GCG

Global Coach Group
Lead for Good

Still Managing Stakeholders?
It's Time to Lead Them Instead



www.globalcoachgroup.com

Introduction:
From Insight to Impact

Leadership today isn't about having the right answers — it's about having the right interactions. As organizations grow more interconnected, the pressure on leaders has never been higher: they must move fast, align diverse stakeholders, and lead through change while maintaining trust. And that means one thing:

Stakeholder leadership is a behavioral skillset, not just a strategic mindset.

It's no longer enough for leaders to be visionaries. They must excel as collaborators, connectors and communicators. Based on decades of coaching over 100,000 leaders and backed by GLA360* feedback data from 19,000+ leadership assessments, we've identified the three essential behavioral skills that define effective leadership in this new reality:

- **Cocreation over Control** – How to move from driving direction to sharing ownership with those impacted by change.
- **Proactive Stakeholder Alignment** – Why early, intentional alignment prevents resistance and builds continuous momentum.
- **Strategic Feedforward Loops** – How transparent, future-focused feedback systems deepen trust and accelerate results.

These aren't just new ideas—they're proven and measurable skills leaders are choosing to develop through coaching. And when these behaviors are reinforced through structured coaching systems and input from coworkers, they result in a **Triple Win: better leaders, better teams, better results,** with a 95% success rate confirmed by coworkers.

Keep reading to discover how you can apply these skills to your own leadership journey—and create a measurable impact for **yourself, your team, and your stakeholders.**



* The GLA360 (Global Leadership Assessment) by Global Coach Group is a 360-degree assessment cocreated by multinationals for multinationals. Based on research with Fortune 500 CEOs and global executives in 100+ countries, it measures the 15 most critical competencies for today's leaders in internationalizing business environments. Learn more at https://globalcoachgroup.com/gla360/

01
Cocreation over Control

The traditional image of leadership — commanding from the top, directing from a distance — is breaking down. Today's reality demands something far more participatory.

Stakeholders no longer accept being passive recipients of decisions handed to them. They expect to be part of the conversation, especially when the outcomes affect their work, their teams, and their success. And when they are invited in early, something powerful happens: commitment replaces compliance.

This is the essence of cocreation. It's not about watering down decisions or striving for consensus. It's about inviting the right voices into the conversation at the right time, so they can help shape better, more resilient outcomes. Cocreation changes the question from "What do I need people to do?" to "What do we need to solve — and how do we solve it together?"

Our coaching results and GLA360 data show that while cocreation is critical, it's also a common development area:

- Leaders are perceived as above average in their willingness to share leadership with business partners, scoring at **the 58th percentile.**
- However, they tend to fall short in creating environments where people prioritize shared success, with a score of just **the 48th percentile.**
- Similarly, their ability to involve others in decision-making ranks lower, **at the 47th percentile.**

These figures show how deeply embedded control still is. But they also point to opportunity. Because in over 100,000 coaching journeys, we see a clear pattern: leaders are deliberately choosing to improve in cocreation-related behaviors.

They're focusing on:

- Engaging stakeholders in decision-making.
- Building stakeholder coalitions across teams.
- Creating cross-functional collaboration frameworks.



Coaching makes this shift real. It creates a structured environment for leaders to challenge their assumptions, build new behaviors, and create the confidence to lead with — not just over — their coworkers.

And when they do, they lay the groundwork for everything that follows. Because cocreation isn't just a better way to work — it's the foundation for alignment, trust, and sustained change.

02
Proactive Stakeholder Alignment

Once leaders begin cocreating with their stakeholders, a new challenge emerges: how to align those stakeholders early, often, and intentionally.

Many leadership failures can be traced back not to bad ideas — but to good ideas launched without adequate buy-in. Without early engagement, stakeholders resist, delay, or quietly disengage. Momentum stalls. Trust erodes. Results suffer.

Proactive alignment solves this. It means anticipating the perspectives and needs of key stakeholders *well before* decisions are finalized. It means identifying who will be impacted, who holds influence, and who needs clarity — and then engaging them in time to build real commitment.

GLA360 data shows that this capability is still underdeveloped across most leadership populations:

- Leaders score below average in building strong internal partnerships, landing at **the 46th percentile.**
- They perform slightly above average in creating and communicating a clear, shared vision, with a score at **the 52nd percentile.**
- And they fall just below average in inspiring others to commit to that vision, at **the 49th percentile.**

Leaders recognize this is a gap. And in coaching, they're taking steps to close it by working on behaviors such as:

✓ **Proactively involve stakeholders** to build alignment in complex or dynamic environments

✓ **Clarifying decisions and expectations early** to reduce surprises and ensure commitment

✓ **Use data-driven insights** to influence key stakeholders and build collective momentum.

