping teams adapt, learn, and deliver in the face of uncertainty.

It's not about controlling the plan. It's about enabling teams to respond to uncertainty, experiment with solutions, and adjust course based on real-time learning.



Adaptive vs. Traditional Leadership

Traditional Leadership

Clear problem, known solution

Incremental change, existing processes

Leader provides answers, direction

"Fix it for us."

Low emotional resistance

Efficiency, control, predictability

Adaptive Leadership

Ambiguous, complex, no predefined solution

Transformational, redefines success

Leader asks questions, guides learning

"Help us figure it out together."

High emotional impact, uncertainty

Adaptability, resilience, growth



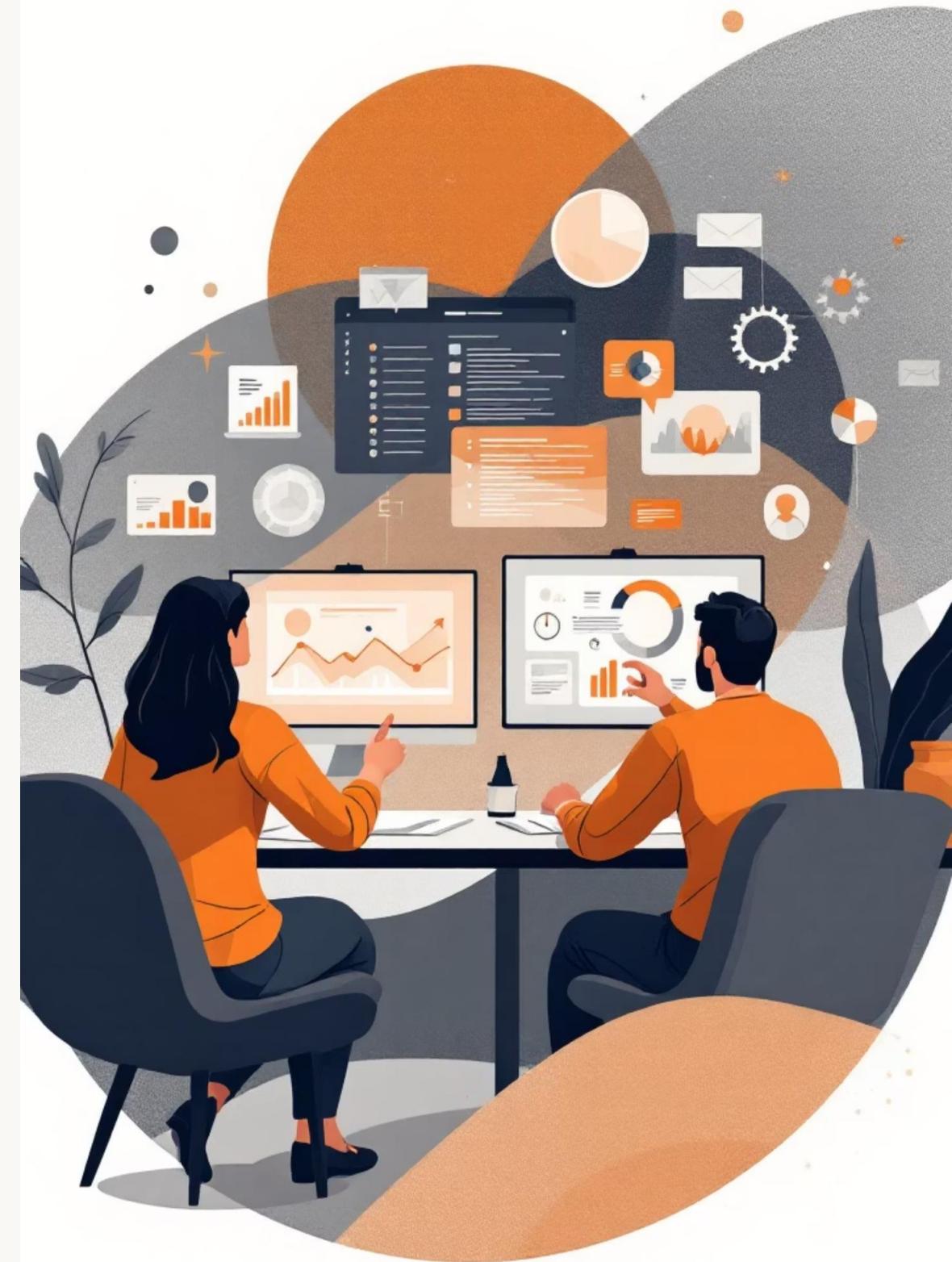
MY EXPERIENCE

**“This is not a story about strategy,
it’s a story about leadership when
certainty disappears.”**

CORE PRINCIPLES

Six Principles of Adaptive Leadership

Guiding your teams through uncharted territory.





