

# LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

JANUARY 2010



**Branded  
the Best  
Values-Based  
Leaders**

**Leader  
Confidence**

**The Art of  
Followership**

**Kevin Freiberg**  
Leadership Consultant



*“Leadership Excellence is an exceptional way to learn and then apply the best and latest ideas in the field of leadership.”*

—WARREN BENNIS, AUTHOR AND USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT

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 VOL. 27 NO. 1 JANUARY 2010



## Prickly Pursuit

*Leaders and followers frequently have a precarious relationship, increasingly one of mutual interdependence, where roles and boundaries blur in the talent-driven ecosystem.*

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# Ambition to Excel

*Achieve something laudable.*



by Ken Shelton

**H**ISTORIAN DAVID McCULLOUGH notes: "Toward the end of his life, President John Adams was having a conversation with the young *Ralph Waldo Emerson* who was newly out of Harvard College. The president said, 'I wish to God that there were more ambition in the land.' Then he paused and said, 'By that I mean ambition of a laudable kind: *ambition to excel*, not to have more power or money or fame.'"

I echo Adams' sentiments. In our *Personal Excellence Plan* (PEP), I invite you to consider the *highest and best use* of your talents, gifts, resources, and abilities. You can find the PEP on our website, LeaderExcel.com. The very name of our site implies that users (leaders) will have an ambition to excel in a laudable way.

In this note, we recognize some of the thought leaders and practitioners in the field who excel in a laudable way in the development of leaders.

**The CLO Learning In Practice** awards were established "to recognize visionary leaders in enterprise education," said Norm Kamikow, president and editor in chief of *Chief Learning Officer* magazine. Here are the 2009 winners:

## Learning in Practice Awards

**Chief Learning Officer of the Year:** Cedric Coco, VP, Learning and Organizational Effectiveness, Lowe's Companies, Inc.

**Leadership Award:** Division 1 Gold: Louise Korver-Swanson, Global Head of Executive Development, EMC Corporation. Silver: Major General Erwin Lessel, Director of Plans, Programs, Requirements and Assessments, U.S. Air Force Air Education and Training Command. Division 2 Gold: Andrew Miller, Director, T&D, Sysco Foodservices of Canada. Silver: Matt Jones, Vice President, Essilor Labs of America.

**Vanguard Award:** Division 1 Gold: John Royer, Director of Sales Training Strategy, AstraZeneca. Silver: Frank Anderson, president, Defense Acquisition University. Silver: Lou Tedrick, Senior VP, Verizon Business. Division 2 Gold: Donal Conn, Global L&D Leader, Momentive Performance Materials. Silver: Betty Bergquist, VP of Education, American Family Insurance Group.

**Innovation Award:** Division 1 Gold:

Charles Beckham, CTO, Sun Learning Services. Silver: Marquam Piros, Senior Director, Seagate Technology. Division 2 Gold: Rob Hennigar, Director of Education, Constellation Wines. Silver: Teri Olsen, Director, University Health Care, University of Utah.

**Business Impact Award:** Division 1 Gold: Dan Braunm, VP, Global Learning, CA, Inc. Silver: Barbara Keen, Senior Director, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. Division 2 Gold: Dan Clark, VP, Silliker Inc. Silver: Anthony Sandonato, Manager, LD, Wyndham Vacation Ownership.

**The Global Learning Award:** Division 1 Gold: Matthew Peters, CLO, Defense Intelligence Agency. Silver: Michael Lux, Vice President, CA, Inc. Division 2 Gold: Joe Lepore, Head of Global Technical Training, Life Technologies.

**The Learning Team Award:** Division 1 Gold: ManTech Intl. Corp. Silver: E-Learning and Technology Center Team, Defense Acquisition University. Division 2 Gold: American Family Insurance Group. Silver: Talent Development Studio, Gensler Corporation.



*Excellence Plan*

## Provider Awards

**Excellence in E-Learning Award.** Gold: NIIT (USA) Inc. Silver: Learning Tree International. Bronze: Allen Interactions.

**Excellence in LMS Award.** Gold: Adayana; Silver: GeoLearning; Bronze: Allen Communication Learning Services.

**Excellence in Simulations and Games Award.** Gold: NexLearn; Silver: WILL Interactive; Bronze: Enspire Learning.

**Excellence in Social Networks Award.** Gold: General Physics; Silver: Saba.

**Excellence in Content Award.** Gold: Market-Partners; Silver: Herrmann Intl.; Bronze: Harvard Business Publishing.

**Excellence in Customer Service Award.** Gold: Vivid Learning Systems; Silver: Achieve Global; Bronze: General Physics.

**Excellence in Academic Partnerships Award.** Gold: Bellevue University; Silver: SMU Cox Executive Education; Bronze: College of the Extended University Cal State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

We applaud all of these award winners for their ambition to excel. LE

*Ken Shelton*  
Editor since 1984

*Leadership Excellence* (ISSN 8756-2308) is published monthly by Executive Excellence Publishing, LLC (dba Leadership Excellence), 1806 North 1120 West, Provo, UT 84604.

### Editorial Purpose:

Our mission is to promote personal and organizational leadership based on constructive values, sound ethics, and timeless principles.

### Basic Annual Rate:

US \$129 one year (12 issues)  
US \$219 two years (24 issues)  
Canada add US \$30 postage per year.  
All other non-U.S. add US \$70 per year.

### Corporate Bulk Rates (to same address)

US \$109 each per year for 5 to 25  
US \$99 each per year for 26 and up  
\* Ask about logo and custom editions and foreign bulk rates.

### Article Reprints:

For reprints of 100 or more, please contact the editorial department at 801-375-4060 or email [custserv@eep.com](mailto:custserv@eep.com). Back Issues: (print) US \$25.00. Permission PDF US: \$50.

Internet Address: [www.LeaderExcel.com](http://www.LeaderExcel.com)

### Submissions & Correspondence:

All correspondence, articles, letters, and requests to reprint articles should be sent to Editorial Department, Executive Excellence, 1806 North 1120 West, Provo, Utah 84604; 801-375-4060, or [editorial@eep.com](mailto:editorial@eep.com).

### Customer Service/Circulation:

For information on products and services call 1-877-250-1983 or email: [custserv@eep.com](mailto:custserv@eep.com).

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The table of contents art is a detail from *Prickly Pursuit* (image cropped) © Daniel Smith, and is courtesy of the artist and art print publisher Greenwich Workshop.

For additional information on artwork by Daniel Smith, please contact: Greenwich Workshop  
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[www.greenwichworkshop.com](http://www.greenwichworkshop.com)

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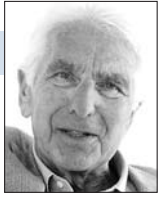


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# Art of Followership

*Followers engage in an interdependent dance.*



by Warren Bennis

WHO ISN'T FASCINATED by the interdependent dance between leaders and followers? Yet, until recently, followers have been largely neglected in the study of leadership. Now we see a long overdue effort to explore leadership's underappreciated complement in all its complexity, as roles, relationship, and process. It is no surprise that books on leadership outnumber those on followership several thousand to one. After all, leadership is the prize that ambitious men and women have struggled, even died, for—at least since Alexander the Great.

Whether their field is politics, business, science, or the arts, *leaders are at the center of the action*—the *envied* if not *enviable* stars whose lives seem to burn a little brighter than our own. We aspire to the power and perquisites, even as we take pleasure when one of them stumbles and falls. Indeed, the moment when we realize that we are mostly followers, not leaders, is a genuine developmental milestone; who forgets that painful leap over the line of demarcation between the boundless fantasies of childhood and the sober realities of an adulthood in which we never become the god we hoped to be.

I am oft reminded how hollow the *label of leadership* sometimes is—and how heroic followership can be. Followers play a vital role in the presence of *toxic leaders*—those malignant wielders of power who have made the last century the bloodiest in all of humanity's sanguinary history. When evil leaders emerge, followers have no moral choice but to try to wrest power from them. Such behavior is usually termed *resistance*, but it is, in fact, a heroic form of action. Moreover, this honorable rebellion reflects an underappreciated underlying truth. Yes, leaders have enormous power, but so do those who follow them. Without their followers, tyrants can accomplish little. Even toxic leaders sleep and are subject to other constraints, and so they depend upon their followers to wield the gas, guns, and machetes. For better or for ill, followers do the

heavy lifting of any successful enterprise. No matter who is memorialized as founder, no enterprise is built without the collective effort of a group of able, energetic, unsung followers. Moreover, followers bear the brunt of the horrors toxic leaders make. Many notorious political leaders peacefully ended their days sleeping on Frette sheets in comfortable exile, sad to say.

In organizations, the consequences of *toxic leadership* are less obvious but no less dire. *Recently, we've seen more examples of courageous followership* as nameless, faceless shareholders rebelled against arrogant, underperforming executives when their corporate boards failed to do so. The last two decades have served as a corrective to the view of the CEO as demigod. Our *disillusion-*



*ment* with much corporate leadership is the cumulative effect of insider-stock trades, executive venality, and \$6,000 shower curtains. As executive compensation packages became excessive, observers began to wonder if they had not given too much of their power to those at the top. The *cult of the celebrity CEO* gave way to a renewed appreciation of the *leader as steward* of the collective treasure of his or her followers.

I remind us of how blurred the line is between leaders and those they lead. When followers check the power of their leaders, they clearly function as leaders. And whether by augmenting the actions of their leaders or conscientiously challenging them, followers both advance the collective enterprise and polish their own leadership skills.

One important—but perilous—arena for follower action is *inside the organization*. We tend to value the leader who acts decisively, whether right or wrong, but followers are expected to behave with

restraint. A follower who dares to poke holes in a leader's plan is seen as a maverick at best, dissident or lunatic at worst, but such internal critics are invaluable as they are most likely to save leaders from investing time and resources in a doomed product or project.

Most of us can tick off the attributes of great leaders, but *the nature and functions of great followers are little understood and rarely articulated*. Followers are often expected to be acquiescent and are rewarded for being so—when, in fact, followers who practice knee-jerk obedience are of little value, and often dangerous.

One responsibility of a good follower is to *speak truth to power*. We know that *toxic followers* can put even good leaders on a disastrous path. But *heroic followers* can save leaders from their worst follies, especially leaders so isolated the only voice they listen to is their own. When the leader can't be persuaded, the follower may be forced to break the rules and become a *whistle-blower*—a kind of rogue leader who wrests power from those in charge and often pays a terrible personal price. Effective followers acquire skills for making their case and causing change without destroying the organization.

*I hope to get us thinking about how to create and become great followers*, since we spend much of our lives in that capacity, whatever exalted titles we may hold. The tools of great followership are similar to those of leadership. In fact, since followers lack the power to order and insist, they are wise to acquire a quiver of diplomatic tools, including mastery of such persuasive arts as rhetoric and acting.

*In many ways, great followership is harder than leadership*. It has more dangers and fewer rewards, and must be exercised more subtly. But great followership has never been more important—if only because our big problems must be solved collaboratively (leaders working in tandem with able and dedicated followers). For example, no single leader, however charismatic, however brilliant, can solve the problem of climate change. It can only be addressed by millions of creative, dedicated, and proactive individuals.

A decade from now the terms *leader* and *follower* will seem antiquated. We're witnessing an erosion of traditional notions of *leadership*. What does leadership mean in a world where *anonymous bloggers* can choose presidents and bring down regimes? Today power is being democratized by new media that spread ideas virally and can topple an

established order without revolution or manifesto. Today, a teen with a camera phone has immense power.

In 10 years, we'll have very different notions of *leadership* and *followership*—if only because each of us can peek into and expose any corner of an increasingly wired world, upending any current notion of what constitutes *status quo*.

It's inevitable that a society as star-struck as ours should focus on leaders, but I'm persuaded of the under-appreciated importance of followers.

**What makes a good follower?** Leaders are increasingly dependent on subordinates for good information, whether leaders want to hear it or not. Followers who tell the truth, and leaders who listen to it, are an unbeatable combination.

