LEADERSHIP INSIGHT #2

From Insight to Impact

What Separates High-Performing Caribbean Leaders?

What if the next leadership gap in the Caribbean is not a shortage of ideas but the ability to recognise the right possibilities early enough and create the momentum to turn them into results?

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The leadership equation

In our previous Leadership Insight, The Leadership Gap, we explored the behavioural differences emerging across the Adaptability and Influence clusters of the Saville Wave Professional Styles framework.[1] Our findings, from assessments of 214 Caribbean leaders, suggested that stronger leadership profiles were distinguished by more than technical competence or experience. The data showed that higher- scoring leaders we profiled had a greater tendency to adapt as circumstances changed and to influence others towards intended outcomes.

However, adapting and influencing are only part of the leadership equation.

$$THINK + ADAPT + INFLUENCE + DELIVER = The\ Leadership\ Equation$$

Leaders must also think and they must deliver. Our assessment data suggests that the greatest differences between leadership profiles occur not simply in how much leaders know but in how they think and what they do with that thinking.

What this paper examines

This second Leadership Insight examines LCI assessment data across the remaining two clusters of the Saville Wave Professional Styles framework, Thought and Delivery.[2] The Thought cluster includes dimensions of leadership competencies such as Analytical, Insightful, Inventive and Strategic. The Delivery cluster includes dimensions such as Activity Oriented, Dynamic, Enterprising and Striving.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Are Caribbean organisations developing leaders who are good at managing what already exists or leaders capable of creating what needs to exist next?

1 Saville Consulting Wave Professional Styles Handbook: Part 1: Overview, Chapter 1: Introduction | Saville Consulting

2 Ibid | Saville Consulting

The Thought Gap: Seeing Possibilities Others Miss

Figure 1 illustrates the difference between the higher- and lower-scoring leadership profiles within the Thought cluster.

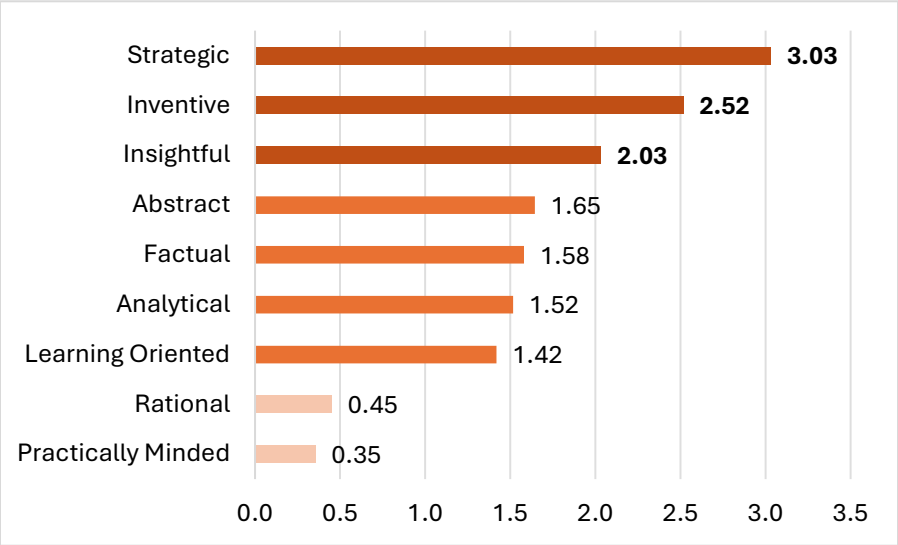


Figure 1. Difference between higher- and lower-scoring profiles across Thought dimensions

The largest differences between the higher- and lower-scoring leadership profiles occurred in:

- Strategic: 3.03
- Inventive: 2.52
- Insightful: 2.03

By comparison, the differences were substantially smaller in:

- Rational: 0.45
- Practically Minded: 0.35

Source: LCI's aggregated leadership assessment data. Values represent the differences in average scores between the two leadership profile groups.

What the pattern suggests

Stronger leadership profiles were not differentiated primarily by being more rational or practical. The greatest differences appeared in their tendency to see patterns, generate possibilities and think strategically.

For Caribbean leaders, this distinction matters. A tourism executive must anticipate changing traveller expectations. A banking leader must navigate innovation alongside increasing regulatory requirements and cyber risk. A utility executive must balance current infrastructure demands with climate resilience and the energy transition.

