

If this newsletter appears garbled, please go to our [Adobe .pdf version](#). To no longer receive our emails, click to [unsubscribe](#).



In This Issue

Incomplete Leader: Good leaders acknowledge their weaknesses.

Mission Possible: Michael Kaiser, hero of ailing arts organizations, describes how he plans for success.

Better Boards: Register now to attend Michael Kaiser's Boston seminar on board leadership.

Keep the Talent Happy: Innovation needs room to grow, says Novartis CEO Daniel Vasella.

Incomplete Leader



End the myth of the flawless leader.

No one can be all things to all people, not even a CEO. Yet many executives—driven by the myth of the complete leader and the fear of appearing incompetent—exhaust themselves and damage their organizations trying to do everything.

In today's complex global workplace, this is a setup for failure.

In the February 2007 issue of the Harvard Business Review, [MIT Leadership Center](#) faculty members [Deborah Ancona](#), [Thomas W. Malone](#), [Wanda J. Orlikowski](#) and [Peter M. Senge](#) write "[In Praise of the Incomplete Leader.](#)"

Leadership exists at all levels of the organization, they argue, wherever expertise, vision, new ideas and commitment are found. "In today's world, the executive's job is no longer to command and control but to cultivate and coordinate the actions of others at all levels of the organization. Only when leaders come to see themselves as incomplete—as having both strengths and weaknesses—will they be able to make up for their missing skills by relying on others."

The researchers break down leadership into [four capabilities](#): *sensemaking* (understanding the context in which an organization and its people operate), *relating* (building relationships within and across organizations), *visioning* (creating a compelling picture of the future), and *inventing* (developing new ways to achieve the vision). Rarely will someone be skilled in all four areas.

But truly competent leaders will accept being incomplete, diagnosing their own weaknesses and compensating for them by finding the right people to provide the qualities they lack. "It's the leader's responsibility to create an environment that lets people complement one another's strengths and offset one another's weaknesses. In this way, leadership is distributed across multiple people throughout the organization."

How many times have you found yourself feigning confidence to superiors? Would you ever admit to feeling inadequate to cope with the problems your firm is facing? It's time to put the myth of the complete leader to rest, the authors write.

"Even the most talented leaders require the input and leadership of others, constructively solicited and creatively applied," the team writes. "It's time to celebrate the incomplete—that is, the human— leader."

[Read more about the incomplete leader ...](#)

Mission Possible



CEOs of financially troubled businesses often slash their way to profitability, cutting a swath through both staff and services. But MIT Sloan alumnus [Michael M. Kaiser](#), the president of the [John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#) in Washington, D.C., takes a different approach.

Kaiser, responsible for saving several major arts organizations, says the key to successful leadership is to stay focused on the primary mission, formulate a long-range plan, and get everyone in the organization on board.

“You can only slash costs so far and then there’s nothing left,” Kaiser warns. “And then what do you do?”

[Read the lessons from Michael Kaiser ...](#)

Better Boards

Learn more lessons from Michael Kaiser at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Board Seminar. The [registration-only seminar](#) will be offered in Boston April 19-20, 2007, presented by the MIT Leadership Center.

Kaiser, the president of the Kennedy Center, is a world-renowned authority not only on arts management but on board member effectiveness. He will give a dinner presentation on April 19 and lead the daylong seminar the following day.

Attendees will learn how to develop strategic plans, build institutional identity, hire senior staff, lead fundraising campaigns and make their board memberships more effective.

All events will take place at the offices of Goodwin Procter LLP at Exchange Place, 53 State Street, Boston, and are sponsored by the Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston and the law firm of Goodwin Procter LLP. Kennedy Center Board Member Seminars and Arts Management Training are funded by the generous support of the AT & T Foundation.

[Register today.](#)

Keep the Talent Happy



“Innovation should permeate each and every function of a company,” says [Dr. Daniel Vasella](#), [chairman and CEO of Novartis](#). But innovation doesn’t just happen. “Leaders must create an environment with energy and motivation for people to innovate.”

It’s critical to attract the best talent—people with competence, ambition and integrity. But an additional challenge for the organization, Vasella says, is not to destroy the intrinsic motivation of the individual. Leaders need high standards, clear priorities and clear success criteria.

[Watch the video](#) of Vasella’s speech at the [Dean’s Innovative Leader Series](#) to learn how Novartis put all the pieces together in the development and marketing of Gleevec, a leukemia drug with sales that now top \$2.4 billion. Vasella credits “persistence, collaboration and the basic innovative idea at the source.”

[Watch the video ...](#)

MIT Leadership Center

The MIT Leadership Center is dedicated to advancing the knowledge, perspectives and experiences that enable leaders to transform their passion into action and improve the world. The Center’s world-class researchers and practitioners create

cutting-edge theory and applied research, pragmatic tools for action, innovative education, and dialogues and networks to connect diverse individuals, organizations and communities around the globe. [Read past issues of our newsletter.](#)



email: mitleadership@mit.edu
phone: 617-253-6011
web: <http://mitleadership.mit.edu>

[Forward this issue to a friend](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to jlehrich@mit.edu, by mitleadership@mit.edu
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Powered by



MIT Leadership Center | 30 Wadsworth Street, E53-420 | Cambridge | MA | 02142