The future of leadership development: The importance of identity, multi-level approaches, self-leadership, physical fitness, shared leadership, networking, creativity, emotions, spirituality and on-boarding processes

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Abstract

Leadership and, consequently, leadership development have taken on far greater import in recent times. As organizations have steadily progressed into the knowledge economy we can no longer rely on simple notions of top–down, command-and-control leadership, based on the idea that workers are merely interchangeable drones. Accordingly, in this special issue you will find seven articles that provide a glimpse over the horizon, so to speak, of leadership development: Together the authors provide a rich research roadmap and a practical set of options for leadership development professionals regarding the next important steps for leadership development, which will carry us well into the 21st Century.
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1. Introduction

Leadership development has taken on far greater import in recent years (Day, 2000; McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004; Murphy & Riggio, 2003; Pearce, Waldman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). The reasons for this are manifold and multiplying. Primarily, however, as Peter Drucker identified nearly half a Century ago (Drucker, 1968), we have entered the age of knowledge work. Knowledge work relies on the, necessarily, voluntary contributions of skilled professionals: After all, knowledge workers can withhold their intellectual capital *and* they can take it with them if and when they choose to leave. Accordingly, we need to rethink the very concept of leadership, and by extension, leadership development, in the age of knowledge work—and that is the very purpose of this special issue on leadership development.

The authors of the seven articles that comprise this special issue tackle a wide breadth of topics that are critical to the future of leadership development. Some approaches are general and some are specific. Some focus on leaders occupying *roles*, while others focus on leadership as a *process*. Some document current best practices, while others

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offer agendas for future research. Some focus on lower to mid-hierarchical levels, while others focus on executive levels and yet others identify cross-level issues. Some focus on capacities, capabilities and behaviors while others focus on physical and spiritual dimensions of leadership. What they all have in common, however, is a deep and profound grounding on the historical research foundations of leader and leadership development. Interestingly, in juxtaposition to the deep grounding of the articles that comprise this special issue is the fresh tilling of new, rich and fertile soil for cultivating our next generations of leaders in multi and varied organizational contexts.

Most current leadership development efforts focus on transactional and transformational leadership and focus quite narrowly on individuals who occupy formal leadership positions or are being groomed to occupy such positions eminently. In contrast, in this special issue, the authors argue that the focus of leadership development should be greatly expanded to include a much broader array of behaviors and competencies and should include *followers* in the process of leadership development (see Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Leadership has long captured the interest of practitioners and academics, as well as the more general public. The scope of this popular interest in leadership—what it is, where it comes from, how we develop and implement it—is readily apparent when one walks into any bookstore. Alternatively, simply click on amazon.com and type in the term "leadership" in the book category. I did this on 7 July 2007. It returned 223,726 results. Clearly, there is an insatiable thirst for knowledge about leadership. In our normal, everyday lives we frequently hear arm-chair analyses of peoples' leadership styles—be they corporate leaders, religious leaders, political leaders or civic leaders—as being "blank" types of leaders, further evidencing our perennial preoccupation with leadership, and all that it entails. Indeed, most professionals—be they in the for profit, governmental or social sector—would most likely concur that developing a keen sense of different types of leaders, how they behave, and what they expect, is essential for success, no matter what the organizational context.

Forgetting our formal academic descriptions of leadership, lay descriptions of leadership, at least implicitly, refer to patterns of behavior that seem (perhaps intuitively) consistent or related. For example, an employee's description of a "micro-managing" boss might be intuitively supported by examples of his/her manager's overly precise specification of goals, continual follow-up on progress, ongoing needling, picayune review of performance, and the like. Whether they are intuitive—based on personal experience—or formalized through rigorous research, these clusters or *types* of related behavior make it easier to size up leaders and make sense of patterns of leadership behavior. Two or more contrasting types of leadership, in turn, form a *typology* (see Doty & Glick, 1994) or model of leadership.

Leadership models offer the guiding frameworks that are critical for implementing coherent leadership development efforts. The models guiding leadership development define and, in some cases, limit the leadership development efforts (Cox, Pearce, & Sims, 2003). Accordingly, the purpose of this special issue is to widen the scope of leadership development beyond today's dominant transactional–transformational leadership model, to include identity, multi-level approaches, self-leadership, physical fitness, shared leadership, networking, creativity, emotions, spirituality and on-boarding processes.

2. Leadership models and leadership development

Leadership scholars are often interested in how particular approaches to leadership relate to individual, group, and organizational outcomes. Indeed, most scholarly investigations of leadership assume the form of theories that relate leadership patterns to outcomes such as creativity, effectiveness, satisfaction, and the like. In research settings, then, leadership models identify the cause that the researcher hopes to relate to some type of organizational effect. Accordingly, in leadership development settings, leadership models supply a useful framework that facilitates the understanding of participants' natural leadership proclivities—at least as they relate to the particular model in use—and articulate alternative, perhaps more effective, options. This is why leadership development professionals depend on models to guide their development efforts. As such, leadership theories, and the models on which they rely, are imperative if one is to coordinate a coherent, internally consistent leadership selection, appraisal, training, and development strategy within an organization.

Given the importance of leadership development in both academic research and the practitioner world, it is critical that we articulate leadership models that are as comprehensible, complete and coherent as possible (Cox et al., 2003; Hunt, 1996). As Yukl (1998) so clearly identified, it is imperative that we understand the range of leader behavior patterns and how these patterns affect leaders, followers, and the organizations they enact. Today's leadership development efforts are largely focused on developing two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. This