Today's operational problem may be urgent. Tomorrow's strategic problem may be more consequential.

From foresight to strategic choice

McKinsey & Company's analysis of 'Strategy Champions' reinforces this point. It found that stronger organisations distinguish themselves through capabilities that include identifying important trends, making bold strategic choices and mobilising their organisations to execute those choices.[3]

For Caribbean executives, this distinction is particularly relevant. Our leaders operate within economies that are often small, open and exposed to forces originating far beyond their shores.

The Caribbean Development Bank's Caribbean Economic Review and Outlook 2025-2026 describes a regional environment shaped by geopolitical uncertainty, climate shocks and persistent structural challenges. Growth excluding Guyana slowed to 0.6% in 2025 and the Bank argues that stronger institutional and project-execution capability will be critical to improving the region's longer-term prospects.[4]

A QUESTION FOR BOARDS AND EXECUTIVE TEAMS

If leaders are rewarded primarily for solving today's problems, who in the organisation is being rewarded for anticipating tomorrow's?

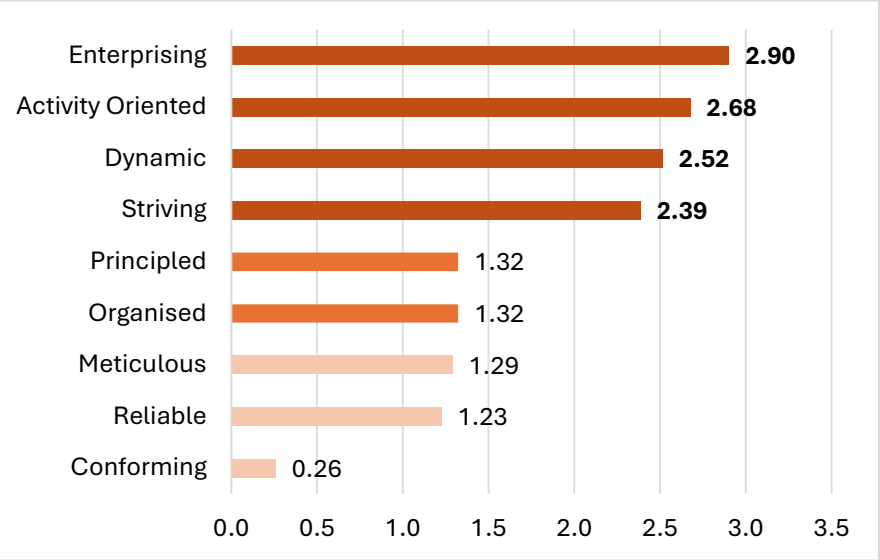
Key considerations

- Create explicit space for strategic sensing, not only operational reporting.
- Assess whether succession and promotion criteria reward foresight, invention and strategic judgement.
- Translate emerging trends into choices, resource shifts and clear accountabilities.
- Pair ambition with mobilisation so that strategic intent becomes organisational movement.
- Build change management capability into everyday leadership practices to mobilise and sustain change.

[3] How Strategy Champions win, from insight to strategy execution | McKinsey
[4] Caribbean Economic Review and Outlook 2025 - 2026 | Caribbean Development Bank

The Delivery Gap: Creating Momentum

Strategic thinking may not be enough. The Delivery cluster reveals an equally telling story.



The largest differences between the two leadership profile groups occurred in:

- Enterprising: 2.90
- Activity Oriented: 2.68
- Dynamic: 2.52
- Striving: 2.39

The differences were considerably smaller in:

- Meticulous: 1.29
- Reliable: 1.23
- Conforming: 0.26

Source: LCI's aggregated leadership assessment data. Values represent the differences in average scores between the two leadership profile groups.

Figure 2. Difference between higher- and lower-scoring profiles across Delivery Dimensions

Dependability is necessary but not sufficient

Most organisations value reliability. They need leaders who pay attention to detail, respect standards and deliver what they promise. Particularly in regulated sectors, these qualities remain essential. However, that is not what most strongly separated the profiles in our dataset.

The greater differences appeared around being enterprising, activity oriented, dynamic and striving.

Turning support for transformation into movement

The behaviours that make someone dependable may not be the same behaviours that most distinguish leaders when organisations need to move, grow or transform.