Effective leaders resist hiring only people who look, sound, or think just like themselves. They look for good people from many molds and encourage them to *speak out*, even to *disagree*. Aware of the pitfalls of institutional unanimity, they wisely build dissent into decision-making. Leaders who do so gain heightened collegiality, make better decisions, and achieve better results.

**Like good leaders, good followers see the importance of speaking out**—and they do it. Yet, even in democracies, where the only gulag is the threat of a pink slip, it is hard to disagree with the person in charge. When the president comes up with foolish ideas, most aides admit to doing nothing. Quietism, or the sin of silence, often costs leaders dearly. Leaders suffer far more at the hands of so-called friends who refuse to tell them unattractive truths than from their ostensible enemies. Good followers are obligated to share their best counsel with the leader. Silence—not dissent—is the one answer that leaders should refuse to accept.

**Effective leaders reward dissent, as well as encourage it.** They understand that whatever momentary discomfort they experience is offset by the fact that reflective backtalk improves their decisions. Executive compensation should help salve the pricked ego of leaders whose followers speak their minds. What's in it for followers? Good followers often put their jobs on the line by speaking up. But consider the price they pay for silence. What job is worth the psychic cost of following a leader who values loyalty in a narrow sense?

Followers who speak out show the initiative that leadership is made of. LE

Warren Bennis is author of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *On Becoming a Leader* and *The Essential Bennis*. Visit [www.USC.edu](http://www.USC.edu).

**ACTION:** Be an effective leader-follower.

## Career Development

*It's now a business imperative.*



by Beverly Kaye

**E**NGAGEMENT IS NOT A program—it's the result you get when you do several things right, starting with career development (CD). To be engaged, you first have to like what you do and then learn, grow, achieve, and feel valued, appreciated, recognized, and rewarded (if not promoted).

If you don't like what you do, if you don't feel excited about something you are doing daily, you can't feel engaged. People who like what they do, usually do it very well. They're creative, put in more effort, meet or exceed goals, and solve problems. And they donate valuable *discretionary effort*—what money can't buy. It's the difference between *giving it your all* and *squeaking by*.

Discretionary effort delivers everything we want from excellent employees: creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, high productivity, and loyalty. When you're doing the right work and getting the right input, you're engaged, work harder, and feel a sense of satisfaction.

### Engagement/ Satisfaction

Every year organizations invest in employee satisfaction and engagement surveys to take the cultural *happiness temperature*. Happiness directly translates into engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. If you're engaged, you're happier. If you're satisfied, you're happier. You can't boost productivity with *dissatisfied*, *disengaged*, and *disgruntled* people. To boost satisfaction, productivity and engagement, you need to ensure that people are in the right jobs, doing the right work, enjoying it, following a CD plan, and having access to relevant tools and training.

Engagement is built on the platform of CD plans. They can be used to create staffing strategies, decrease turnover, and increase satisfaction and engagement. High engagement starts with CD. Teach employees how to assess their skills, interests and values. Help them understand how they're viewed. Inform them of what's happening in the company that may change how

they work. Open them up to new possibilities and multiple options and give them tools to create an action plan to get what they want. Such CD will result in high engagement and satisfaction.

**The manager's role is to manage for CD.** Most managers are trained in performance management (PM). They learn how to conduct performance reviews and submit the forms. Some managers believe that PM and CD are the same, since the performance appraisal form may deal with *areas for development*. However, they require different management skills. CD is future-focused professional growth. PM is about getting the job done better now. Management training that provides PM without managing for personal growth and CD won't move the organization forward. Building talent for tomorrow requires a commitment to CD at every level—with the supporting tools and processes to sustain it and hold managers accountable for how well they develop their staff.

To get the talent you need for tomorrow, conduct a "stay interview" with people to learn how to help them grow. Train them how to view their skills, talent, and future. Give them the tools they need to assess their career and train managers to support the development of their talent. The results will move the needle on satisfaction scores.

### Beyond Disengagement

**What's the cost of disengagement?** If those who are not engaged are operating at 90 percent of their productivity level (a generous assumption), they are still costing you 10 percent of whatever you pay them! I invite you to calculate the cost of such disengagement.

**What's the solution?** Employee commitment depends most on opportunities for career growth, learning, and development. Sadly, employees are unaware of how the organization can be an "opportunity market" for meeting their *learning* and *development* needs.

CD balances individual career needs with organizational business requirements. It involves assessing gaps, seeking feedback to improve capabilities, mining for career opportunities, and developing by growing in place, self-marketing, and action planning. LE

Beverly Kaye, an authority on career issues, engagement and retention, is CEO of Career Systems International and best-selling author on workplace performance and talent management. Visit [www.careersystemsintl.com](http://www.careersystemsintl.com).

**ACTION:** Engage people to boost satisfaction.



# Branded the Best!

*Create the branded culture.*



by Kevin and Jackie Freiberg

**I**F YOUR COMPANY IS KNOWN FOR BEING the *Best Place* where the *Best People* can do their *Best Work*, you have a branded culture that impacts the bottom line and provides competitive advantage. Your competitors will find it impossible to replicate the *esprit de corps* and productivity that comes from impassioned employees who proudly build and own your brand.

Individuals choose to be extraordinary and do their best because of *will*, not *skill*—a *will* to do whatever-it-takes with limited, or no, resources! They *will* to make a difference, even amid uncertainty. When people exercise their will, they offer extraordinary contributions that add greatly to the bottom line. They're far more likely to assume responsibility and own the brand.

**Branded Best cultures are purposeful.** Is your culture *purposeful* or *accidental*? In BB cultures, people aren't hindered by functional boundaries, political BS, turf protection, and silo mindedness. People come to work energized, committed, and accountable to add value and innovation. Speed-to-market is a must, not an aspiration. Loyalty, not satisfaction, is the target!

Are you committed to building a *best place* culture where the *best people* can do their *best work*? This means inviting people to check-in, be brand ambassadors for the culture, and consider culture a strategic priority and competitive advantage. Branded cultures are *famous* for attracting world-class talent. The culture is as well known as the products and services. People freely and willingly act like they own the business and the brand.

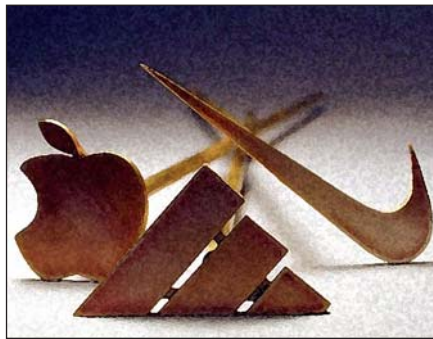
Here are three strategies for building a branded, purposeful culture:

**1. Define your business as a noble or heroic cause.** What's the difference between contagious enthusiasm and *Dead People Working*? What lies at the heart of true, substantive, and sustained motivation? What motivates people to

do their best, to dedicate the totality of who they are—heart, mind, and soul—to the success of the business? People must be moved internally and drawn to something bigger than the job. *Ordinary people will do extraordinary work when they find the passion and discover the heroism and nobility in their work.*

For example, *Southwest Airlines* people are committed to their *legendary cause*—giving ordinary people the freedom to fly, to go places and see and do things. This cause is deeply rooted in the history, marketing, communications, hiring, on-boarding, and training.

Every job can be described as *trivial* or *noble*. What's heroic about what you do? People who see how their contribution links to a heroic and noble cause find more meaning in their work. This *sense of heroism* inspires in them a drive



to succeed, a will to win, and a deep-seated passion for the customer!

Creating a branded culture is about being the kind of leader who can see beyond the job, find the significance in the work, and discover the ultimate value you bring to the world.

To identify the cause, ask: How are you defining the cause/heroism? How can you remind people of it daily? Do your internal communications, tag line on your business cards, letterhead, home page, on-boarding process, stories, recognition and reward program, marketing materials, and service philosophy promote your heroic cause?

**2. Decide what you want to be known for—create a compelling vision.** What brand are you building? What would it look like if your culture were branded as an extraordinary magnet for world-class talent? The best people, talented, bright, and self-motivated—the kind it takes to build a branded, legendary culture—want to know what the orga-

nization stands for, where it's going, and how they fit into the larger picture. A *vision* is a word picture of the results you want to create. When the picture is clear, people develop a sense of direction and purpose. They're more confident, more willing to take risks and to take action because the boundaries set by the vision are clear. With a compelling vision, people can better determine their high-leverage tasks. They can say *No to urgent but unimportant things* because of a bigger, more important *Yes*. When people are focused on critical tasks that align with realizing a clear and compelling vision—*busyness* is replaced with *purposeful actions* that drive bottom-line results.

As you create a compelling vision, ask: What results do you want to create? Keep it simple, compelling, and easy to understand. Communicate the vision or word picture over and over again. Measure, reward, recognize, and communicate progress constantly. Make sure everyone sees how their roles and contributions add value and link to the vision and the cause.

**3. Hire people who don't suck the life out of your business.** Branded cultures are rigorous, purposeful, and strategic about who gets hired. Hiring should take on that same seriousness, attention, and care as marriage. The people you hire today will determine your culture tomorrow. So, surround yourself with people who have the right attitude and skills for every position—hiring should never take on a "one size fits all" approach. Think about the attitudes you need to build a culture of action-oriented people who will risk and innovate; a culture where people are committed to serving each other and building team unity; a culture where people share their humor to make work more fun. Hire people who are predisposed to protecting and promoting the culture you want—people with the right attitudes and skills that align with your vision and values. Are you looking for collaborative team players? For optimistic, open-minded people? For detail-oriented, data-driven thinkers? For risk takers? For people with a sense of humor? For performance-driven managers? For multitasking, administrative wonders?

Create interview questions to help you hire for specific attitudes and skills. Create a team of *culture champions* who embody the culture you want to grow. **LE**

*Kevin and Jackie Freiberg are thought leaders, change agents, and authors of the best-seller NUTS!, GUTS! and BOOM! Call 619-624-9691 or visit [www.freiber.gs.com](http://www.freiber.gs.com).*

**ACTION: Build a Branded Best Culture.**

# Values-Based Leaders

Ground your leadership and life on solid bedrock.



by Bob McDonald

**I**START WITH TWO SIMPLE yet profound premises:

**Premise 1: You need to have a goal in life, and to lead your life by a set of principles, values, or morals.** Imagine that you're in a hospital and about to die, and your loved ones ask you, "Did you achieve what you set out to accomplish in your life?" Would you have an answer? You have a clear choice: either you control your schedule, or you allow your schedule to control you. You need to set a goal, and ensure your schedule follows that goal. This beats meandering through life—going from activity to activity, not ever being sure that you're going to get where you want to go.

**Premise 2: You need to understand how you've been socialized in organizations to which you belong**—because that socialization makes you unique—and then understand how your socialization has led to a belief system.

Procter & Gamble has changed much in my 28 years with the company. When I began at P&G, only 25 percent of our business was outside the U.S. (today, it's almost 60 percent). In 1980 we'd just crossed \$10 billion in annual sales (today, we're an \$80-billion company). In 1980 we employed 61,000 people (today we have 138,000).

As things change, we must improve our productivity. P&G sales have increased eight-fold while the employee population has increased two-fold. There are several reasons: globalization, acquisition, scale, and technology. Those who succeed today have the ability to learn. In 1980, it was good enough to be an effective leader in your culture. Today, you have to be effective in many cultures—you have to learn.

## Bedrock Values

You need a *values system* to keep grounded. As Jim Collins wrote, *great companies change everything but their values*. If you don't change everything else, you won't grow your business.

When I talk about values, I start with the P&G purpose and values: Our purpose is to improve the lives of the

world's consumers. That's why most of us joined P&G; why we come to work every day; and what keeps us excited about the job. Having been in nearly every country in which P&G operates, I assure you: Many people are less fortunate. We create products and services that help people have better lives—and we take that purpose seriously.

We also have strong *values*. The first two values are *leadership* and *ownership*. We expect each employee to be a leader and to act like an owner. More than 10 percent of our stock is owned by employees. That's a real accomplishment, as it inspires people to run the company as if the dollars they spend and the decisions they make are their own.

