

Athens 2025: Advanced EU Funding & Project Innovation Camp

2 - 6 June 2025 Athens, Greece





About Us

European Academy is a training provider.

Established in 2015 as a response to the noticeable information gap between the E.C. and its beneficiaries.

Building on our direct experience within the E.C. and the E.U. funding and project environment, we offer open and tailor-made courses on highly specialised domains.

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Welcome!

A European Academy's exclusive event, meticulously designed to provide you with the tools, connections, and confidence to deliver projects that stand out.

Gain the essential skills and knowledge to excel in every aspect of EU project management—from crafting winning proposals to advanced project execution, financial mastery, impact maximisation, and audit preparedness.

Athens 2025: Advanced EU Funding & Project Innovation Camp Sessions for Online Delivery

Friday, 13 June

- 09:30-11:00 CET
Managing Project Costs:
Direct & Indirect Costs

11:00-11:30 CET – Coffee Break
- 11:30-13:00 CET
Reporting Costs of External
Experts

Tuesday, 17 June

- 09:00-10:30 CET
The Erasmus +: 2021-2027

10:30-11:00 CET – Coffee Break
- 11:00 – 12:30 CET
Avoid Risks: Coordination
That Clicks – Meetings,
People & Partner
Communication in EU-
Funded Projects

12:30-13:30 CET – Lunch Break
- 13:30-15:00 CET
Mapping Your EU-Funded
Project to PM² Methodology

15:00-15:30 CET – Coffee Break
- 15:30-17:00 CET
Future of Work and Industry
4.0: Dr Bojan Lalić

Wednesday, 2 July

- 12:45-14:15 CET
Managing Project Costs:
Direct & Indirect Costs

14:15-14:45 CET – Coffee Break
- 14:45-16:15 CET
Reporting Costs of External
Experts

Friday, 4 July

- 16:00-17:30 CET
Innovation in Public &
Private Sectors

Tuesday, 8 July

- 09:00–10:30 CET
Innovation Leadership &
Change Management

10:30–11:00 CET – Coffee Break
- 11:00–12:30 CET
Industrial Transition
Strategies

12:30–13:30 CET – Lunch Break
- 13:30–15:00 CET
Creating Effective Cluster
Models

15:00–15:30 CET – Coffee Break
- 15:30–17:00 CET
Workshop: Strategic
Planning for Industrial
Clusters



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Innovation Leadership & Change Management

Goran Mladenovic

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Goran Mladenovic

Inspirer, Change Maker

Business Achievements

- Guided 20 startups and companies to early-stage investments totalling €4.5 million
- Secured funding for over 60 projects
- Best hiring process in Serbia in 2020; 2nd and 3rd place in 2023

Education

- Faculty of Electronic Engineering
- MBTI

Experience

- 2003 NGO Youth Response
- 2005 Branch Manager at a Coliers
- 2007– Organizational Development and HR in an international corporation at WVI
- Since 2011 CEO and Project Manager at Ni CAT
- Since 2025 Founder of ITG Consulting

Agenda

09:00–10:30 CET – *Innovation Leadership & Change Management*

10:30–11:00 CET – *Coffee Break*

11:00–12:30 CET – *Industrial Transition Strategies*

12:30–13:30 CET – *Lunch Break*

13:30–15:00 CET – *Creating Effective Cluster Models*

15:00–15:30 CET – *Coffee Break*

15:30–17:00 CET – *Workshop: Strategic Planning for Industrial Clusters*

Agenda/Session 1

- Introduction to innovation leadership
- Introduction to change management
- Group sessions in zoom rooms
- Discussion
- Critical skills
- Addition info and conclusions
- QA session

Short introduction and 1 example of leadership behaviour

Innovation levels

- **1. Firm-Level Innovation**
Innovation within individual companies
Example: A tech company introducing an AI-driven product
- **2. Sectoral Innovation**
Innovation across a specific industry or value chain
Example: The green transition of the automotive industry
- **3. Regional/Cluster-Level Innovation**
Innovation supported by regional ecosystems and clusters
Example: A biotech cluster aligning startups and research institutions
- **4. System-Level Innovation**
Transformation of entire industrial systems and policies
Example: EU-wide transition to sustainable and digital industry

