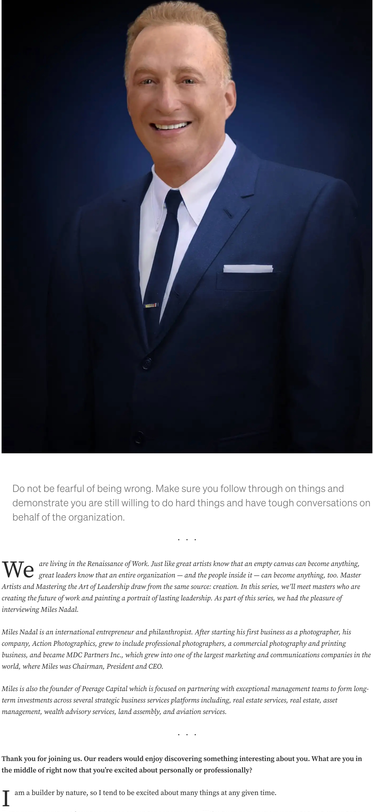
Published in Authority Magazine

Karen Mangia
Jan 16 · 7 min read · Listen

The New Portrait Of Leadership: Miles Nadal Of Peerage Capital On Strategies to Shape Yourself Into A Modern Masterpiece

An Interview with Karen Mangia



Do not be fearful of being wrong. Make sure you follow through on things and demonstrate you are still willing to do hard things and have tough conversations on behalf of the organization.

. . .

We are living in the Renaissance of Work. Just like great artists know that an empty canvas can become anything, great leaders know that an entire organization — and the people inside it — can become anything, too. Master Artists and Mastering the Art of Leadership draw from the same source: creation. In this series, we'll meet masters who are creating the future of work and painting a portrait of lasting leadership. As part of this series, we had the pleasure of interviewing Miles Nadal.

Miles Nadal is an international entrepreneur and philanthropist. After starting his first business as a photographer, his company, Action Photographics, grew to include professional photographers, a commercial photography and printing business, and became MDC Partners Inc., which grew into one of the largest marketing and communications companies in the world, where Miles was Chairman, President and CEO.

Miles is also the founder of Peerage Capital which is focused on partnering with exceptional management teams to form long-term investments across several strategic business services platforms including, real estate services, real estate, asset management, wealth advisory services, land assembly, and aviation services.

. . .

Thank you for joining us. Our readers would enjoy discovering something interesting about you. What are you in the middle of right now that you're excited about personally or professionally?

I am a builder by nature, so I tend to be excited about many things at any given time.

Right now, a number of our businesses are under construction. We're busy getting them upgraded and expanded to position them for even greater success as the economic cycle turns. We've got a clear idea of where we want to be and how we are going to get there — which is very exciting.

On the philanthropic side, we've just finalized the creation of the Dare to Dream Foundation. My focus is always on the intersection of entrepreneurism and community support, and I am excited to get this initiative up and running.

We all get by with a little help from our friends. Who is the leader that has influenced you the most, and how?

I've been fortunate enough to be inspired by so many remarkable people. I don't have a lot of formal education, but I've been a student of success my whole life.

Of all those I follow and admire Warren Buffet is very special in my eyes. He is thoughtful about the lessons for life — not just business. My favorite quote of his speaks to inspiring the love and loyalty from others that protects you in extreme adversity.

Referring to a friend who had survived the Holocaust, he reflected that true friendship is someone who would "hide you." That is an extreme and tragic example, but to a lesser degree, it applies on so many levels and in so many situations.

Another leader I admire is Howard Schultz. He came from a humble background and completely changed not just a category of business, but the way we connect and socialize. He's been smart, family-minded, and philanthropic — the trifecta.

Sometimes our biggest mistakes lead to our biggest discoveries. What's the biggest mistake you've made as a leader, and what did you discover as a result?

I have made so many over my career, I really can't choose a single, favorite mistake.

That said, there have been many times when a transaction failed the first time but worked out the second or third time. From that, I have learned the value of persistence. I am a huge believer that you should never, ever give up. Giving up is always the ultimate mistake.

How has your definition of leadership changed or evolved over time? What does it mean to be a leader now?

I have come to understand the importance of tempering my leadership with greater kindness and humanity. As a leader, it's not what you say or do, it's how you make people feel that they remember.