We also stress *integrity*: we don't lie, cheat, or steal; and we don't tolerate



people who do. We also have a *passion for winning*. Our goal on the job every day is to win with consumers and beat the competition. We also value *trust*. The fact that P&G is a *build-from-within culture* that trusts each other makes us much more efficient. These are the P&G values, and they are my values as well.

P&G's *sustainability efforts* complement our values. We've been in business since 1837—172 years. To sustain the company, we need to deliver outstanding business results and take care of our environment, people, and communities where we operate.

So we've developed strategies to improve the footprint of our operations. We're creating billions of dollars of new, eco-friendly products. The best companies and leaders operate by a clear purpose and consistent set of principles or values. People like working for leaders who are transparent about what's important to them.

## My 10 Beliefs

As I share my 10 beliefs, I invite you to identify your values, set goals, and check your progress every six months.

**1. Living a life of purpose is more meaningful and rewarding than meandering through life without direction.**

My purpose is to improve the lives of all 6.5 billion people in the world with P&G brands. I try to make a positive impact on each person I meet. This goal led me to be a Boy Scout, attend West Point, become an Army officer, and join P&G. People like to work for leaders who operate with a clear and consistent purpose. The leader's job is to enable the purpose and dreams of their people. In this sense, the role of the leader becomes a *calling*, not a *job*.

**2. Everyone wants to succeed, and success is contagious.** Since people like to be part of a winning team, you need to create a high-performance team and culture. How? First, realize that *nobody wants to fail; everybody wants to succeed*. Rather than catch people making mistakes so you can correct them, catch people succeeding and turn that into bigger success. Since *success is contagious*, one success leads to another; one successful person will influence another to succeed. Leaders start the fire that fuels the *virtuous cycle of success*.

**3. Put people in the right jobs.** You need to get the right people on the bus and get them in the right seats (especially your leaders). How do you know if you have the *right leaders* in the *right place*? People like to do what they're good at. If people are unhappy, they're not in the right job. Ask them and observe them to see if they like what they're doing. Get each of them in a job that takes advantage of their strengths.

**4. Character is the most important trait of a leader.** I define *character* as putting the needs of the organization above your own. As an Army officer, I ensured all my soldiers ate before I did to show them that their well-being was more important to me than my own. People follow leaders with character. Jim Collins calls this *Level 5 Leadership*: leaders whose ambition is for the organization. Leaders of character take responsibility. If something goes right, give credit to other people. If something goes wrong, take responsibility. *Choose the harder right, rather than the easier wrong*. The reason P&G has done business for 170 years is that we do the right thing, even when it's hard to do—so train yourself to do the right thing.

**5. Diverse groups of people are more innovative than homogenous groups.** Diversity is a necessity at P&G to

reflect the consumers we serve and to drive innovation—the result of connections and collaboration. A diverse group can better make these connections, since they have a greater diversity of nodes to connect. The role of the leader is to create the culture for connections and collaboration by following the *Platinum Rule*: treat others as they want to be treated. Know how your people want to be treated.

**6. Ineffective systems and cultures are bigger barriers to achievement than the talents of people.** When something goes wrong, before blaming people, ask if you provided the right leadership, strategies, systems, and culture. Edwards Deming taught me that leaders often put people in a poor system and expect them to deliver great results—but *organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they get*. So if you get bad results, *redesign your organization*. If you get good results—keep it going.

**7. Some people will not make it on the journey.** To find these individuals, find who is not happy. Identify those who can't go on the journey, help them recognize the tension, and identify other careers that offer promise.

**8. Organizations must renew themselves.** Growth requires change, and change requires renewal. Standards of performance are rising; hence, leaders must provide training and development for people. Renewal is vital in a build-from-within company like P&G. What causes companies to stop growing? It's the capability they needed to build but did not. Determine which marketplace changes could cause your business to become obsolete, and build the right capability for the future.

**9. Recruiting is a top priority.** When we recruit, we're hiring future leaders. It's why I visit colleges worldwide. We need to recruit actively to ensure we are raising standards and generating renewal. When I retire, you may be in my job, and my livelihood as a shareholder will depend on you. So I want to choose the absolute best people.

**10. The true test of leaders is the performance when they are absent or gone.** Have you built the capabilities so well that when you're gone, the organization continues to grow and succeed? Or, is the organization so dependent upon you that you have to be there? Build an organization so capable that your presence or absence won't affect results—this is how you sustain growth. LE

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**ACTION: Articulate your beliefs.**

# Lead Learning

Achieve high performance.



by Michael Beer

LEADERS FACE CONSTANT turmoil, and many react non-strategically and head down the wrong path or are frozen with fear and fail to adapt.

And yet certain leaders adapt to new circumstances and achieve sustained high performance. Resilient enterprises are *high commitment, high performance (HCHP)* organizations that achieve three outcomes: *performance alignment, psychological alignment, and the capacity for learning and change*. They embody the principles—and results—to which all leaders aspire. They serve customers with care. They give employees work that offers dignity, personal growth, and meaning. They afford shareholders good and steady returns. And they develop reputations as extraordinary companies, recognized for contributions to all stakeholders.

## Take Six Key Actions

To transform your organization into a HCHP system, take four key actions:

**1. Build the leadership team.** CEOs can learn much from their senior team and employees who are in touch with the day-to-day realities of the marketplace and the efficacy of the execution. Transformational CEOs come to rely on their *leadership team*. This requires a sustained effort to build that team and develop together a vision of the firm—the purpose, strategy, and values; the legacy they want to leave; and the principles for organizing and managing.

**2. Connect authentically.** To mobilize followers on a journey to HCHP, leaders must have a *high moral purpose*. Their aspirations must go far beyond the usual financial and strategic goals. Leaders must reveal *who they are, what they believe in, and what higher purpose motivates them* to engage people emotionally. This enables people to hope that their own aspirations to do something meaningful and important—to leave a legacy—will be fulfilled by committing to the leader's agenda for change.

**3. Advocate a direction.** Transformational leaders have a strong point of view

about strategy, values, direction, and how to organize the enterprise, and they advocate a new, long-term vision for the company, how it will compete, and the management philosophy and values by which it will be governed. They also ensure the business and value components are consistent and reinforce each other by defining the animating beliefs that will govern all decisions. And HCHP leaders are visible, engaging people in a dialogue.

**4. Inquire.** Leaders need to actively solicit unvarnished feedback and promote an honest fact-based dialogue, or inquiry. HCHP leaders implement disciplined processes for feedback and reflection. Without inquiry, leaders can't learn that their plans and vision are doomed to failure. Inquiry prevents values from backfiring when disenchantment rises. It enables leaders to *evaluate the gap* between the espoused strategy and principles and the reality experienced by others. Inquiry buys trust and makes the vision credible.

**5. Confront conflict and manage tensions.** Bringing different views into the open to seek the best integrative solution enables creative problem solving,

continuous improvement, and *sustained performance*. Although changing a system inevitably involves personal losses in power, relationships, rewards, competence, esteem, and identity—which will be resisted—these sentiments are vital. Without emotional conflict, you can't establish the *new moral order* needed to

transform to an HCHP enterprise.

**6. Develop a partnership with employees.** Power asymmetries reduce collaboration and commitment, reducing the potential for value creation. So leaders must create a *partnership culture* in which participation in decisions is not based on position, but on knowledge and proximity to the problem. Commitment to mission and reduced hierarchical barriers enable people to engage spontaneously and fluidly to solve mission-critical problems.

Leading transformation is about enabling leaders and their people to learn together what problems they must face and actions they must take. If the leader engineers a collective learning process, transformation to an HCHP system will be a great success. LE

Michael Beer is chairman of TruePoint and professor emeritus of business administration at Harvard Business School and author or co-author of nine books, including *High Commitment, High Performance* (Jossey-Bass/Wiley). Visit [www.truepoint.com](http://www.truepoint.com).

**ACTION: Create a high performance team.**



# Leader Confidence

*Do you really want to be a leader?*



by Marshall Goldsmith

**H**OW CAN YOU EXHIBIT more self-confidence while still being collaborative and authentic? I often encounter this dilemma in my work with high-potential future leaders who need to develop and demonstrate more self-confidence. Most CEOs—and other senior leaders—rarely have self-confidence problems.

## 10 Ways to Boost Your Confidence

Here are 10 suggestions for boosting your confidence and contribution:

**1. Decide if you really want to be a leader.** Many MBAs and other high potentials who lack self-confidence as leaders are brilliant technicians. They often find the *uncertainty* and *ambiguity* of leading people very unsettling. They are looking for *the right answers*. In some cases, such people should continue to be brilliant technicians—not become managers and leaders.

**2. Make peace with ambiguity in decision-making.** Rarely are there clear right answers when making complex decisions. Even CEOs are guessing. So, accept the fact that you'll fail on occasion. Gather reasonable data, involve people, then follow your gut and do what you think is right. Once you make a decision, commit and go for it. Don't second-guess yourself. If you have to change course, fine—change course. If you never commit, all you will ever do is change course.

**3. Demonstrate courage outside, even when you don't feel it inside.** We're all afraid on occasion—that is just part of being human. If you are going to lead people in tough times, you'll need to show more courage than fear. When direct reports read worry and concern on your face, they begin to lose confidence in your ability to lead. Don't expect your direct reports to demonstrate confidence, courage, and enthusiasm if they can't see it in you.

**4. Succeed in your current job—the executive office isn't always home suite home.** Job security in executive suites is tenuous. Failed transitions are costing companies millions in expenses and

lost opportunities. About 40 percent of senior executives in new positions fail to meet expectations in 18 months, and half are gone within three years. Few companies are taking proactive steps to reverse the trend, even when they need to get the most out of their talent. The failure rate for leaders is high, whether the senior leader comes from outside or inside the company.

**5. Read the tea leaves.** If it looks like you have no future, perhaps because an acquisition will lead to *right-sizing* in your function, start looking for another job. Realize that the acquiring company may well have more loyalty to their previous employees than to you. Revisit how you are working. This acquisition may bring fresh resources. Consider how you can leverage them



to make a larger contribution and better serve customers and stakeholders.

**6. Don't assume that internal promotion is a sure bet—or that you will succeed in the new position.** Don't assume that the safest course in leadership development or succession is to stick with people who you know and promote from within. Leaders often feel internal candidates know the culture, and so it will take less time to bring them up to speed. However, 20 percent of senior executives fail when they change roles internally (are promoted).

**7. Prepare now for your next position.** Why do many professionals fail in new senior management and leadership roles? Too many are left to sink or swim. They often lack confidence and have poor interpersonal and leadership skills—the non-technical skills that don't show up on résumés. Newly promoted people often become consumed with *what the work is* rather

than *how they will do the work*. Hence, they suffer breakdowns in their human interactions. Also, it takes more time than expected for new leaders to gain traction in the new role—certainly more than just a couple of months.

**8. Engage in transition and succession planning.** Address the style that new leaders need. Don't fall for the illusion that good intentions will drive good results. You first need to get the hiring right by ensuring a good behavioral fit between the individual, team, and culture. Think about *transition* during the hiring and interviewing. Be realistic about the time it takes for a new executive to get up to speed. Provide the support and resources necessary for newly hired and promoted people to succeed. Craft a clear road map of the challenges and expectations.

**9. Onboard new leaders.** Provide support commensurate with the needs of a new senior leader. If pre-employment activities and orientation programs are ineffective, costs can soar to over \$1 million per leader (at least two times yearly salary). That includes recruiting, sign-on bonuses, and exit packages. Then there are the intangibles—alienated employees, customers, and suppliers; a tarnished brand image; and lost momentum. Even one misfire of this magnitude can cripple a business. Coaching and mentoring are the most effective on-boarding tools. I first talk with the new leader and the boss and define requirements. I meet with the team and determine what they need to know about the new leader and what he or she needs to know about them. Then I facilitate candid dialogue between the team and leader. We draft ground rules and a road map for success, how to measure progress and create a culture of trust.

**10. Develop a thick skin.** You will be scrutinized, criticized, and possibly fired or acquired. The standard PR hype that goes with an acquisition sounds like this: "We are so impressed with the management and direction of your company that we have no interest in changing it. In fact, we can learn a lot from all you've done right." This love-fest seldom lasts long. Many acquired leaders seem to forget: They now own you! You are now part of *them*, and they can do whatever they want to do. Realize that you may be starting over. Learn what matters most to your new boss and board. Look for positives.