Source: European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Regional Innovation Monitor Plus*, 2017.
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation_en

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"Everything that can be invented has been invented."
The Commissioner of the United States Patent Office
around 1899

„Innovation Bang“ (since 2016)

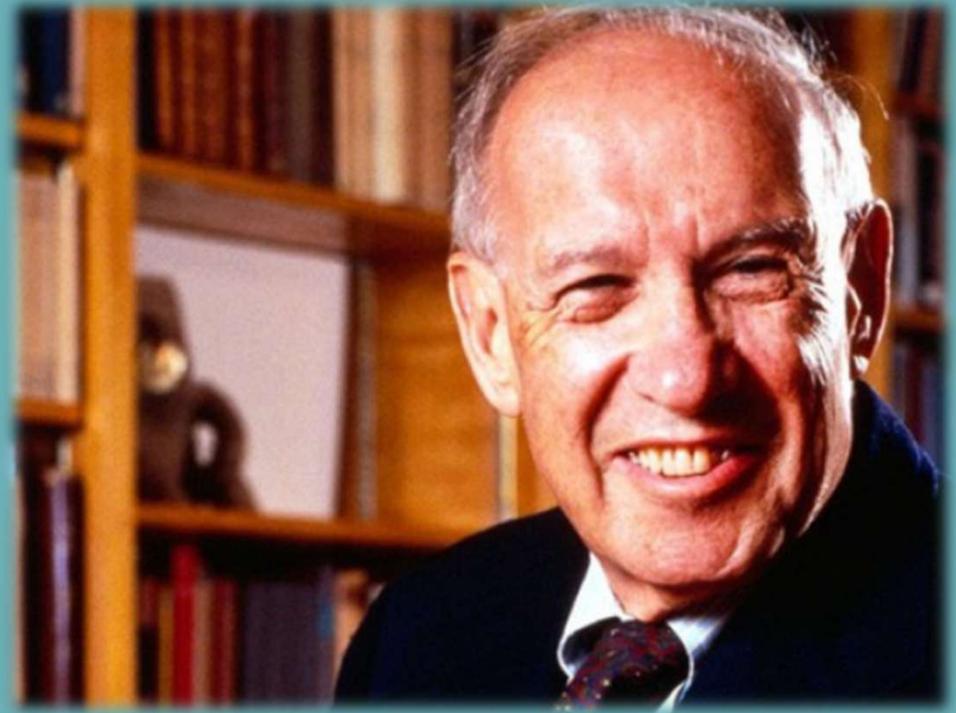
- Brainstorming
- Successful past practices
- Future trends
- Analytical approach
- Competition



"What do you think about this statement?"

"A manager does things right,
while a leader does the right
things."