It's always more rewarding to lead people who are engaged and motivated, who trust you and are loyal to you. Overall, that's how you build a sustainable organization, exceptional results, and a great place to work.

Success is as often as much about what we stop as what we start. What is one legacy leadership behavior you stopped because you discovered it was no longer valuable or relevant?

Entrepreneurs cannot be troubled by self-doubt, but that means they tend to be micromanagers and "second-guessers." They are hyper-focused on their vision and their way of doing things and that can drive away talent if it's not harnessed properly.

As your company grows, you can't be up in everything without causing real problems. Over time, I have learned to empower others and to support them in the ways they want to move the company and the team forward.

It's not always easy but it's an essential discipline. No one wants to work for someone who is always over-ruling them and disrupting the implementation of professional process.

What is one lasting leadership behavior you started or are cultivating because you believe it is valuable or relevant?

The most valuable thing I can do as a founder is to develop the next generation of leaders. I am genuinely delighted to celebrate others and their successes. When they shine, we all shine — and I truly mean that!

What advice would you offer to other leaders who are stuck in past playbooks and patterns and may be having a hard time letting go of what made them successful in the past?

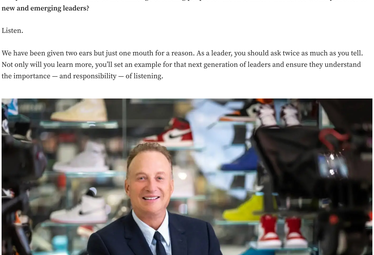
Give honest consideration to what you want your organization to look like in 10, 20 years — and then put the plan and the people in place to work toward that outcome.

That can mean addressing tough issues — like succession. You may be tempted to dance around your own replacement, but there must be a plan in place while your dreams still exceed your memories.

Many of our readers can relate to the challenge of leading people for the first time. What advice would you offer to new and emerging leaders?

Listen.

We have been given two ears but just one mouth for a reason. As a leader, you should ask twice as much as you tell. Not only will you learn more, you'll set an example for that next generation of leaders and ensure they understand the importance — and responsibility — of listening.



Based on your experience or research, what are the top five traits effective leaders exemplify now? Please share a story or an example for each.

Courage

Do not be fearful of being wrong. Make sure you follow through on things and demonstrate you are still willing to do hard things and have tough conversations on behalf of the organization.

Kindness

Courtesy and kindness are extremely underrated. If you truly want to lead by example, build loyalty, highlight company values — be kind and courteous to absolutely everyone.

Curiosity

Curiosity is essential. Honestly, if you aren't curious about everyone and everything, you won't get very far with anything.

Persistence

Absolutely never, ever give up.

Ray Kroc said something I absolutely agree with. "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence."

Communication/Metrics

Be clear and consistent in what you tell people. Communicate with them on an ongoing basis — not just when you have a very specific message. And let them know how you measure results and assess impact, so they have a sense of the underlying priorities.

American Basketball Coach John Wooden said, "Make each day your masterpiece." How do you embody that quote? We welcome a story or example.

I actively practice gratitude. It's something I think about and something I try to embody every day. I never lose sight of my remarkable good fortune and my many blessings.

Peerage has a pretty extensive roster of philanthropic commitments — as do I personally. But I always build in a reserve for some very grassroots and local community causes. They run into potholes now and then and I am very mindful of the direct impact a relatively modest amount of capital can have.

That helps to keep me grounded and reminds me to dream as if I will live forever and live as if I may die today.

What is the legacy you aspire to leave as a leader?

I'd like to be remembered as a great family man, a community leader, and far after that, as someone who was successful in business.

How can our readers connect with you to continue the conversation?

If you wish to continue the conversation, please visit: www.milesnadal.com/contact/ or visit my LinkedIn or Twitter pages: https://www.linkedin.com/in/miles-s-nadal-513204106/ and https://twitter.com/milesnadal.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to experience a leadership master at work. We wish you continued success and good health!

. . .

About The Interviewer: Karen Mangia is one of the most sought-after keynote speakers in the world, sharing her thought leadership with over 10,000 organizations during the course of her career. As Vice President of Customer and Market Insights at Salesforce, she helps individuals and organizations define, design and deliver the future. Discover her proven strategies to access your own success in her fourth book Success from Anywhere and by connecting with her on LinkedIn and Twitter.

Social Impact

1