## Entrepreneurial Spirit

To instill an entrepreneurial spirit in people, follow these eight suggestions:

1. **Love what you do, and do what you love.** Years of hard work won't seem so hard if you do what you love. My mentor, Dr. Paul Hersey, upon receiving an honorary doctorate, shared one secret for success with graduating students: "Looking back, I don't feel that I've worked a day in my life. If you love what you do, it all seems like fun!"

2. **Be curious.** One great leader is G.M. Rao, founder of GMR Infrastructure in India. When I asked his colleagues what he does right, they all marveled at his curiosity: "He travels through life, constantly observing, taking notes on potential opportunities, and then he acts—he follows up with messages to staff that say, 'Please check this out.'"

3. **Find your market niche.** Develop a competency that differentiates you. Be creative. Look for market needs and provide innovative solutions—products and services that are better or different. Ask: What should be done that isn't?

4. **Become a world expert.** Achieving world-class expertise may not be daunting. If you pick a narrow specialization, focus on it, and learn as much as you can, you'll accumulate serious knowledge in a few years. You can't become the world authority on everything, but you can be an authority on one thing.

5. **Learn from the best.** As you ponder career options, ask yourself: *Who do I want to be like in 10 years?* or *Who are the experts in fields related to my expertise?* Learn from these people. Some may even go out of their way to help you.

6. **Do your homework.** While your role models may help you, respect that they're busy people. Their time is valuable. If they've written books on a topic, read the books before you ask them questions. If they are executives, study their history, read their bios, and learn from their co-workers before you ask them to invest their time to help you.

7. **Build your own brand.** Create your mission statement. My mission is *to be the world authority in helping successful leaders achieve positive, lasting change in behavior.* People will respect you more if you don't pretend to know everything but have a unique brand as a leader.

8. **Pay the price.** You may get lucky and succeed without having to work hard. Don't count on it. Most successful people work very hard. Their *luck* often comes from the years of effort that prepare them to take advantage of fortuitous opportunities. LE

*Marshall Goldsmith helps successful leaders achieve positive, measurable change in behavior. He is the author of What Got You Here Won't Get You There. Visit [MarshallGoldsmithLibrary.com](http://MarshallGoldsmithLibrary.com).*

**ACTION:** Build the confidence of your people.

## Leadership Strengths

*You have what you need to lead.*



by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie

LEADERS OFTEN WONDER: HOW CAN I fix my weaknesses to be a more complete leader? How can I emulate the traits of great leaders? Should I focus on vision or strategy? Our answer is: *Don't bother.* Those issues will only distract you from the key aspect of leadership—your natural talents. These can be developed into strengths, and great strengths make leaders great.

*We all have natural talents, but great leaders are highly aware of theirs.* They know what they're good at and spend *countless hours* becoming better at what they do best. They don't try to become *well-rounded* or like some other leader. Nor do they devote their energies solely to the relentless pursuit of strategy or vision. What they don't do well, they hire someone else to do.

When leaders focus on *developing the strengths of their people*, the odds of their people being engaged go up eightfold! Leaders need to focus on helping others uncover, develop, and deploy their strengths.

Effective leaders figure out how best to use the strengths they have. It matters less what your strengths are—the key is to understand what strengths you have, how those strengths help you to be effective, and how you can best deploy your strengths to have the greatest impact.

There is no *universal set of talents* that leaders have in common. Leaders are all very different. For example, if you were to sit with four leaders—Brad Anderson, CEO of Best Buy; Wendy Kopp, CEO of Teach For America; Simon Cooper, CEO of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co.; and Mervyn Davies, chairman of Standard Chartered Bank—you'd note that they do things very differently based on their awareness of their unique talents.

*If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you'll never be great at anything.* Mimicry takes away from

who you naturally are. Encouraging people to be well-rounded inadvertently breeds mediocrity. Great leaders are not well-rounded individuals. They do not become *world-class leaders* by being average or above-average in different aspects of leadership. They become world-class in a few areas of leadership. They recognize their strengths and their deficiencies, and they successfully identify and hire others who can compensate for those deficiencies.

The concept of *well-roundedness* sounds desirable from a developmental perspective; but when people try to fix their weakness, they spend inordinate time trying to become marginally better in an area that will never be strong for them. They get far less of a return by trying to shore up mediocre capabilities. Leadership is not a construct of well-rounded attributes—it is the consequence of some incisive talents that are specific and slightly narrow in focus *being leveraged to the maximum.*

Great leaders spend countless hours leveraging their natural talents. They aren't just *naturally gifted*. You need *both* effort and talent to produce greatness.

If you lack a basic awareness of your natural talents and where you could receive the most return on the time you invest, you won't go far. So, don't try to be like some great historical leader. The best leaders all do things differently. If you try to follow someone else's style or system, you'll only achieve mediocrity.

Leaders must lead without pretense. Leaders who understand their strengths find their way of leading. Mimicry takes away from who you naturally are. So unless there is a perfect overlap of styles, you'll be less genuine when you mimic others.

We see *four domains of leadership strength*—*executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking.* Ensure that your team has the strength and capability to cover all four domains. If *strategic thinking* or *relationship building* is weak, you need to compensate for it. If you only have *strategic thinking*, you'll head in the right direction with no one behind you. If you only have *relationship building*, you'll have a happy team that is likely headed toward a bad result. Leaders who know their strengths find their best way of leading. LE

*Tom Rath and Barry Conchie are authors of Strengths Based Leadership. Visit [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).*

**ACTION:** Lead from your strengths.



# Leadership Development

Create a multi-year plan and evolve as you go.



by Josh Bersin

COMPANIES REACHING the strategic stage of leadership development (LD) perform better than companies with generic and inconsistent approaches. In fact, companies at the top levels of maturity show measurable bottom-line benefits, including lower turnover among high-performing employees, half the rate of downsizing, and higher scores on *productivity, financial performance, strength of leadership pipeline, and planning*. These companies are more likely to emerge from the recession ahead of the pack.

Our *Leadership Development Factbook* (based on a survey of 350 firms) shows that LD continues to be a top priority. But the study also raises red flags:

**Only half of all leaders participated in some type of LD last year** (in spite of the huge role that leadership plays). Senior leaders create and implement the strategy, drive growth, inspire high performance, and help sustain competitive advantage. As technologies and markets shift, leaders must adapt.

**Many leaders fall short in skills development.** We asked participants to rate the skills and capabilities of each level of leader based on expectations for that role. Leaders received lackluster performance ratings. In fact, only 37 percent of executives were rated as having *excellent* skills and capabilities—and fewer than half of executives have development plans in place, and 20 percent of companies don't offer *any* development to executives. *Clearly, executives are not getting enough focused development.* Many companies have put aside LD as they cope with restructuring and layoffs. With fewer budget dollars, companies are more selective in choosing leaders for development.

**Informal learning is gaining traction for leaders.** Companies continue to develop leaders, despite the economic challenges, by turning to less formal, more collaborative methods. These changes can make LD programs more cost efficient. *Informal learning* refers to learning that is ad hoc, customized to an individual's needs, unstructured

with no defined beginning and end, and without the discipline of instructional design. We advise L&D teams to “architect” these informal elements, set clear objectives for each, decide how to evaluate their success, and include them in the design of all major learning programs. The effort to provide more structure is formalizing informal learning.

Because the lines between *formal* and *informal* learning are blurred, **we group informal learning into three main categories:**

- **On-demand learning** (self-study) refers to learner-led activities, such as books, reference materials, videos, podcasts, online self-study materials and other content. This learning is not part of a structured program, but is consumed at the learner's discretion. For example, GE relies on its SkillSoft library to maintain a continuous learning environment for its leaders. First- and mid-level managers are more likely to access online materials; senior-level managers and executives access more books and videos.

- **Social learning** (collaborative) refers to the use of social experiences and includes project teams, coaching, mentoring, social networking, communities of practice, quality councils, wikis and blogs. Social learning is the hottest topic in LD (most companies are now experimenting with it). Coaching and mentoring, although highly effective for all leader levels, are more commonly used for senior-level leaders and executives. Communities of practice, wikis and blogs are more highly adopted at the lower levels—likely because these are typically younger individuals who fit into the Generation-X or -Y categories, and who embrace technology.

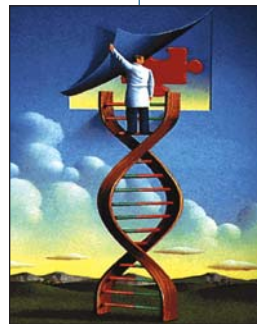
For example, **Ameriprise Financial** recently implemented a mentoring program. Using an online system, mentors sign up to be a mentor and complete a profile. Those seeking mentors sign up and also complete a profile. Based on *leadership competencies*, the system identifies a match between mentor's strengths and mentee's needs. Mentees search the database to find a mentor and then reach out to the mentor. Mentee's

manager approves the pairing. The mentor and mentee receive training resources that support the relationship.

- **Embedded learning** (on the job) encompasses processes, content, and systems that help an employee solve problems and learn while doing the job, such as job-aids, help systems in software, checklists, reference cards and online performance support. Even “stretch goals,” customer interviews, councils and feedback surveys are considered as embedded learning. First- and mid-level managers are more likely to take advantage of job-aids, reference tools and performance support applications. Since senior leaders learn best by being challenged on the job, stretch goals and complex assignments are effective.

**Case in point: Formalizing informal development at Motley Fool.**

Motley Fool provides investing advice and stock research. With about 215 employees, the company uses an innovative approach to developing its future leaders. Its Fellowship Program targets up to 12 individuals who have the potential to run



the company. This cohort meets weekly for 18 months. Executives teach a series of six-week courses to educate participants about all key areas of the company and provide them with tools to lead.

Participants are assigned rigorous reading and work together in study groups and team-building activities. They interact, breaking down silos and collaborating. Each study group presents a final project, usually addressing some problem or opportunity. Many of their ideas have been adopted. They also work on several high-profile experiences—including running a board meeting, presenting a summary of their experience, and spending time with some leader in their field from outside the company.

**Making progress.** Building an effective LD program takes time. Develop a multi-year plan that includes executive sponsorship, business alignment, tailored competencies, and TM integration.

Companies with *mature LD programs* give their leaders higher ratings on their skills and capabilities. Strategic LD does, in fact, improve the skills and capabilities of leaders at every level, and companies with best-practice LD consistently outperform and endure. **LE**

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**ACTION: Refine your LD program and process.**

# Distributed Leadership

*Going from pyramids to networks.*



by Deborah Ancona and Elaine Backman

THE WORLD HAS BECOME MORE COMPLEX, fast-paced, hazardous and unpredictable with economies in crisis, war, nuclear proliferation, global warming, starvation and disease. Leaders face shrinking revenues, increasingly competitive markets, and a race to develop new products.

Leaders have been woefully inadequate at solving these problems. The recent past has showcased a leadership stage featuring Greek tragedies filled with leaders who are corrupt, out of touch, and unable to act—witness the latest insider trading scandal, the Afghan elections and Wall Street bonuses that make Marie Antoinette's famous, "Let them eat cake" seem like a minor disconnect with the populace.

Addressing these issues will require cooperation, reliance on others, internal and external engagement, and working (sometimes leading and sometimes following) with people who are different from us. It will require distributed leadership (DL).

DL involves practices that are more collaborative, open and decentralized—designed to mesh effectively with new forms of work and new technologies. And while it is difficult to leave behind models of the pyramid with the omniscient, omnipotent leader at the top, more organizations are viewing leadership not as an individual characteristic, but as a system involving networks of leaders—some formal, others informal—operating at all levels and often across boundaries. Such leaders can more effectively mobilize the collective intelligence, motivation, and creative talent of their employees, partners, and customers.