Peter Drucker

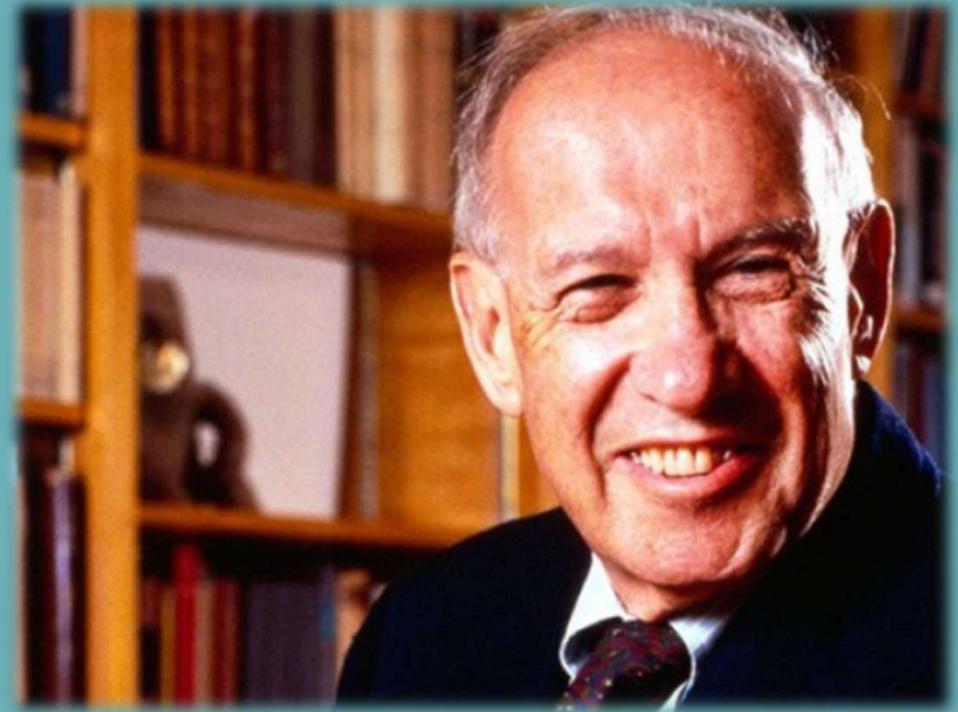


"What do you think about this statement?"

"A manager does things right,
while a leader does the right
things."

Peter Drucker

WRONG!



Management and leadership

Leadership	Innovative, adaptable, energetic, but the organization can be on the edge of chaos	Stable in the present and ready for the future.
	It will soon disappear unless it has a monopoly.	Stable and secure, but it can become bureaucratic, with too much control and on the verge of being overtaken by time due to inflexibility.
		Management

Management vs leadership vs innovation leadership

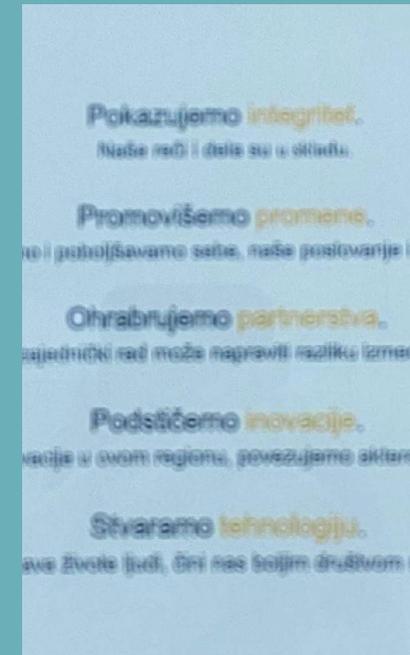
Category	Management	Leadership	Innovation Leadership
Focus	Efficiency, control, processes	People, direction, vision	Experimentation, future
Goal	Achieve set goals through resource organization	Inspire and guide people toward a shared vision	Create new value, transform the industry
Decision-Making Approach	Analytical, rational, data-driven	Visionary, consultative	Intuitive, risk-embracing
Attitude Toward Change	Seeks to minimize change, maintains stability	Accepts change if it aligns with goals	Drives change , constantly looks for new opportunities
Approach to Failure	Punishes or avoids failure	Learns from failure, reflects	Celebrates failure as a learning step, accelerates iteration
Vision & Communication	Focus on short-term goals and internal procedures	Clear, compelling long-term vision	Inspiring, unconventional vision that challenges the status quo

2 important elements for innovation leadership

Strategic decision

Organizational culture

- Ni CAT „Licence to disrupt“
- „In the business vs on the business“



Critical skill-Communication

Fine (superior) communication

(I maintain a positive mode at all times. If the other side slips out of it, I bring them back to this mode. I make an effort to understand the other side first, and only then do I express my own point of view.)

Normal communication

(I have my own point of view, I care about respecting the other side, but... they don't listen, they impose their own opinion, they are not being reasonable...)