1 PRINCIPLE 1

Name the Challenge Correctly

"If you misdiagnose the problem, even brilliant leadership will fail."

Technical problems require to apply expertise, plans and best practices.

Adaptive challenges require a shift in people's identity, mindset, behavior or values. They need **momentum**. Start small experiments that build confidence and shift thinking.

Ask yourself: is the challenge technical or adaptive?



2 PRINCIPLE 2

Walk slowly through the crowd

"Great leaders slow down to understand faster."

Diagnose patterns, not symptoms.

Instead of reacting to every fire, ask: What's creating these fires? What behavior or structure keeps this problem alive?

📄 Ask yourself:

Who speaks?

Who stays silent?

Where is energy and momentum rising or collapsing?

Who is in the room?

What patterns do I notice?



3 PRINCIPLE 3

Be the pace setter

"Your job is not to remove the heat. Your job is to regulate the temperature to make things moving."

Trust is built through consistency and example. You cannot ask people what you are not giving.

Set the rhythm and tone for your team, show vulnerability, communicate openly, and model the behavior you want to see. Your pace becomes their pace.

 **Ask yourself:** am I setting the project's pace?

4 PRINCIPLE 4

Hold the line

"Great leaders refuse the luxury of avoidance."

The moment things get uncomfortable, people try to escape.

Common escape routes:

- Endless meetings
- Blame games
- Avoid meaningful conversations
- Procrastination

In turbulence, people look to you for stability. Give your team a steady anchor in the storm, even when pressure mounts.

📄 Ask yourself:

Am I facing challenges in the same way I would like the project team to do?

What am I avoiding that I can start facing from tomorrow?

5 PRINCIPLE 5

Empower people

"The moment you only give answers, you take away growth."

Leadership is not about control, it is about capacity-building.

Give ownership, not just tasks. Enable decision-making at the right level. When people feel trusted to solve problems, they take initiative, innovate, and deliver beyond expectations.

Ask yourself:

Am I allowing people to grow and take responsibilities?

If I spot a core area where I need to improve this, what can I do to fix the situation from tomorrow?



Build Cultural Awareness

"In multicultural teams, humility and curiosity are stronger than expertise."

Global teams bring diverse communication styles, decision norms, and trust-building rituals.

Create a new shared culture: make your project team curious about other cultures and promote a curious mindset where people feel safe to share their core values and beliefs.

Adapt your approach: Understand how your team prefers to communicate, make decisions, and build relationships. Design rituals that honor cultural differences and create shared understanding.



Understanding Global Project Dynamics

Cultural awareness is critical in global projects. These three key dimensions frequently vary, impacting team dynamics and project outcomes.

Communication Styles

High-context: Implicit, relies on shared understanding, strong relationships.

Low-context: Explicit, direct, relies on verbal agreements and written communication.

Power & Decision-Making

Egalitarian: Open discussion, dissent encouraged, decisions often by consensus.

Hierarchical: Respect for authority, decisions flow from the top, dissent may be indirect.

Conflict & Resolution

Indirect resolution: Avoid public confrontation, use intermediaries, prioritize harmony.

Direct confrontation: Address conflict openly and immediately to move forward.

Strategies for Cross-Cultural Success



The importance of building relationships



Overcoming the language barrier



Do not assume



Promote transparency



Understand a "yes" or silence



Find common tools



Respect time zones



Be visible

Six Principles of Adaptive Leadership

01

Name the Challenge Correctly

Distinguish technical problems from adaptive challenges

02

Walk slowly through the crowd

Step back to see the system and diagnose patterns

03

Be the Pace Setter

Create trust and lead by example

04

Hold the Line

Maintain focus under pressure and protect priorities

05

Empower People

Give ownership, not just tasks

06

Build Cultural Awareness

Understand and adapt to diverse norms and rituals



CALL TO ACTION

Your Turn

Reflect

What assumptions no longer serve your project?

Identify

Which principles of Adaptive Leadership can be used?

Act

How can you empower your team next?

Lead adaptively. Deliver consistently.

Thank You

For further discussion or collaboration, please feel free to reach out:



LinkedIn
Giulia Morello



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