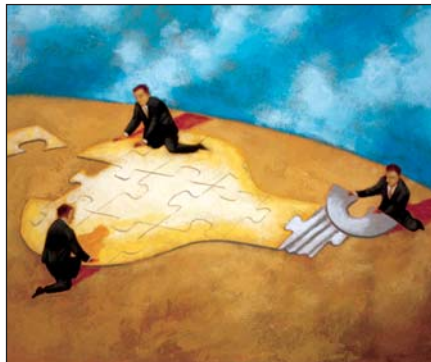
The MIT Leadership Center has launched a project to identify DL practices, mapping their dynamics, and evaluating their effectiveness so that we know more about what it is and how to make it work at the firm level. Deep dive research at specific

companies is one way we are finding patterns of leadership at the firm level. We are also creating a community purposefully designed to reflect the diversity of opinions and expertise that characterize distributed leadership. Our recent forum brought together more than 65 senior executives and leading academics to explore sustainable solutions for today's challenges. So far, we've learned three lessons:

## Lesson 1: Five Common Elements

First, while many organizations are experimenting with selected DL practices, some are weaving together multiple practices into broader DL systems with five common elements:

**1. Spontaneous forms of collaboration.** While organizations that rely on *command and control leadership* and those



that rely on DL may both exhibit significant collaboration, the latter appear to involve more fluid and spontaneous forms. For example, when there was a technical glitch at the interface of work done by three groups at a company with *command and control leadership*, the organization arranged for a meeting of the three group managers to discuss the problem and decide how to proceed. In an organization with DL facing a similar problem, members from each of the groups "swarmed" together when the glitch was identified, did a quick diagnosis, brainstormed solutions, and immediately sent a small group to a local supplier to find a part to fix the problem.

**2. Multi-directional influence.** In one company moving toward DL, the senior manager stopped making the choices about which new product ideas would move forward. Instead, she created a cross-organizational committee, gave them a budget, and told them to choose

which projects to fund. These decisions prompted on-going dialogue between the committee and manager about funding levels and strategic direction. We saw similar multi-directional influence in firms that relied more on DL practices. In one, key decisions are even made by external partners.

**3. Local entrepreneurship.** Several companies with strong DL offered examples of employee-initiated change. At one high-tech manufacturing company, engineers hatched new product ideas during *doodle time*. Many of these engineers were then able to attract sufficient interest and commitment from coworkers, get funding, and actually create new businesses for their firm.

**4. Global purpose.** In organizations with *command and control leadership*, the top of the organization sets strategy and others implement their specific part. In organizations with DL, however, there is more widespread and in-depth understanding of the *shared purpose and vision*. In one organization we visited, everyone from the top to low-level technicians could talk about the vision—as well as the markets they served, the financial return they needed, and the resources they could use. People did not have a sense of their job in isolation, but held a sense of the whole. And, people felt that they had freedom to act in new ways to contribute to the global purpose and even shape it.

**5. Peer mitigation of risk.** In organizations with high DL, we see clear evidence of *shared accountability for survival and mitigation of risk*. Organizations practicing *command-and-control leadership* often have specialized risk assessment groups and risk limitation rules; more distributed forms augment these mechanisms with shared cultural norms supporting smaller bets on a broader array of new products and markets. People regulate themselves and check on others to be sure that no one is putting the organization in jeopardy.

In DL systems, many more individuals take on the role of leader. These leaders engage proactively and collaboratively to create change in alignment with the shared global purpose that focuses and guides action and with mutual regulation to avoid excess risk.

## Lesson 2: Four Clusters

Experimentation with DL is occurring in four clusters:

**1. Traditional hierarchies** like IBM, Cisco, and Best Buy that introduce DL practices as an overlay on a hierarchy. This category also includes professional organizations, which may have fewer

levels and be governed by a partnership model, but are trying to shift from top-down, centralized control to DL.

**2. Distributed DNA organizations** like Google, W.L. Gore and Whole Foods that minimize hierarchy and maximize collaboration with multi-directional influence from their inception.

**3. Nimble networks** such as *Wikipedia*, open-source projects, and P&G's *Connect and Develop* initiative composed of individuals or networks working semi-autonomously that may never take on a formal organizational form but nevertheless produce complex outputs.

**4. Cross-organizational collaborations** such as joint ventures in Silicon Valley or value chain collaborations including corporations, NGOs, and local suppliers that partner across sectors to provide predictable raw material delivery and sustainable work practices.

### Lesson 3: We Can Measure DL

While many organizations have DL practices, there is great variation in the level and patterns. To understand it, we need three ways to *map and measure* DL:

**We can document the portion of employees engaged in leadership activities:** creating contextual understanding (*sensemaking*) setting direction (*visioning*), gaining commitment (*relating*), and aligning action (*inventing*). We can then diagram how these leaders are distributed across formal and informal roles and across different levels. If all leadership behaviors are concentrated in a few leaders at the top, there's no DL.

**We can measure elements of DL to see how many are present.** In the financial services sector are many attributes of DL. However, missing are *risk mitigation mechanisms* that might have avoided the financial crisis. Similarly, organizations can have *spontaneous collaboration* but still follow more of a *command and control* influence pattern.

**We can map patterns of DL, since DL may be confined within different boundaries.** One organization is starting to practice DL, but efforts have only spread to the top three levels. Another is effectively practicing DL, but employees struggle to exhibit the same practices when dealing with other firms. Thus, one way to map patterns of DL is to indicate which elements of DL are being practiced across which boundaries.

Sustainable success will require all of us working together—it is going to take distributed leadership. LE

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**ACTION: Develop more distributed leadership.**

## Improving ROI

On your development program.



by David Giber

I'M OFTEN ASKED ABOUT leadership development (LD) best practices—about which ones make the greatest positive impact and help turn *training programs* into a *leadership system*. Leaders want to know: Where's the biggest ROI?

I consider these three practices to be most powerful in developing leaders:

**1. Integrate classroom experiences with on-the-job application.** Most firms have LD programs that are highly rated in terms of the experience of participants but have little or no connection to rigorous application of the learning on the job. Despite all the excitement over action learning and connecting classroom experiences to on-the-job assignments, this is still the biggest gap in LD—often due to the difficulty of coordinating assignments and the discomfort many leaders feel when working as mentors and coaches. Training groups rarely note how participation in LD will integrate with talent and succession planning for on-the-job assignments and participation on task forces.

The artful blending of classroom work and on-the-job assignments takes focus. At *Macy's*, for example, the *Leadership Institute* has refined the work of *challenge assignments* so that high-potential participants review their on-the-job application plans with their manager, their manager's manager, a group of their peers and a senior executive from another division. Alumni from past programs are used to mentor and advise on these assignments. This scrutiny leads to broader, more strategic thinking and more stretch in the challenges participants take on. Put as much work into determining the dynamics of on-the-job development assignments as you do into planning curricula.

*Action learning* in teams integrates LD with real-world issues and practice. The critical issue, as Henry Mintzberg notes, is to make it into *action-reflection learning*, leaving time to assure that the program is not dominated by actions to be taken or problems to be solved.



**2. Connect LD with business strategy.** Connect LD to the strategy and involve internal leaders as teachers and facilitators of the strategy. Involve leaders in crafting the strategic message and issues to be tackled. Beyond telling leadership stories, it is teaching in a way that projects the participants into the strategic choices and decisions that their leaders are facing. Taking on the role of teacher has a profound impact on senior leaders and changes their view of LD. However, these leaders are seldom trained to be effective teachers and facilitators of strategic cases studies and interactive debates. Such teaching takes preparation and coaching, but it alters the leader's approach to asking questions, listening, and learning. Create your own toolkits for analyzing and solving problems, improving teamwork, and driving change. These become teaching tools. Creating a committed internal leadership faculty is a powerful way to turn senior leader into passionate advocates.

**3. Provide access to the right resources at the right time.** Time access the LD to the right career or transition point. Involve emerging leaders where they are ready and open to learn. Communicate a development roadmap of where the leadership transitions are and what's needed to succeed at each point. Connect the program closely to a recent transition point in responsibility or scope so that it rings powerfully in the experience of participants. Clarify *developmental goals* of a program or assignment to the participant, manager, and direct reports.

Ensure that participants are ready to learn and engage with a new set of leadership issues. Do the assessments create an opening—through the 360-degree feedback process—and do participants gain new insights on their personality, decision style, or strategic thinking? The learning needs to be applied during the class and reapplied intensively after class. *Timing* means engaging individuals, teams, and organizations at points where the *connections to leadership learning* hit with impact because success is not guaranteed and the stretch to improve and innovate effectively gets people's attention.

**Look for ways to bolster these three best practices** as you seek an integrated approach to developing leaders. LE

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**ACTION: Implement these three best practices.**

# Recovery Leadership

*Commandment or commitment?*



by Janet Boulter

AS A RECESSION SHOWS signs of recovery, leaders and managers need to adopt a new mindset to prevent a reoccurrence of the problems. The adage *what got us here, won't get us there* is good strategic advice. Leaders and managers need to shift their ideas, beliefs, and processes from a mindset of *commanding* to *committing* in order to shift their structures to stay competitive.

The word *commandment* is defined as: an order, to dominate by position or order, to mandate. Some organizations function best and most efficiently in the *command style* including the military and most government agencies (like the post office), where strict order and discipline is required to coordinate the hundreds of thousands of people and products they're responsible for. The more people involved, the more complicated the processes and the more compliant the required outcomes, the better match for a *command style* of leadership. Today, if you are not mobilizing millions of people or managing millions of pieces of mail, you should shift to a *commitment style*.

The old way of operating was in the hierarchal structure where employees chose (or were chosen) to join one specific career path—either the *management ladder* or the *technical ladder*. Each ladder had a defined process or career path of moving up to the next level, but rarely could you cross over from one ladder to the next. This structure created a *command style* of leadership where plans and strategies were created at the top and implemented down the rungs of employees. Companies were organized into vertical silos, each with its own profit goals and products/services. This rigid organization often creates competition with the same organization and forces employees to develop specific skills within their defined career ladder. Organizations structured in a silo format offer little communication or teamwork between groups, and some groups even end up competing against each other.

I think of the hierarchical (*command*) style of leadership like a

ladder. The ladder gives you two options—climb up (usually one rung at a time)—or go back down (either one rung at a time or slide to the bottom). If you need to move to a different work area, you must move the ladder, greatly reducing productivity. The *command style* is about prioritizing the “must haves” with the available personnel within a specified time frame to accomplish specific goals. There is little room for flexibility, and few things are negotiable. People are expected to fit with a specified structure and play by the rules. There is little information sharing, few options for creativity, and everything is measured and improvement goals determined. Companies hire based on demand; when the need declines, the workforce is reduced. This hire/fire



cycle creates a *peak and valley syndrome* with strong, fast growth followed by immediate and drastic reductions. This cycle reduces productivity and profits.

In some organizations, the *command style* of leadership has its benefits and usefulness. It can be an efficient way of managing a large workforce, where you need well-defined set of skills for each position and promotions need to be carefully planned based on need and qualifications. It minimizes discrimination and keeps everyone informed of their expectations and work requirements. If you operate in a controlled, predictable environment, the *command style of leadership* may be the best choice. But today, rigid hierarchical structures must bend to stay competitive and be flexible enough to operate in the technology-oriented environment.

Technology combined with different skills and talents for employees are requiring business leaders to shift their

structures to a matrix managed format, under the *commitment style of leadership*. I think of a matrix managed organization like building *scaffolding*—designed to be configured in different arrangements that provide users with the mobility to move up/down, side to side, and even diagonally. Such scaffolding can greatly increase productivity and reduce costs over time by allowing continuous movement without having to constantly move the ladder.

**What is commitment style of leadership?** *Commitment* is a *pledge or promise, engagement or involvement*. Regardless of your current structure, changes in leadership style are required to effectively keep you in the competitive race. People who have been raised in this technological environment want flexibility, fast access, and immediate information, and they have a high need to be involved and included. The Gen X or Y employee is prepared to change jobs for the slightest new opportunity. You need to keep employee turnover to a minimum to control costs and to develop the skills and talents for future management and leadership.

**Commitment style involves focusing on and encouraging the development of the softer skills.** It is about teamwork, attitude, relationships, striving for excellence, and the freedom to change and adapt as necessary. It is about the possibility of change and the speed of adaptability, when the economy shifts direction. It is about encouraging (and rewarding) your employees for “going the extra mile,” thinking outside of the box, committing to delivering a higher degree of quality, being proactive, encouraging communications, building relationships, setting the expectations, giving people the freedom to achieve their best through *encouragement not demands*, and retaining your employees during slowdowns.