These aren't one-off tasks — they're learned skills. And when embedded into the leader's daily rhythm, they prevent costly misalignment and create the conditions for change to succeed.

Proactive alignment builds on cocreation. Once leaders begin sharing ownership, they must also learn how to sequence involvement. Who needs to know what, and when? Who should be at the table — and why? Coaching helps leaders answer those questions in real time, inside real challenges.

The result? **Fewer missteps. Faster execution. Stronger trust.** And a leadership style that's not only strategic — but deeply human.



03 Strategic Feedforward Loops

Even when alignment is strong at the start, it can fade. Priorities shift. Resistance resurfaces. People get busy. That's why the third critical behavior — **strategic feedforward loops** — is essential.

Traditional feedback systems often focus on the past: what went wrong, what to fix. But effective stakeholder leadership focuses forward. It uses real-time insight to reinforce alignment, address tension, and adjust direction.

Feedforward loops close the communication cycle. They say: "We asked. We listened. Here's what we're doing."

GLA360 data reveals just how challenging this area is for most leaders:

- Leaders score just below average in their ability to genuinely listen to others, landing at the **49th percentile.**
- When it comes to being open to constructive feedback, the average leader scores even lower — at the **48th percentile.**
- And perhaps most tellingly, leaders score only in the **42nd percentile** for actively asking others what can be done to improve — a clear sign that many are hesitant to engage others in suggestions for change.



It's not that leaders don't care — it's that they haven't built good habits. But coaching gives them the structure to improve. And most leaders who want to improve strategic feedforward loops are choosing to develop behaviors like:

- Regular pulse check-ins with stakeholders
- Transparent progress updates that reflect stakeholder input
- Feedback dashboards to track improvement and next steps

With coaching support, these loops become more than tools — they become leadership rituals. And with the help of digital platforms, they scale effortlessly, creating a living feedback ecosystem that keeps everyone engaged.

Feedforward loops complete the stakeholder leadership system. Cocreation sets the foundation. Alignment ensures shared momentum. And feedforward ensures that momentum is sustained, adjusted, and reinforced.

The Triple Win: Where Stakeholder Leadership Becomes Measurable

When these three capabilities come together, leaders don't just feel more effective — they become more effective. And their coworkers notice.

Across tens of thousands of coaching engagements, we've seen a consistent pattern: when leaders focus on cocreation, alignment, and feedforward — and get real coaching support to build those habits — their impact becomes measurable.

This is a Triple Win:

01

Better Leaders who engage, adapt, and grow with their stakeholders

02

Better Teams that collaborate, align, and execute with clarity and accountability

03

Better Results validated not by opinion, but by coworker perception and performance data



Stakeholder leadership is not a soft skill. It's a performance multiplier.

And with the right coaching systems, coworker involvement, and technology to support it, this new standard of leadership is not just possible. It's already here.

> *The future of leadership is shared.*
> *The future of leadership is measurable.*
> *The future of leadership is cocreated.*

For Clients



We Deliver a Triple Win

Better Leaders, Better Teams, and Better Results — boasting a 95% success rate confirmed by coworkers, based on more than 100,000+ leaders coached.

Global Coach Group delivers the best results-based coaching worldwide through our network of over 4,000 world-class certified coaches, powered by our proven Triple Win Leadership Coaching approach and proprietary digital tools.

Triple Win Leadership Coaching, captured in Everybody Wins by Will Linssen — Amazon #1 International Bestselling Author.

Author



Will Linssen

Will Linssen has been ranked World's #1 Leadership Coach by Global Gurus (USA) and World's #1 Coach Trainer by Thinkers50 (UK), serves as advisor to the Harvard Business Review, and is recognized as a LinkedIn Top Executive Coaching Voice. He is an Amazon #1 International Bestselling Author. With more than 30 years of experience in executive leadership across Europe, North America, and Asia, Will holds the International Coaching Federation's highest accreditation: Master Certified Coach.

He is the founder and CEO of Global Coach Group, the world's #1 international leadership coaching network, with over 4,000 coaches worldwide serving Fortune 500 companies and leading multinational corporations.