"Mud"

(Arguments – reality show model, no one listens to anyone, everyone is shouting, each person is talking over the others)



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Change management

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People's Reactions to Change – Common Reasons for Resistance

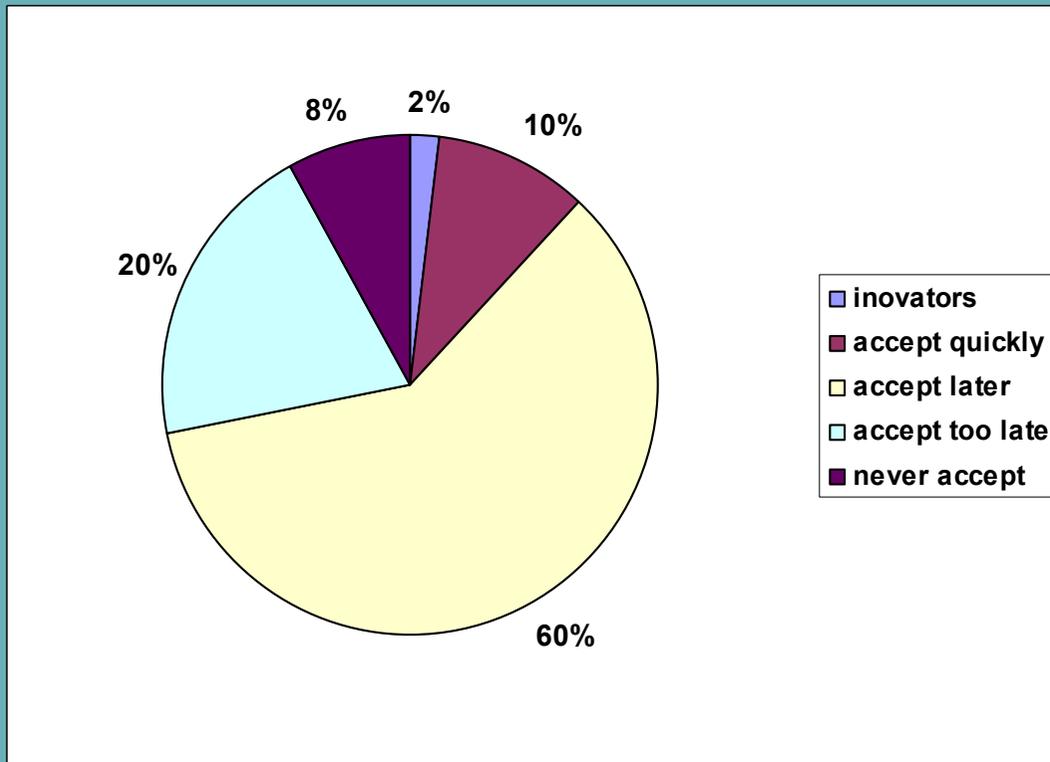


Chart People Reaction to Change (various sources)

- **Fear** for personal status, position, and benefits
- **Lack of trust** in change promoters
- **Exclusion** from the change planning process
- **Bad experiences**
- **Individual personality (MBTI)**