As we see signs of economic recovery, leaders need to embrace a new attitude, a new awareness of possibility. Relax the boundaries, think outside of the box (or throw away the box), set your goals and aspirations high, expand your communications program, commit to achieving a new level of quality. Start shifting from the *command style* to the *commitment* to change: encourage passion, instill trust, empower people, and prepare for unlimited possibilities. *Commit* to creating an organization that is responsive, focused, and profitable. LE

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**ACTION:** *Engage in recovery leadership.*

# Revitalize Your Leadership

*Reorientation + Renewal = Revitalization.*



by William Bridges

**M**Y LEADERSHIP practice goes in waves. For a while, it is all about mergers, then outsourcing or *de-jobbing*—getting work done without so much reliance on full-time, long-term workers (people with traditional jobs)—and then *reorganization* or *revitalization* of a team or organization after a difficult change.

Even if the change doesn't affect the structure or processes directly, people feel drained or confused by the change. If *transition* is managed effectively from the start, negative impacts can be minimized. But people usually don't do the right thing the first time around; so, by the time I get there, things aren't going well. People are *already* demoralized. Talent is *already* heading for the exits. Productivity has *already* dropped. The time for *avoiding trouble* is past. Now, we need to *revitalize* people.

Ironically, the very process that wears people out—*transition*—is the source of the solution. If well managed, transition can give them a fresh start.

Let's see how that can happen in four different situations. Teams/organizations seem to fall naturally into three groups: **Group 1** is holding on to the past; they can't get with the changes because they can't let go of *the way we've always done it*. **Group 2** is stuck somewhere in between the old and new way. **Group 3** is having trouble getting the new ways launched. Each group needs to be *revitalized*.

## Holding on to the Past

Group 1 needs help with four things:

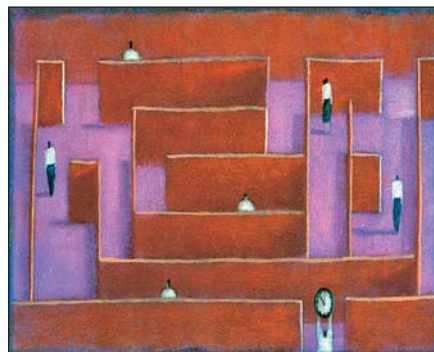
**1. It needs to say goodbye to the past, after honoring it for its contributions.** *Saying goodbye* is a metaphorical process, so this may involve some ritual or symbolic event. There's no list of rituals. What you need to do is get people talking about what it's time to let go of and how that letting-go could be expressed visually or dramatically.

**2. The gates need to be closed behind the people.** Some people hold on in the belief that *all this new stuff will pass*, so send a strong message: *There's no going back*. When Moses headed for the promised land, he closed the Red Sea be-

hind the people. This protected them from pursuit and cut off their retreat.

**3. Unpack old baggage.** Often what holds people back are attitudes and beliefs from a previous change that went badly. Sometimes it is unresolved resentments or outlived arrangements. Now is the time to finish any unfinished business or discard what isn't working—then you're free to move on.

**4. The hangers-on are swamped by the confusions of the situation.** Let go? Of what? You may need to re-prioritize actions to be taken or weed out non-essential things that get onto the agenda. Simplify and clarify what the group is doing—and what it will no longer do. Most people are then ready to move on.



## Stuck in the Middle

Group 2 is bogged down or stuck in a transition, in the neutral zone, and unable to get out. This situation won't resolve itself, but four things will help:

**1. Review with the group its purpose or reason for being.** Get clear on purpose when a group is stalled or drifting. Remind the group of its charter, or update the purpose a bit to realign it with the real needs of the situation.

**2. Paint a convincing picture of the optimal future state.** In a neutral zone, people need to re-focus their energy on their own internal transformation, but that turning can become an immobilizing force. Rushing people through the neutral zone is counter-productive, but they need to have their destination re-established again and again.

**3. Involve the group itself in creating and implementing a plan for getting there.** To present them with the plan does only half the job, for it is in working through the issues and in designing the best solution to them that a group comes to understand what is

needed. Just as important, is how a group comes to understand why other ways simply won't work. When the plan is theirs, they are invested in it.

**4. Everyone needs to have a significant part to play**—both in reaching the goal and in operating successfully once it is reached. From a change point of view, handing out parts-to-play gets the work done; from a *transition* point of view, it insures that getting through the transition serves everyone's self-interest.

## Failure to Launch

Group 3 still struggles to focus on the new beginning. Do four things:

**1. Give people a clear grasp on what the general vision means for them.** For people to overcome their fear that they'll do badly in a new effort that they've never tried, you need to translate the general goals into an actual plan for the group, and into the behaviors and attitudes that each individual will need to contribute to the joint effort.

**2. Go beyond explaining—dramatize those new behaviors and attitudes.** Find and publicize an example of someone who is practicing them, or embody them in your behavior. Look for symbolic events and initiatives that capture the new style that the change requires.

**3. Protect people's first tentative efforts at doing something in a new and unfamiliar way.** Go for small-scale victories that encourage further efforts and sway people who aren't yet making such ventures. People's first efforts in a new style are like the first shoots sent out by a plant: they are fragile. So, don't think *this is the real world!* and *people had better get used to working in it*.

**4. Reward the new behaviors.** Even leaders who are committed to a strategic change may thoughtlessly do and say things that reward people for acting the old way. Ask for feedback. If you need some help, find someone who can coach you.

Getting a group through transition creates two components of *revitalization*: it *reorients* the group, by pointing it in a new direction and engaging it in the behaviors necessary to make the new way work; and it *renews* the group by dissociating it from its old patterns, immersing it in the energy-rich neutral zone, and rebuilding its sense of purpose in a new beginning.

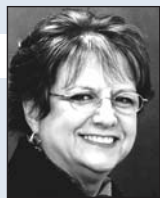
A well-managed transition ensures that the change will work as planned and it will *revitalize* the group. LE

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**ACTION: Revitalize your people.**

## Innovative Culture

*It's a leadership responsibility.*



by Sharon Daniels

**C**RISIS BEGETS INNOVATION. In turmoil, leaders wonder: *How do we get out of this mess?* Many focus on saving money, trimming costs, cutting talent, or seeking policy shifts and stimulus funds. But the long-term solution rests with *innovation*—thinking your way out of problems by *changing the circumstances*.

To discover how to create a culture of innovation, we interviewed a diverse group from many industries worldwide.

We discovered that innovative workplaces share six cultural characteristics:

- **Context rich.** Information feeds innovation. Ensure free-flowing communication so innovators can draw on a rich background and perspective.

- **Customer close.** Creating customer value, key to innovation, requires deep commitment to connecting with customers' expectations, needs and wants.

- **Confidence building.** Innovative ideas aren't introduced or executed by people who are fearful, tentative, or waiting for confirmation. Leaders who *build confidence* build innovators.

- **Curious.** Encouraging people to think in terms of "why?" "why not?" and "what if?" leads to new understandings.

- **Challenging.** Resting on past success does not drive innovation. Cultures that encourage people to reach for new heights inspire innovative results.

- **Collaborative.** Innovation is a team sport. People must work together in informal networks or sanctioned teams to generate and implement new ideas.

To cultivate a culture of innovation, make it a strategic priority and put systems and processes in place that encourage and implement change. Inspired innovation demands *committed leaders*.

Innovation moves organizations from a *defensive* to an *offensive* position in the market, *being ahead*, not *playing catch-up*.

Leaders must manage and facilitate an innovation process that delivers results. A process creates a common language and serves as a focal point for appropriately prioritizing and deploying the effort and energy of all involved.

Innovative leaders help make innovation happen by speaking genuinely and backing up their words with action. They generate the most and best ideas by optimizing diversity and sparking new thinking. They select and shape promising ideas. This enables execution by leveraging resources.

**Everyone owns responsibility for innovation.** Effective collaboration creates the synergies required for breakthrough thinking and sound execution. Executives, managers, or staff could achieve little just by their own knowledge or expertise. More minds create better innovation and swifter change.

### Genuine LD Generates Innovation

The *Genuine Leadership* system facilitates building a motivated, loyal workforce capable of greater innovation. Since the four management levels have different development needs, we divide the levels into skill areas:

**Executives DEFINE leadership vision.** Training provides core knowledge and skills, but leaders and employees must know where the organization is going, see a compelling reason for change, understand the benefits, and express support for using skills learned in training. Executives need to ensure that the leadership solution leverages strengths, addresses the critical issues, and achieves lasting results.

**Senior managers DIRECT resources to transform vision to action.** Managers must determine what actions are needed to deliver the results and what it will take to create and sustain those behaviors.

Organizations get the behaviors they shape and reinforce. To build a culture that reinforces productive behaviors, translate the strategy to a tactical level, asking *why are people doing what they're doing?* Then align processes and systems and allocate resources that enable employees to *deliver desired results*.

**Managers DEVELOP others.** They develop the capabilities in individuals to execute defined strategy. They teach, coach, reinforce, model, give feedback, empower, recognize, and lead day-to-day behavioral improvement.

**Individual contributors DELIVER results.** Customers get results when individuals do the right things at the right times. People deliver results. **LE**

Sharon Daniels is CEO of AchieveGlobal, where she leads the company's strategic vision and development. Visit [www.achieveglobal.com](http://www.achieveglobal.com) or call 1-800-566-0630.

**ACTION:** Create an innovative culture.



## Power of Diversity

*Create competitive advantage.*



by Pat Lencioni

**F**EW TEAMS TAP INTO THE power of diversity. Recently I was reminded why. Our firm was meeting to discuss our marketing strategy when we got into a loud, passionate argument. Two team members argued their point based on an *accurate interpretation* of something we'd decided earlier. Other members were making their point based on a *theoretical interpretation*.

For a minute, our debate sounded more like a brawl, with team members calling each other out for their intellectual biases and blind spots. Fortunately, because there is great trust on our team, our argument never came close to personal or mean-spirited attacks.

When the melee was over and we'd arrived at a decision, I realized that the conflict had allowed us to get closer to the truth, which often lies somewhere between two divergent points of view (*rational and data-driven* versus *emotional and intuitive*). The practical advantage of diversity is that a group of people with different perspectives, backgrounds, and skills usually makes better decisions and finds more creative solutions. However, when a team can't productively engage in conflict, the power of diversity remains untapped—it becomes a competitive *disadvantage*.

When team members with divergent points of view can't passionately advocate their positions, the team can't understand and incorporate those ideas into a final decision. Instead, they compromise, walking away *dissatisfied* with the outcome and *resentful* of team members who they still don't understand.

When we talk about *diversity*, we tend to emphasize *acceptance*, *tolerance*, and *getting along*—all good things. The problem surfaces when those qualities prevent people from challenging one another's points of view out of fear of being labeled *close-minded* or *intolerant*.

The key to making diversity a *competitive advantage* is to teach people first how to *appreciate one another's differences*, and then how to *challenge them* in pursuit of the best possible outcome. **LE**

Pat Lencioni is CEO of The Table Group. Visit [www.tablegroup.com](http://www.tablegroup.com).

**ACTION:** Tap into the power of diversity.

## Beyond Hiring

*Five steps for retention.*



by Kathy Albarado

**W**HEN DEVELOPING best practices for interviewing, hiring, and on-boarding new employees, do you also address the responsibility of hiring managers? Managers should take ownership of the relationships with new employees and retention.

By reaching out to new employees and coaching them through the new hire process, managers can create a better culture for hiring practices and increased retention. In most hiring processes, hiring managers interview a candidate and provide HR with feedback on whether or not the candidate is desirable. Managers need to remain engaged in the process beyond the interview to ensure optimal employee assimilation and retention.

To keep managers engaged before, during, and after a new employee's start date, take these five steps:

**1. Develop checklists for new hires and managers to complete together before new hire start date.** Coordinate with the new hire's manager, so that both parties understand where new employees should report on the first day, and identify activities that they'll perform during their first few weeks. Hiring managers should assign a buddy or mentor to the new hire to address questions or concerns. First impressions last, so having cards and email/voice mail set up sends a message.

