

ADAPTING TO 'PERPETUAL MOTION'

In this Q&A, Adolfo Gomez Sanchez, CEO of Gold Results, speaks about leadership, adaptability, AI, performance and the capabilities that will define successful organisations in the years ahead

Business leaders have always faced disruption. What feels different today is the pace, scale and frequency of change. From AI and workforce transformation to geopolitical uncertainty and shifting customer expectations, organisations are navigating multiple forms of disruption at once.

A recent Financial Times article described this environment as one of “perpetual motion”, where leaders must adapt to continual change rather than occasional periods of turbulence. Success increasingly depends on an organisation’s ability to learn, evolve and perform in uncertain conditions.

Adolfo Gomez Sanchez believes organisations need to rethink not only how they manage change, but how they build cultures capable of thriving through it.

Q1: Some business leaders describe their environment as one of “perpetual motion” and continual disruption. Does that resonate with your own experience as a CEO, and how has your approach to leadership evolved as a result?

A: Absolutely. In fact, I would argue that the defining characteristic of modern business is not simply change, but the accelerating pace of change.

Markets have always evolved. Competitors have always emerged. New technologies have always disrupted established ways of working. What feels different today is how many forms of disruption are happening simultaneously and how quickly they are reshaping the landscape around us.

Artificial intelligence is the most obvious example, but it is far from the only one. Geopolitical shifts, changing trade relationships, supply chain volatility and economic uncertainty are all forcing leaders to re-evaluate assumptions that may have remained stable for decades.

The challenge is that human beings are wired for stability. When uncertainty increases and our sense of control diminishes, anxiety rises.

Teams look to leaders in the same way families look to parents or tribes look to elders. They want confidence, perspective and reassurance. Leaders do not need to have every answer. They do need the ability to remain



grounded when others are anxious and create conditions for people to move forward despite uncertainty.

Q2: Another theme dominating leadership conversations is that change is no longer about implementing new tools but transforming behaviours. Why do organisations often focus on technology before people, and what are the consequences of getting that balance wrong?

A: Technology is seductive because it promises immediate results. Whether it is improving profitability, learning a new skill or adopting AI, there is a tendency to look for a silver bullet.

The reality is that organisations are built around people. An idea alone has very little value unless there are people capable of consistently and effectively executing at world-class level.

We have seen this pattern repeatedly. Years ago, it was ERP systems. Then it was blockchain. Then the Internet of Things. Now it is AI. The question leaders should be asking is not how technology can replace teams. It is how technology can support teams and amplify their strengths.

Q3: The rapid rise of AI is forcing many organisations to rethink how work gets done. Beyond the technology itself, what do you believe is the biggest leadership challenge AI creates?

A: One of the biggest mistakes organisations make is treating AI as a technology project rather than a leadership challenge.

The first issue is designing the right relationship between humans and AI. Every organisation has unique strengths, capabilities and ways of creating value. The optimal balance between human judgement, AI

automation and human-AI collaboration will differ from one organisation to another and one function or use case to another.

The second challenge is that AI often exposes weaknesses that already exist. The third challenge is wellbeing and adaptation. Every major change initiative creates uncertainty. Employees naturally wonder what technology means for their role, their future and their value to the organisation.

Leaders who ignore those concerns create resistance, doubt, and allow fear to grow amid the silence. Leaders who address them openly create trust.

Q4: Has the time come for leaders to move from a commanding style to an enabling one? If so, what does an enabling leader look like in practice, and why is this shift becoming more important?

A: I would argue that this shift is long overdue. One of the biggest misconceptions in leadership is the belief that a small group of senior executives can genuinely control large organisations. The reality is that control is often an illusion.

I once heard budgeting expert Bjarte Bogsnes explain this brilliantly through the analogy of traffic lights and roundabouts. Traffic lights represent command-and-control leadership. A central authority decides when everyone moves and stops, based on historical data. A roundabout works differently. Everyone understands the rules, adapts in real time and manages themselves within a shared framework.

The roundabout is more efficient because people closest to the situation can make decisions quickly. An enabling leader understands this.

The best leaders will combine ambition with patience. They will understand that meaningful progress takes practice, experimentation, and resilience

This also requires authenticity. Many organisations claim that trust is one of their core values, yet their systems, processes and policies suggest otherwise. If every decision requires approval, every expense is scrutinised and every action is tightly monitored, employees quickly recognise the gap between stated values and actual behavior.

Q5: Recent research suggests that empathy, compassion and kindness are becoming critical leadership skills during periods of uncertainty. Have these qualities become more valuable in the modern workplace, and if so, why?

