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## Leading in positive

Ángeles Delgado

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# “Technology does not define the world, people do”



## Ángeles Delgado | Chairperson of Fujitsu.

Ángeles Delgado (Seville, 1962), a graduate in Economics from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, is the Chairperson of Fujitsu Spain, Portugal and Latin America. A pioneer in Spain in the management and administration of strategies at technology companies, before joining Fujitsu she worked for companies such as Bull, Digital Compaq and Steria. Ángeles actively participates in various business organisations. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Círculo de Empresarios, patron of the CEDE Foundation and of CEAPI (Alliance for Latin America Business Council) and patron of the Juan XXIII Foundation; she is also a member of the Professional Council of ESADE, a member of the Advisory Council of the Board of Trustees of Universidad San Pablo CEU and cooperates actively with the world of academia. We talked with her about the keys to leadership and the role of technology in facing the challenges of an environment as volatile as the current one.

### What does leadership mean to you?

Leadership is the ability to align an organisation with a common project. This project must be beneficial for all the company's stakeholders: i.e., its customers, employees, etc., and for society in general. Therefore, one of the characteristics of leadership is precisely having that vision and the ability to transmit it, generating confidence in the organisation and aligning all of the company's talent with that common objective that everyone must perceive as being positive. For me, that is the best definition of leadership.

### What values should a good leader have?

A good leader must always be able to define a project with a mix of realism and positivity. I think that what you have to convey to the organisation is a project for the future, a positive project. That doesn't mean it shouldn't be realistic, we shouldn't confuse positivity with optimism. This is essential for understanding the

## “Companies must be connected with society's global aims”

company's activity and its characteristics. It is very important to understand the company. On many occasions people fail because they try to apply what is done in one organisation to another organisation; that is why we need to know each of our companies very well. A good leader must have that kind of vision, and must inspire confidence; this is related to authenticity, leaders must be great communicators and be collaborative.

**Talking of companies, how have you adapted to the Japanese way of working and Japanese culture?**

Japanese culture is very person-centric, so it is very reassuring to work at a Japanese company. They focus their attention on people and base their behaviour on respect for people. For example, in the crisis caused by covid-19, Japanese companies took enormous care of their people and their families, and all those of us who work at Fujitsu have felt looked after. Other characteristics of the Japanese are their attention to detail and their exquisite treatment of others; all this makes you feel very comfortable. Japanese culture is a culture of highly committed people, who keep their word and are reliable, and that is something that coincides with my personal values. I think it is very difficult to work for a company long term if there is no connection between your own personal values and those of the organisation you work for. When there is a conflict in this regard, it is not usually manageable. In the case of Fujitsu, the company's values and mine are exactly the same.

**Your company is a pioneer in using disruptive technologies that contribute considerable value to society. What contribution are these technologies making in the current pandemic?**

One of the things that we have corroborated during the pandemic is that technology has been fundamental. Technology has connected us, it has enabled us to keep operating, helped us to educate our children, kept us entertained; I believe that technology has played an absolutely vital role and it has been seen to be at the centre of our lives, both our private lives and our professional lives.

Returning to the values we talked about before, one of Fujitsu's principles is its commitment to society, and I think it has been reflected in this case. I can

“A good leader must know their company well and inspire confidence”

give you several examples of what we have done at worldwide level. One is that we made 40,000 patents available to scientists and researchers absolutely free. We also gave them use of the fastest computer in the world, the Fugaku. Moreover, we worked together with radiographers to develop a system of artificial intelligence to enable the presence of covid-19 to be detected using chest CT scans. I feel very proud of all these actions implemented by Fujitsu.

We have done some very interesting things in Spain too. Since we are closely related with the provision of healthcare services, managing 40% of the Spanish public healthcare system's computer systems, we were able to get all the computer systems at the IFEMA hospital up and running in a weekend and to transfer 40,000 doctors and nurses in the Catalan healthcare system to the cloud so that they could access all the apps, in just two days. We also rolled out a programme called “Fujitsu with society” in which we created CVs of digital competencies aimed at enhancing the employability of people whose jobs are affected during this crisis situation. This programme is up and running and is open to everyone. In addition, we have created a lovely app called iBarrio that connects small businesses with the people living in the neighbourhood. A lot of the volunteers in the COVIDWarriors network are developers who have contributed solutions to attack the crisis from different angles. The fact is that we are very proud of the contribution that Fujitsu is making. Another well-known programme is that involving the production of respirators at our Málaga factory, which is normally used for automotive products and ATMs.

“We have all had purpose as a generation, but no purpose has been as relevant and as transcendental as the one the current generation has, which is to design a new world”

### What sort of training capabilities should leaders develop?

This crisis has brought forward many things and shown up as many others. One of those things is indeed training, and the capabilities leaders must have in this regard. In my opinion, the purpose of this training must be to complement the knowledge we already have.