**2. Identify first-day responsibilities of HR and of hiring managers.** Both parties share roles and responsibilities and should coordinate their efforts. HR may be responsible for orientation, providing new employees with an agenda for the first day. The orientation may include an overview of company history, business operations, strategic goals, structure, client and partner contacts, internal policies, and a benefits overview. Allow time to complete all forms necessary for benefits enrollment. The hiring manager is responsible for greeting new employees, providing a tour of the office, facilitating introductions

(especially to the mentor) and assimilating new employees. Consider taking the entire team out to lunch on the new hire's first day. It's amazing how this one simple action can unite a team.

**3. Identify first-week responsibilities.** During the first week, HR managers should follow up on activities requiring completion, ensuring that all forms are complete and enrollment in benefits programs are finalized. Managers should clarify concerns and address questions about the job description, performance expectations, training opportunities, performance goals, and the office operating environment.

**4. Seek integration during the first 30 to 90 days.** Hiring managers need to ensure that the orientation phase moves effectively into long-term assimilation. Neglecting to monitor assimilation greatly increases the odds of losing the new employee. Hiring managers can ensure the growth of cultural identity by assisting new hires in building positive relationships with co-workers, clients, and managers. Clearly communicating performance expectations and recognizing a job well done is ideally done by a manager who is actively engaged with the employee.

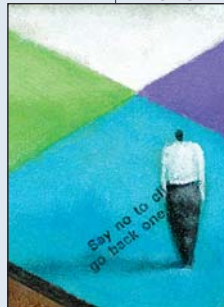
**5. Continue development beyond 90 days.** After initial goals and expectations are set, managers must follow through with new employees to refine performance goals based on changing project and client priorities. Employee and manager should identify and discuss mutually beneficial development goals and training needs and opportunities for career development. Managers can provide positive support and solicit employee feedback when possible.

HR should conduct a confidential survey to solicit feedback on the orientation and assimilation process. Feedback can help target areas for improvement and enhancement. Confidential surveys can be set up online through Web-based applications at low cost.

**Following these five steps reduces the time to assimilate new hires and increases retention.** Hiring managers need to dedicate the time and energy to assimilate new hires—to take ownership and share responsibility for assimilation and retention, and work with HR to ensure that new hires are clear on performance expectations and receive the resources they need to succeed. **LE**

*Kathy Albarado is CEO of Helios HR and coauthor of Guide to HR Administration (Thompson). Visit [www.helioshr.com](http://www.helioshr.com).*

**ACTION: Involve managers in assimilation.**



## Developing Leaders

*Innovative action learning program.*



by Cindy Crosby and Greg Zlevor

**L**EADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS are often cut in recessions, and yet LD programs are needed to train the leaders of tomorrow. At Johnson & Johnson (J&J), effective LD is a key success factor. We provide high-potentials with the resources and training they need to maximize their strengths and achieve optimal results.

Five years ago, J&J Quality executives developed an innovative leadership *action learning process*—the *Executive Quality Leadership Program* (EQLD)—to increase our pipeline of ready-now talent for critical positions. Before 2004, only 10 percent of the critical roles in Quality at the Director and VP level were filled from within J&J. Internal talent had low visibility and limited opportunity to develop skills. EQLD was created to address these concerns.

The premise of *Action Learning* programs is that individuals learn better by taking action and they retain much more knowledge and understanding when applying new concepts to an actual project. This is learning in action.

In the EQLD Action Learning program, delegates are required to develop a solution to a critical business challenge while engaging in leadership and skill-specific training in real-time. The vision is to build a diverse, robust pipeline of extraordinary J&J Quality leaders with the business savvy and technical capabilities to drive transformational change and create competitive advantage.

This year-long program was divided into three on-site residency sessions and three virtual periods. *On-site residency sessions* enable delegates to gather from different regions. Sessions last for up to seven days. Delegates engage with executive coaches to focus on their goals; subject matter experts to learn specific skills; and leadership coaches to learn in real time as they practice skills such as facilitation, delegation, and decision-making.

EQLD enables delegates to engage with J&J leaders, other cultures, and

government leaders. Prominent J&J business leaders advise, guide, and provide various resources to the delegates, thereby giving them an inside look at what their future might entail.

Each class travels to develop global leadership skills, understand operations in other cultures, and appreciate insights and experiences of colleagues.

In five years, over 100 delegates have graduated from EQLD, and the alumni network is strong; in fact, many former delegates continue to meet and solve critical businesses challenges. About 58 percent of participants in the first four classes have been promoted—18 to VP positions.

**Many lessons have come out of the program:** J&J business leaders need to speak, sponsor, and provide feedback while interacting with the class. Presenters and trainers need to be exciting, inspiring, credible, and interact with class members. Coaches need to be on-site during residency sessions for observation and real-time coaching. Customize the program and adjust the training as needed. All training needs to deal with relevant topics and issues. Executive *interaction* is more intense and impactful than *presentation*.

### Ask Four Key Questions

To create a burning platform for an LD program, ask four key questions:

**1. What are the critical business needs?** You may need to prepare high-potential leaders for the future. Adding a training program into a succession management and planning strategy is one way to protect against unexpected loss of top managers and executives and prevent long-term vacancies in top positions.

**2. What are the needs of your company today and in the near future?** Executives won't support a LD program focused on an undefined future—the program must address *immediate* and *future* needs.

**3. What are the costs and impact of continuing the present course?** At J&J, the cost of hiring externally for roles at the Director and VP levels was high—many positions remained vacant for months and external candidates required months to learn internal workings.

**4. What are the benefits of change?** Compare the costs of staying the present course against the benefits of change to build the burning platform for LD.

In executing the vision, remain flexible. LD programs evolve. Each year components of the program change. LE

Cindy L. Crosby is VP of Medical Devices & Diagnostics and Strategic Quality Leadership at J&J. Greg Zlevor is president of Westwood International. Visit [www.westwoodintl.com](http://www.westwoodintl.com).

**ACTION:** Evaluate current LD programs.

## Virtual Teamwork

*Eliminate us versus them conflict.*



by Joseph Grenny

**I**N YOUR EFFORTS TO BRING long-distance teams together, you may still encounter a strong sense of *us* and *them*. To make these working relationships among widely dispersed people more cohesive, think about all the sources of influence that *create* conflict and alienation in your current environment.

Start by asking yourself, "What can I do to *increase* conflict?" You can get almost any two people to resent each other if you do a number of things:

- Give them separate identity or goals.
- Make it difficult to communicate.
- Have them associate with a social group that already resents the others.
- Make it difficult for them to help each other or limit their communication to official channels by imposing a chain of command.

• Reward them for individual achievements or for supporting those in their area but not the large team.

• Keep them physically isolated—allow few means for them to communicate and then only in sterile ways (voice only, e-mail).

This set of influences will make it *inevitable* that people will, at best, tolerate those in other locations; at worst, despise them.

Now you might think *inevitable* is too strong a word. But our recent *Long Distance Loathing* study shows:

- Employees are 243 percent more likely to have problems with distant coworkers than co-located coworkers.
- Employees say that these problems are *more difficult to solve* and *last longer*.
- To cope with annoying co-workers, people avoid answering or stop returning phone calls or e-mails; read e-mail instead of listening during phone calls; avoid working with the colleague; tell the person what he/she wants to hear instead of sharing facts; leave the person out of the loop when making changes that affect him or her; warn others about working with the person; criticize the colleague to others; and challenge their colleague's decisions.

**What can a leader do?** Well, if these six sources of influence are the reason for

resentment, distance doesn't make conflict inevitable. It is only *one* source of influence. You have five other sources you can use to create a cohesive team; however, it will require work.

Here are a few examples for using multiple sources of influence:

**Source 1: Personal motivation.** Make a greater effort to create team identity and purpose. Have a mission, charter, and operating rules. Have a team name. If possible, have periodic face-to-face meetings. Take extra care as new members join the team. Create as much face time as possible so people connect at a human level, not just a task level.

**Source 2: Personal ability.** Build *crucial conversations* skills to ensure people don't resort to dysfunctional games.

**Sources 3 & 4: Social motivation and ability.** Build bonds of friendship and trust. Begin meetings by having one or more people share a personal anecdote. Have the team work on volunteer tasks or personal betterment tasks, such as raising money for United Way, running races in their communities, or building a *Habitat for Humanity* home.

Have team members from different locales meet together at client sites or work together on the same projects. Set the norm that everyone holds everyone accountable. Schedule frequent, formal feedback sessions—times when you ask about what's working and what's not. When you have a concern, talk it out—don't act it out.

**Source 5: Structural motivation.** Use small prizes or awards—maybe competitions—that provide an occasion for recognition. Distance often removes informal opportunities to say *thanks*. Let people know you're aware of their contribution and appreciate their work.

**Source 6: Structural ability.** Provide daily or weekly progress on key indicators that track team performance. Ensure people have visual reminders of their team members—photos on their phones or computers. Create a Web site, Facebook page, or social networking hub. Have a physical *teaming space* where team members can meet.

If you systematically counter sources of influence that create conflict, you'll see cooperation. Conflict is not natural. We are social creatures. Wise leaders bring out the best of our nature! LE

Joseph Grenny is co-author of *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*, and *Crucial Conversations* and speaker, consultant and co-founder of VitalSmarts. Visit [www.VitalSmarts.com](http://www.VitalSmarts.com).

**ACTION:** Create a culture of teamwork.



# New Normal Leaders

*Know constituents' state of mind.*



by Jim Clifton

**M**OST LEADERS ARE discovering that decision-making is more emotional than rational—consumers don't always make rational decisions about the products and services they buy. In the *new normal*, old ways of doing business won't work. Today, you need to understand your constituencies' state of mind, quantify it, and then use your knowledge of talent, innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, optimism, and determination to create real economic growth.

*There hasn't been a big idea in leadership in 25 years*—nothing that shows the huge sweet spots for big advancements. In the *next generation of leadership*, quality and price won't matter as much. With globalization, most everything can be made as well or more cheaply somewhere else. Someone, somewhere, can deliver excellent quality at the same or better price.

*The next big idea in leadership* is leading with an in-depth understanding of *states of mind*, not *financial statements*. You need to know the will of your constituencies—their will to work, live, revolt, and follow; how much stress they feel about money, about trying to get to work, about their relationship with their boss. Innovation, talent, and entrepreneurship are what matter most now. New leaders must master these areas because they drive growth. Everything human and important relates to *states of mind*.

Behavioral economics (BE) describes how people make decisions and how that affects behavior. But you can't apply BE until you can go beyond anecdotally describing behavior to *mathematically* describing it. You can't just talk about what you see or experience personally and *anecdotally*—you have to quantify it for it to be of value.

*Leaders who can quantify states of mind will be the winners.* They'll have the information—the data needed to solve the biggest problems. For example, many people think money is the solution to all problems, but problems like education, security, job creation, and well-being can't be solved by just

throwing money at them. Yes, you can double productivity if you spend enough on it, but it's not sustainable.

Today, solving problems isn't about spending money—it's about understanding and managing ideas, talent, and states of mind. That's where the new breakthroughs will be. The best leaders will quantify states of mind and make decisions based on the data.

*Your constituency is whomever you are leading*—your team, company, city, country. Or it's a group you're tracking. If you can quantify states of mind, you can better understand the emotions that cause behavior. Knowing those causes helps you change behavior. It also shows you where you're wrong. If you're making decisions without understanding what your constituency is thinking, you'll make poor decisions.

Since in the global marketplace, you can get anything from anywhere at the price you want, that negates competition based on price or quality. This new leadership requires you to quantify states of mind before you act. If you make decisions based on assumptions rather than data, you'll only make things worse. You must understand human nature, the states of mind prevailing in your constituency. If you don't, you'll make mistakes.

For better or worse, you *can* affect the states of mind of people you've never met. Everybody now can know everything about everyone—and that's fairly new. When I grew up, my only access to the world was my bike!