A: Without question. These qualities are often described as soft skills, but that phrase does them a disservice. They are performance skills.

Empathy, compassion and kindness build trust. They create psychological safety, which is essential when organisations are trying to adapt. If people do not feel safe asking questions, admitting mistakes or expressing uncertainty, they will hide problems. Those problems do not disappear. They come back later, often at a much greater cost.

This matters even more in a period of continual change. When uncertainty is high, people need to feel heard, understood and included. That does not mean leaders should avoid difficult decisions. It means they should create an environment where people can engage honestly with those decisions.

Innovation depends on experimentation, and people are only willing to take those risks in environments that are psychological safety.

Q6: Many organisations are facing several forms of disruption simultaneously, from economic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions to AI and workforce transformation. How can leaders prioritise when everything feels urgent?

A: It starts with clarity of identity. Organisations need to understand what makes them unique, where they create the most value and what they should not be doing.

This is especially important when every trend feels urgent. AI is a good example. Many CEOs are under pressure from boards, investors or shareholders to act quickly, but if you ask why AI is important to that specific organisation, the answer is often unclear. The fear is simply being left behind. That is not strategy.

Leaders need to identify the few areas that will have a disproportionate impact on the business. They also need the discipline to stop activities that no longer support the mission.



In uncertain environments, focus becomes a competitive advantage. Leaders who are grounded, able to self-regulate and clear about the organisation's identity can help teams avoid panic and distraction.

Achieving success

Q7: Is it true that the most successful companies neither resist disruption nor simply imitate competitors? What separates organisations that adapt successfully from those that struggle?

A: The organisations that adapt successfully do not simply copy competitors or blindly resist disruption. They start with a clear understanding of who they are.

That clarity helps them decide which changes matter and which do not. Not every trend deserves attention. Not every technology deserves investment. The best organisations know their areas of maximum impact.

They are also willing to experiment. Leaders do not need to be right all the time. They need to create controlled, thoughtful experiments that help the organisation discover what works.

Progress is rarely linear. Most success stories involve testing, failure and adaptation. The danger is believing you can stay exactly where you are while the world changes around you. That is often far riskier than experimentation.

Q8: One expert argues that leaders must focus on building adaptive organisations rather than trying to control every outcome. What practical steps can businesses take to become more adaptable?

A: Many organisations still operate with models designed for the industrial era which work well when the environment is stable. They struggle when the environment is unpredictable.

This is why I distinguish between operational performance and adaptive performance. Operational performance is about efficiency, consistency and measurable output. Those things matter, but they are not enough. Adaptive performance is about creativity, problem-solving, resilience and the ability to respond when conditions change.

The challenge is that adaptive performance is harder to measure in the short term, so many organisations neglect it. They talk about culture, innovation and agility, but they do not develop the skills or systems that make those things real.

Practical steps include redefining failure as practice, giving people more autonomy to shape their work and creating regular opportunities for experimentation with feedback.

Culture is the nervous system of the organisation. It shapes how people respond under pressure. If people are punished for ideas that do not work, they stop offering ideas. If they are trusted and supported, they learn faster.

Q9: Is it possible to sustain the energy needed to lead during continual change? How can leaders avoid burning out while still providing confidence and direction for their teams?

A: Yes, but only if we rethink what high performance means. In business, high performance is often misunderstood as more hours, more pressure and more intensity.

Elite sport offers a better model. Athletes do not train at maximum intensity every day. Improvement comes through cycles of stress, recovery, adaptation and refinement. Businesses often ignore this completely.

I use the Performance Triangle to explain this: work, nutrition and rest. When one element dominates and the others are neglected, performance deteriorates.

This is especially important in a world of continual change because adaptation requires energy. Human beings are wired for stability, so working outside our comfort zone is cognitively demanding. Burnout is not the unavoidable cost of ambition. It is often the result of poorly designed performance systems. Recovery is not the opposite of performance. It is part of performance.

Q10: Looking ahead, do you believe the pace of change will continue to accelerate? If so, what capabilities will distinguish successful organisations and leaders over the next five years?

A: The pace of change will continue to accelerate. I do not believe leaders can wait for stability to return. The organisations that thrive will be those that build the capacity to perform during times of uncertainty. That will require highly developed adaptive skills, strong leadership presence and a deeper understanding of how humans learn, improve and grow. Also, if you understand how people respond to stress, uncertainty, feedback and recovery, you can design better organisations.

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