Individual Reaction to Change

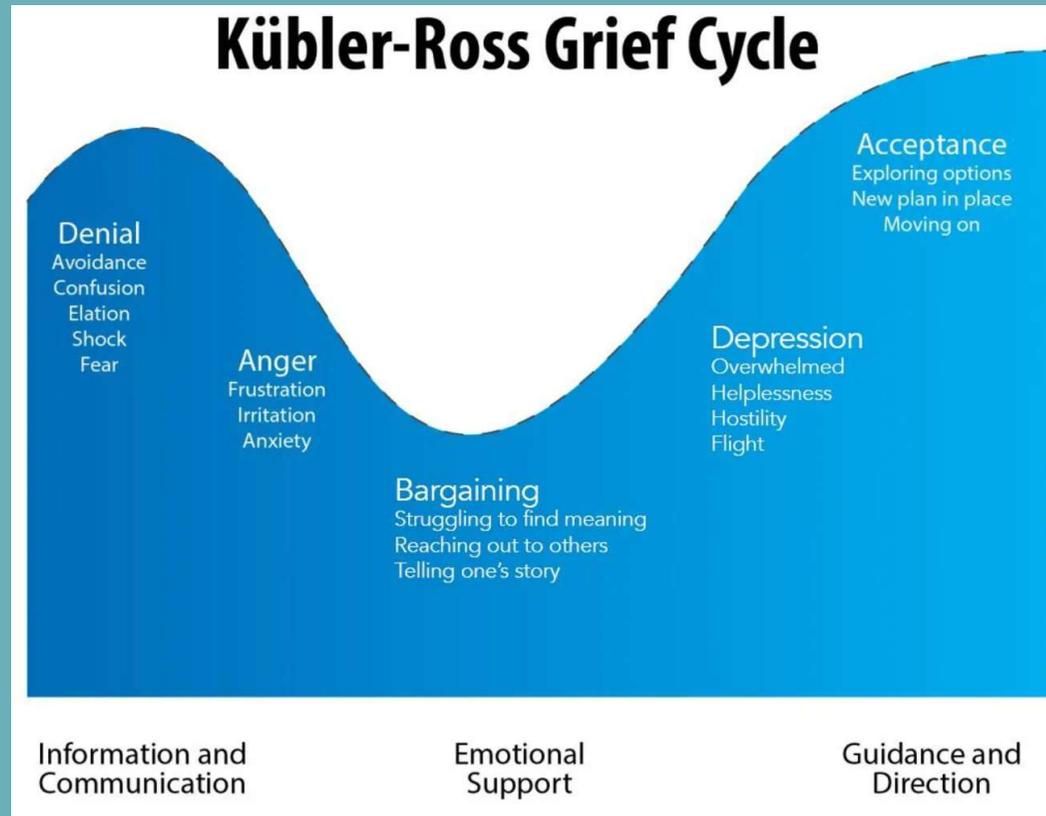
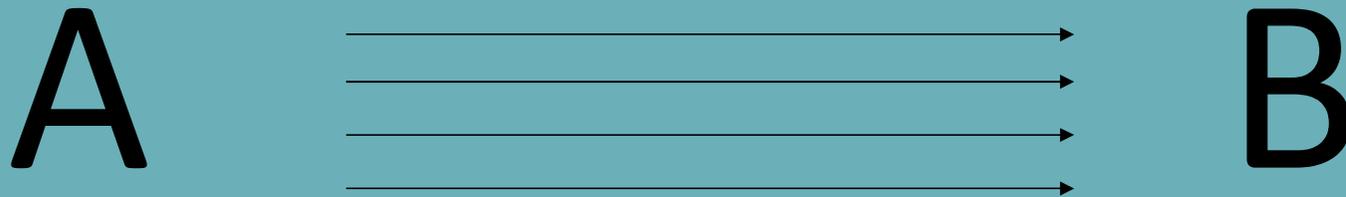


Figure1 <https://www.healthcentral.com/>

Planned change



Execution of the Plan through Alignment

8 steps in change management

	Stage	Example from projects 2015 -2025
UNFREEZE	Sense of urgency	New regulations, higher performance(Women in IT)
	Coalition	Include most influential LO (Change bonus scheme)
	Vision	Bring champions to share success stories,Valid data from the market
CHANGE	Communicating the vision	Multichannel approach-Board meetings, working groups, 1 to 1
	Executing actions	Additional calls, Follow up (all projects)
	Quick wins	Deals closed before 1st B2B event (Digitalization)
FREEZE AGAIN	Building on the change	Introducing a percentage fee from concluded deals.("Increasing membership fees in the cluster.)
	Institutionalizing the change	Organizational value, implemented in all projects (since 2015)

Group work-25 min

Group 1 – Innovation Leadership Activities

- Task-Identify up to five potential innovation leadership activities, risks, and suggest mitigation strategies."

Group 2 – How to help your team members- Example of Denial

- Employee goes around and says: "There's nothing to this."
- *Task-What is your reaction? Simulate meeting with him*

Group 3 – Ensure success of the change management plan

- You prepare change management plan
- *Task-Prepare examples for sense of urgency, quick wins, and institutionalizing the change*

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Group 1

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Ni CAT examples/live events/building trust

- Virtual Management Board
- Ni CAT Business Ambassador
- Fast track program for Youth
- Innovation bang (open space version)

„Bad news“



Chart 2 <https://geerthofstede.com/>

„Good news“

Factor	Generation X	Generation Y (Millennials)	Generation Z
Flexibility	Prefer stability and proven approaches to innovation	Positively embrace innovative leadership	Naturally digitally savvy and easily adopt innovations
Speed	Adapt to changes if there is clear purpose and benefits	Seek inspiring and creative leaders	Expect agile leaders with fast decision-making and technology use
Results and Transparency	Expect planned and competent leadership	Prefer collaboration and openness to new ideas	Value social responsibility and transparency in leadership