PwC's Caribbean Digital Readiness Survey 2024 found that just 25% of respondents strongly believed their organisation encouraged digital innovation and adaptability and only 42% thought their digital transformation was proceeding quickly enough. More than one-third saw digital disruption as a threat to their survival.[5]

The same survey found that 68% regarded their CEO as a champion of digital transformation, yet only 59% believed leadership was sufficiently digitally savvy and helping the workforce to think in new ways.[6] Against this backdrop, the rise of AI adds another layer of complexity and places even greater demands on leaders already struggling to keep pace with digital change.

This gap between supporting transformation in principle and creating the conditions for transformation in practice deserves attention. It is relatively easy to endorse innovation. It is harder to challenge an entrenched process, redirect scarce resources, stop something that has historically worked, make a decision with incomplete information and create enough organisational momentum for something new to take hold.

That is where delivery becomes leadership.

What organisations can examine

- Where do approvals, incentives or governance processes unintentionally slow action?
- Are leaders empowered to redirect people, budget and attention when priorities change?
- Does the culture reward disciplined experimentation or only error-free execution?
- Are transformation leaders selected for energy and enterprise as well as reliability?

[5] Caribbean Digital Readiness Survey 2024 | PwC
[6] Ibid | PwC

Where Thought Meets Delivery

Perhaps the most significant leadership insight appears when Thought and Delivery are considered together. A leader can be strategic, insightful and inventive but fail to convert ideas into meaningful outcomes. Equally, a highly driven and action-oriented leader can move quickly in the wrong direction.

THINKING	DELIVERY	IMPACT
Creates possibility	Creates momentum	Requires both

Thinking without delivery creates possibility without impact.

Delivery without thinking creates activity without direction.

Recent strategy research from McKinsey & Company found that a particularly important distinction between stronger and weaker strategy performers lies in mobilisation: the bridge between designing strategy and making it happen.[7]

Great leadership is not simply the ability to see further. It is the ability to move people, resources and attention towards what you see.

The Caribbean leadership challenge

Caribbean leaders operate in environments shaped by economic vulnerability, technological disruption, climate pressures, changing workforce expectations and increasing global uncertainty. The Caribbean Development Bank's 2026-2035 strategy places resilience, stronger institutions, private-sector development and transformation at the centre of the region's future.[8]

The leadership challenge is therefore not simply to execute today's agenda. It is to deliver today while simultaneously creating tomorrow.

[7] How Strategy Champions win, from insight to strategy execution | McKinsey
[8] Caribbean Economic Review and Outlook 2025 - 2026 | Caribbean Development Bank

From Insight to Impact

Taken together with LCI's previous analysis of Adaptability and Influence, the emerging message is clear. Tomorrow's leaders will need to:

- **Think** beyond the immediate.
- **Adapt** as circumstances change.
- **Influence** people towards a common purpose.
- **Deliver** with pace, enterprise and discipline.

None is sufficient alone. Together, these capabilities form a more complete picture of the leadership required to navigate complexity and create sustainable organisational performance.

THE FINAL QUESTION

If tomorrow's organisation requires different leadership from today's, are we developing those leaders now or waiting until we need them?

The leadership equation

$$THINK + ADAPT + INFLUENCE + DELIVER$$

Stay tuned as we expound on this in another Leadership Insight Report

References and Notes

References

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Notes

Method note

The analysis compares average assessment scores across two LCI leadership profile groups. The values shown are differences between group averages and should be interpreted as descriptive patterns within the dataset, not as causal findings or universal norms. Individual assessment results should always be interpreted in context and alongside other evidence.

Understanding the scores: Respondents were grouped by their average assessment scores, with the top 15% forming the higher-scoring group and the bottom 15% forming the lower-scoring group. The figures shown represent the difference between the groups' average scores for each dimension. Larger figures indicate greater differences between the groups, while smaller figures show where their scores were more similar.

About LCI Consulting

LCI Consulting helps organisations across the Caribbean strengthen leadership, talent and strategic capability, effectively manage change and drive stronger organisational performance. Through our expertise in Talent Management, Change & Transformation and Human Resource Services, we work

with organisations to strengthen leadership capability, develop talent, navigate organisational change and build the people and organisational foundations needed for sustainable growth.

This Leadership Insight is intended to stimulate evidence-based discussion about the behaviours required to lead through complexity, transformation and growth.