Since, in the global marketplace, you can get anything from anywhere at the price you want—or close to it—that negates competition based on price or quality, makes states of mind more important, and raises the bar on knowing how and why employees and customers behave the way they do. When you have choices to make, you can't base them solely on price or quality. You must make decisions based on workers' and customers' states of mind. You have to calibrate your strategies against behavioral economic data.

*This requires a new way to lead.*

Not long ago, you could buy customer constituencies with advertising. That's hard to do now because of information overload. With hundreds of cable channels and the Internet, your ad campaign gets buried by all the other stuff. This makes innovation more important. Innovation means you have to beat everybody with a better idea because that's worth more than money.

But, of course, talent is key to innovation. Talent is being able to do something better than 10,000 other people. So, to succeed in the new world, you need to find your strengths, then your passion. You'll be one in 10,000 with that. Then find which single thing you can become one of the best in the world at doing—some niche that you can own. Leaders want the workers in their constituency to be one in 10,000.

And their best have to be one in a million.

It costs less for a country to have citizens with high well-being because they're healthier, more productive, earn more, and they're more philanthropic.

No matter what you need to know about—talent, leadership, economics, corruption, law, war, *anything*—Gallup can hang a number on it, with our polling, research, assessments, or *Clifton Strengths-Finder*. If you can't hang a number on something, you make decisions without solid data on your constituencies' needs and states of mind. If you don't address your constituencies' needs, you'll fail at making policy, and won't change anything.

The ultimate win for your country, city, and company is *quality growth*. For a country, quality growth means growth in GDP—and that means creating good, future-oriented jobs. Quality growth in business is organic growth created by original ideas and magnificent entrepreneurship, rather than growth that comes merely from financial manipulations and acquisitions.

Leaders also need policies that create higher well-being for individuals. It costs less for a country to have citizens with high well-being because they're healthier, more productive, earn more, and are more philanthropic. That's how you *maintain leadership* of the free world.

When leaders tell us who their constituency is, we can help build an institution of data so they can thrive by creating a sustainable culture. LE

*Jim Clifton is Chairman and CEO of Gallup. Visit [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).*

**ACTION:** *Become a new normal leader.*



# Open Both Eyes

*Don't misplace attention.*



by Gregory Gull

**F**AILING TO DEVELOP an operational definition of *leadership*, we tend to think that leadership is the property of those in the upper echelon of a hierarchy. *Leadership* has become synonymous with a person of *position* or *title*—hence we commonly aspire to attain leadership positions. We also tend toward idol worship of people holding leadership positions (offered up as *models* or *examples* to emulate).

The problem is, in an effort to emulate celebrity leaders, many managers copy the practices of the idol with hopes of realizing similar results. I see four problems with such imitation: 1) not all persons holding high positions serve as great models of leadership; 2) not all practices should be copied; 3) copying without an in-depth understanding can be fatal; and 4) material results should not be the only focus.

For example, the misguided practice of *rank-and-yank performance management* is often copied. Though this practice may yield short-term material gain, it also fosters fear, mistrust, and competition—results antithetical to progress and the essence of the leadership experience. Deming's *System of Profound Knowledge*—so critical to leadership yet so rare in leaders—helps explain the flaws of this practice.

**How can we write so much about leadership yet understand so little?** Focusing eyes on *results*—on material manifestations of the decisions and actions—of those at the top limits analysis to what can be observed and measured.

As a means of identifying *leadership*, we tend to ascribe a noteworthy outcome as a leadership effect. For example, the CEO of a big-box chain was credited for providing leadership that doubled the number of stores and annual revenue over six years. Such outcomes can be the result of many actions. There are multiple paths to an end, and not all favorable outcomes are the result of admirable behavior—*the means are not justified by the ends*. Moreover, we can't assume that an effect is always locally caused or that an outcome catching our attention is the only effect. In fact,

*over the same six years*, the organization saw a decline in intellectual capital, employee morale, and service quality. Although the organization increased in profit, these gains were realized at the expense of future progress. Clearly, *the assessment of leadership must be based on a more in-depth understanding of leadership effects* than an accounting of short-term profit and material growth.

With much of the focus on getting results, *leadership development* is often associated with *skill development*. The assumption is that an individual could provide leadership—get the results—if he or she just acquired the right skills. Hence, we spend millions of dollars sending aspiring candidates to leadership training with the expectation that they'll acquire the requisite skills to get leadership results. Recipients of this



training view acquired skills as tools to help them move up the hierarchy into a leadership *position*. This furthers the falsehood that *leadership is the attainment of a high rung in the hierarchy* and perpetuates the misunderstanding that *leadership has a positional requirement* and that *leadership prowess is affirmed by the accomplishment of material, surface-level results, such as growth in assets and profit*.

## ***I-We, not Me***

Leadership has no applicable meaning as a characteristic of an individual, since it is not the property of one person but an emergent property of relationships between individuals. *There can be no leadership with just one individual!* Neither hydrogen nor oxygen has the characteristic of wetness, yet water is wet. In short, leadership has to do with a *We* and not with a *Me*. While we have a responsibility for our individual development, *leadership extends beyond the finite (egoic) Me*. Leadership requires a *We*. It's something that a *We* experi-

ences—not something an *I* acquires.

The development of leadership is an issue of transcendence, requiring going beyond an *egoic conception of self* toward an *integral sense of self*. This higher sense of *self* makes apparent our *I-We* nature. The *integral self* acknowledges that while you and I are different individual *I's*, we are not separate *I's*—the *I* that I am and the *I* that you are are deeply connected, and through this connection we are a *We*. This *developed self* understands the essence of being human and the responsibility to both aspects of self—life is not simply a collection of *Me's* bumping into each other in pursuit of maximizing self-interest.

We need each other for more than the satisfaction of our material needs—we have a deep responsibility to each other's unfolding, since each of us is incomplete without each other: each *I* is incomplete without a *We*. As noted by Amitai Etzioni, "the *I's* need *We* to be." Accordingly, leadership can only emerge when we act responsibly to both our *individual self* and our *collective self*, to our *I-ness* and our *We-ness*.

## ***Leadership Requires Caring***

There is a deep and wide sense of caring consistent with this understanding of *what and who we truly are*. Accordingly, the road to leadership has more to do with interior development than skills training and exterior accomplishments. The way leadership realizes exterior achievement is through interior development, including the development of self, moral development, social development, emotional development, and intellectual / cognitive development. These developmental realms are most critical to the leadership experience.

Leadership is not about climbing to the highest rung in the hierarchy—it is about rising to our *I-We* responsibility as whole-parts (holons) in the holarcy. Then, our search for examples finds Eleanor Roosevelt or Nelson Mandela.

When a person attains an upper rung on a hierarchical ladder, he or she has the positional authority—and added responsibility—to make a better world, not for *Me* but for *I-We*. A *better world* is one wherein *jobs are a joy* largely because through work we are facilitated toward utilizing our uniquely human potential. Aspiring leaders must open both eyes to develop the self and to act consistent with their *I-We-ness*. LE

Gregory Gull, Ph.D., consults in leadership and strategic design for sustainable growth ([www.forprogressnotgrowth.com](http://www.forprogressnotgrowth.com)) and directs the Leadership MBA program ([www.sjcm.edu/mba](http://www.sjcm.edu/mba)).

**ACTION:** Create a sense of unity.

# Service Leaders

*They lead with simplicity.*



by Chip R. Bell and John R. Patterson

**G**OOD MORNING! WELCOME TO OUR *USAToday* route. Now, if I should miss you, please call me at the number below. I'll personally re-deliver your paper as soon as possible. If you have a complaint that you and I can't solve, you may call my district manager directly. His name and number are also below. Thanks a lot. We really appreciate your business."

This is the letter to the *USAToday* home delivery Chip received with his first paper. It was crafted, copied, and conveyed by the local delivery person, Hazel. Look at its tone and message! The top concern of newspaper customers is "not getting a paper." Hazel's letter deals with that loyalty driver up front. It leaves you the clear impression your business is truly valued. No letter written in legalese with a fancy letterhead and logo—just a simple note from the heart to a new friend.

Customers don't require *fanfare and froufrou* to know they're important. In fact, organizations that overcomplicate service tend to spend more time maintaining processes than focusing on customers. Simplicity means removing all hassle from customers' experiences. Too often added complexity rolls down from top; it rarely emerges from the bottom. Service with simplicity requires leaders more interested in relationships than rules.

**Focus on what matters most.** Great service leaders ensure everyone knows what attributes or features of service most drive customer loyalty. While *safety* is rated the *most important feature* among airline passengers, it does not drive their loyalty. We assume safety. We select one airline over another based on one-to-one communications; a positive customer experience from ticket purchase to luggage handling; and, employee behavior.

Quick service restaurant chains know *location* is their most critical feature. Yet, *location* only wins if you're

the only game in town. When it comes to insuring customer loyalty, *customer service* beats everything else, including the food and the price. Customers assume the food will be as they expect and the price fair. Those are tickets to play, not tools to differentiate. Hazel knew that concern about non-delivery was a critical driver of loyalty.

Great leaders talk most about what truly matters—not trivial sideline issues like budgets, procedures, policies, and minutia. These sideline issues are important, but, *subject air time* and *passionate communications* telegraph the real story. Show grave concern about the budget while ignoring a conversation about its impact on customers and you will get penny-wise, pound-foolish front-line decisions. Help employees focus on the mission like owners and you get responsible focus—taking care of the customer *and* the organization.

**Provide easy escape routes.** Customers should never have to *demand* to "speak with your manager!" Service experiences should have *easy escape routes* so customers know from the gitgo they're not boxed into one person, one rule, or one approach. Hazel provided easy access to her manager as a part of the introduction. Should there be an irresolvable problem (only a remote chance with Hazel), the customer would only need to make a simple request for a higher court review. How easy is it for your customers to complain to someone who can effect restitution and improvement?

Look at your service processes. If customers can't get exactly what they need the way they want it, are there alternatives? Examine the phone cues—if your system lacks a "punch 7 to talk with a real-life person," you are set up for customer ire. Customers expect your service to be laced with options.

Simplicity leaders look at service processes through the customers' eyes. When John Longstreet was GM of the Dallas-based Harvey Hotel, he held weekly "What's Stupid Around Here" meetings with employees, often inviting a vendor and hotel guest to attend. The learning shaped improvements in

his guests' experience and told employees their ideas and suggestions were valued. John also held quarterly focus groups with the taxi drivers who often transported guests to the airport after check-out because he knew guests would be more candid with them.

**Make it simple.** *Service with simplicity* comes from taking an "empathy walk" in order to view the entire service experience through the customer's eyes. The customer-centered inspection helps discover the things that make sense inside out; but appear completely absurd outside in. It includes helping employees focus on the customer's *goal*, not just on their *request*.

Well-meaning service people are often stopped by a request outside their script. When we ask—what would happen if you provided the item, they reply, "I'd get in trouble" or "the computer would reject the order" or "I'd be fired." Leaders who handcuff employees with silly rules frustrate customers and emasculate employees. Enslavement yields a lack of passion, pride, and professionalism.

**Show your gratitude.**

*Thank you* are the two most important words in the English language. Yet, how often are you served, pay your hard-earned money, and end up doing the thanking? Like Hazel, let customers know that you never take them for granted.

An effective *Thank You* conveys a feeling. We've all heard *thanks* knowing there was little sincerity. *Thanks* means *communicating gratitude in a fashion that makes customers feel your authenticity*. Most customer relationships don't end in dispute—they wither away from disregard and inattention. Neglect is more dangerous than strife; indifference more costly than error. Customer relationships are fueled by affirmation, attention, and care.

Great simplicity leaders show the gratitude to employees they expect them to show to customers.

Great customer service is *simply* focusing on what's important to customers, managing the details to keep the experience simple, and letting them know they are valued. Put great leaders behind the front line, and your people will provide customers with service daily that is *simply* the best! **LE**

Chip R. Bell and John R. Patterson are consultants and authors of *Take Their Breath Away: How Imaginative Service Creates Devoted Customers*. Visit [www.taketheirbreathaway.com](http://www.taketheirbreathaway.com).

**ACTION: Lead with simplicity and sincerity.**



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