Key Skills for Innovation Leadership

- **Vision and Strategic Foresight**
Recognizes future trends and shapes a clear long-term vision.
- **Creativity and Complex Problem Solving**
Uses creative methods to find innovative solutions beyond the usual.
- **Empathy and Network Collaboration**
Builds trust and connects people to foster collective innovation.
- **Change Management and Agility**
Leads teams through uncertainty and adapts quickly to change.
- **Innovation Literacy**
Understands how ideas become valuable for users and society.

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Group 2

Individual reaction to change and how to help

Stage	Reaction
Denial	Allow time to accept the reality
Anger	Acknowledge anger but make a clear distinction between feelings and inappropriate behaviour Redirect blame from the change agent to the actual cause
Bargaining	Focus on the benefits that individuals, teams, or the organization will gain
Depression	Follow up frequently Empower positive actions that help the individual
Acceptance	Use the person to coach and mentor others Give recognition for efforts made

How to help teammates to accept change

- **Respect the Other Side's Feelings**
I understand that you feel...
- **Discover the Real Cause**
When you say "xxxxx," what do you mean? Can you give me an example?
- **Address the Real Cause**
Let's work together to solve the actual issue.
- **Offer Support**
I'm here to help you through this.

Group 3

Sense of Urgency

- 60% of buyers in Paris demand real-time catalogs and stock updates
- 76% of Turkish suppliers use automated ordering and digital invoicing
- 50% of non-digital companies risk losing access to strategic supply chains

Quick Wins

- Pilot with 2 companies using cloud CRM and inventory apps
- Save 10 hours/week via digital automation
- Virtual session: 3 companies share digital success stories

Institutionalizing Change

- Digital Support Unit: 1 expert guides members
- Each company sets 1 digital goal per year
- Quarterly videos highlight 1 successful company

Change management in „Brave New World“

	Stage	Agile approach
preparation		Data, information, news, statistics, success stories, presales approach
UNFREEZE	Sense of urgency	Repeat during the change
	Coalition	Involve a broader and more diverse group Include „rebels“
	Vision	Vision should be flexible
CHANGE	Communicating the vision	Use multiple channels, two-way communication, feedback
	Executing actions	Workshops, brainstorming, and inclusive methods
	Quick wins	Often, celebrate them publicly and frequently
FREEZE AGAIN	Building on the change	Continuously improve and adjust changes based on feedback and learning
	Institutionalizing the change	Changes should be continuously integrated into daily practices, not just a one-time phase

Critical skill-Communication

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Critical skill-Communication

Critical skill-Communication

- Practice active listening
- Be clear and concise
- Stimulate the brain positively

QA session

1. What are key challenges for leaders driving innovation in clusters?
2. How can public sector and academia support innovation leadership?
3. Which tools best motivate cluster members to embrace change?
4. How does innovation leadership differ from traditional leadership?
5. How to identify and develop future cluster leaders?
6. What are best practices to overcome resistance to change?
7. How to measure the impact of innovation leadership?
8. What role does organizational culture play in change?
9. How to align interests of different stakeholders in clusters?
10. Can you share examples of successful innovation leaders?

Summary and what is next

- **Innovation leadership is crucial for the future, but consider the obstacles and how management can ensure current business operations.**
- Communication is key.
- Create a plan and follow all three phases: **unfreeze, change, refreeze**, and apply the appropriate action from the table.
- Only a small number of people initiate change – focus on the **60% who need to be convinced**.
- Understand where the resistance to change comes from and help people accept it.
- Check your communication style and attitude towards change
- Review previous projects and find possible action elements
- Share with project team findings from this session and integrate change management in all actions

**“Change your views, but hold on
to your principles.
Shed your leaves, but keep your
roots.”**
— *Victor Hugo*

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- *This content was partially created with the assistance of artificial intelligence (ChatGPT), followed by review and adaptation to ensure relevance and applicability OpenAI ChatGPT (2025)*