One very interesting point is that the traditional characteristics of leadership have been very valuable in addressing this crisis at companies. We are talking about the ability to communicate, take decisions, manage risks and anticipate events. These basic management concepts have been very important. At the same time, it has become apparent that we need to acquire new capabilities and skills very quickly. Also, these capabilities and skills must be applied without distinguishing between the executive and the person, because what is really needed is a combination of professional and personal characteristics. Certain aspects are obviously more technical and the fact is that today any job is digital. In any company we must have a digital legal department, a digital CFO, a digital marketing manager, etc. We also need to learn to manage things differently in a much more complex and uncertain environment, to assume that it is more useful to ask good questions than to think that we have got all the answers, to correct things as we go along.

All these skills and that type of management are absolutely essential nowadays. All aspects of cooperation are also very important, as they enable organisations to be fluid and dynamic; this is something that is really going to show the difference between some companies and others. The ability to create fluid multidisciplinary teams for specific projects. This is something that, perhaps because of the more traditional characteristics of management, we find difficult. In this regard, there is a very important connection, which is that relating to the individual. That is, if a modern leader wants to be good for their organisation and manage it in a time of such complexity and uncertainty, they must feel good about themselves. Therefore, looking after your health, having a good work/life balance, being a balanced person and knowing how to manage your emotions play a vital role in enabling you to exercise leadership, both in the current situation and in the digital world to come, and which will arrive sooner as a result of covid-19. The concept of the person as a whole seems fundamental to me.

Consequently, now more than ever we must be aware of our values in everything we do, in the same way that digitisation and technologies must take them into account. For example, we have an explainable concept of artificial intelligence that complements the individual and allows people the freedom to decide; we know the processes that the algorithm carries out. I believe that this humanism must be included in digitisation and therefore it is very important for leaders to have profound, deep-rooted values.

“The way in which companies are reinventing themselves shows the talent that needs to be highlighted in this country and should serve as the basis for reconstruction”

### If you had to give advice to medium-sized companies that are struggling to adapt to the current situation on how to overcome it, what would it be?

Giving advice is always difficult. In principle, the first thing to do would be to congratulate these companies, because I think that the example Spanish companies of all sizes are setting is truly a masterclass in overcoming adversity. The way in which companies are reinventing themselves, reimagining the way they do business and looking for different ways of doing things shows the talent that needs to be highlighted in this country and should serve as the basis for reconstruction.

This is the time when companies reconsider or think about their purpose, because this crisis has shown us that, in a globalised world, things that happen in one part of the planet affect us all, and, therefore, companies have to be connected with society's global aims. Knowing how my company's objectives are connected with society's global aims and that my *raison d'être* is not only the income statement, but also the development of my employees and the impact I have on my environment.

I would advise them to follow that process of reflection. Digitisation and innovation arose as a result of that process of reflection. Reflecting on our purpose and the role we are playing as a company define a strategy, and digitisation and innovation must be inspired by that strategy. In fact, here at Fujitsu we envisage that the covid-19 crisis will bring forward digitisation and innovation and that perspectives will also change, thus giving rise to a more solid connection between strategies and their purposes.

Furthermore, as the leader of a technology company, I would offer medium-sized companies three pieces of advice for digitisation. The first would be to get the basics in order, because we have seen that not everybody did. It is not just a matter of having laptops, you also need networks, communications, contingency systems, procedures, etc. A scant 30% of Spanish companies are in the cloud. The second would be to get the data in order. We have to take decisions based on data and we are seeing that there is a great deal of work to be done in this regard: the dispersion of the data, the quality of the data; all this means we have not got the data to help us make good decisions. When you have controlled these steps, you must digitise the central purpose of your business. Thirdly, for digitisation to be complete, you have to generate ecosystems. In digitisation it is essential to create ecosystems throughout an industry or around a type of customer. Let's take tourism as an example. We can create a unique customer experience, in this case for a tourist, by generating ecosystems among the many agents involved in the tourism industry, be it transport, hotels, leisure activities or culture. All this cooperation and creation of ecosystems is vital in the digital world, providing we have digitised our own business and it is built on solid foundations.

“Leadership is the ability to align an organisation with a common project”

**Let's finish talking about young people. In an environment like the current one, what message would you give to a young person who had just finished their academic preparation and was about to enter the labour market?**

Young people are one of the groups that are suffering most because they also suffered the previous crisis and now entering the labour market is more difficult in the current situation, but they are young, they've got their whole lives ahead of them and a project waiting for them. Young people have a purpose as a generation, so I would advise them to seek out that purpose and the mission of their generation. Looking back, other generations started presenting Spain to the world, or industrialising this country, mine accompanied companies as they expanded into Latin America, those of us who worked in the technology industry also saw Spain's first large technological projects, etc. In the end, irrespective of the industry we have been working in, I think we have had purpose as a generation, but no purpose has been as relevant and as transcendental as the one the current generation has, which is none other than the capability to design a new world, a new order. It's a wonderful project that all young people should join and contribute to, because they are the people who are going to define it. Technology is a medium, so it is not technology that will define the world, it is people. Asking us what we want to do with that technology has given us enormous power to change the world, to create more wealth and wellbeing and to have a more inclusive society, but somebody has to put themselves at the head of that process, and that is the current generation's responsibility

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