

Leadership Update

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Special points of interest:

- Briefly highlight your point of interest here.
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Leadership concerns in the third sector?

In 2007, two research studies (*"Next Shift"* and *"Ready to Lead"*) were released by *The Annie E. Casey Foundation* in the USA. These reports make the following points:

1. 75% of executive directors (CEO's) in the third sector will leave their jobs before the end of 2011
2. There is considerable concern about the current suitability of organisational structures in the third sector
3. The role of current executive directors/ceo's needs to be carefully re-examined to make it more appealing to younger people
4. There is a very urgent need for older leaders in the third sector to think

about the way that they can develop and support leadership both in their own organisations and for the third sector overall.

The papers went on to say current CEO's are leaving because of:

- Retirement
- Work stress / burnout
- Remuneration
- Frustration in achieving organisational goals because of increasing legislation, tied grants, pressure to become a quasi government department etc
- Increasingly difficult environments for fund raising
- Lack of support from the Board

The reports point out that

there is a dearth of qualified & experienced people currently available to take their places. Apparently, in the USA, only 32% of people working in the third sector aspire to be CEO some day and 30% state that they would never consider such a position.

Given the importance of the not for profit sector ("the third sector") this is alarming information. I wonder what the situation is in Australia and other countries. I wonder, too, what is being done to solve the problem.

Increasingly, in Australia services once provided by government agencies are being provided by the third sector. A strong third sector with good leadership is essential.

Committed and competent or just committed?

Leadership in the third sector can be different from that required in government and business. In the third sector there is little or no opportunity to remunerate at a high level and, by the very nature of their funding, third sector or-

ganisations can have more precarious lives than commercial operations.

On the other hand, people who work in the third sector tend to do so out of a social values base and their commitment tend to be

high—sometimes, especially with volunteers, without a commensurate level of competence.

Balancing these factors so as to meet the intended goals can be a thankless task. Reluctance to lead is understandable.

Developing leaders and leadership

Those of you who are familiar with my work will know that I believe leadership is all about creating an environment in which people can achieve desired results – in other words, consciously setting people up to be successful rather than having success as a random variable

Leadership is different from the activity of “a leader leading” – ie, leadership is a far more broad concept than particular behaviours, habits, or attitudes: leadership is a shared activity involving

every person whether or not he or she is designated as a leader in the organisation

We focus on organisational leadership (an organisation may be any size from 2 people upwards) that considers the desired end state of the organisation in a defined period (ie the vision for, say, 10 years hence) and the variables that will impact on whether or not that vision becomes a reality. Accordingly we look at how specific local characteristics and cultures can be harnessed to work in har-

mony with both the existing and desired cultures of the organisations with which we are working.

The issue of how leaders engage with followers is critical. Leaders need to explore and develop their own behaviours in this regard. If we want to ensure strong on-going organisations of any sort, we need to ensure that both leaders and overall leadership are developed in and for all organisations—and that requires engagement by current leaders of everyone in their organisations.

Key aspects of leadership development

Developing tomorrow’s leaders along with developing tomorrow’s leadership for all organisations (including societies) should be a high priority. The world today with its bigotry, conflict, inequality, and failure to care properly for all in need is not the world I want for my grandchildren.

We need leaders who show unconditional respect for all people and who will transform society in all its aspects.

So how can any organisation go about developing their overall leadership? Some approaches that have been proven to work are:

- Replace dated power structures
- Help staff build strong networks
- Recruit young leaders to work with you
- Be a mentor—listen to people for their needs rather than your own—show unconditional respect
- Be a good role model (in relation to work hours particularly)
- Pay reasonable salaries and benefits
- Engage in succession planning
- Recognise and celebrate genera-

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tional differences between current CEO’s and emergent CEO’s.

- Hire from outside your comfort zone

These are all things that any organisation can do without requiring outside assistance. Of course assistance, if desired, can be provided from a variety of sources and one form of assistance that can have big payoffs is cognitive coaching that helps existing leaders develop their own ability to coach and grow the people with whom they work.

But this requires culture shift

Unfortunately all organisations today are permeated with conditional respect (“I’ll respect you if you do what I want”) and this creates an environment in which the first (but unexpressed) priority for many people is to seek approval from those with who they interact.

In our work with schools we have found that this aspect of conditional respect is a key factor that prevents eradication of bullying and other anti-social behaviour as well as one which seriously impedes learning. Despite all the talk around “learning organisations” the culture of conditional respect shown by managers and others

in authority is one reason why there is a huge gap between rhetoric and reality in most organisations.

Leadership which demonstrates unconditional respect creates an environment in which everyone can achieve desired results and is leadership that will address and change cultures.

To some, the lies were always transparent

Scott McLennan's story is now well known. There now can be very few people who don't know that this previous White House media spokesman and once staunchest Bush and Iraq war apologist has turned and bitten the hand that fed him.

The interesting thing is the response from the White House and those who continue to push the pro Iraq line. Invariably they are attacking McLennan and seeking to call his integrity into question. So far I have seen nothing in which they seek to address the substantive issues he raises.

It is interesting, too, to note that the media are failing to take any lessons

from what happened. All of the responses I have seen are along the lines that they had very little option but to go along with the White House line. Given that the White House is using much the same approach and arguments to justify their possible attack of Iran it seems to me that the fourth estate will, in the main, continue to be propaganda mouthpieces for this on-going Goebbels-type media blitz rather than the seekers and purveyors of truths that need to be discovered and told.

In *Leaders: diamonds or cubic zirconia* I raised the issue of pseudo leadership—that which appears to be giving direction and helping people achieve

whilst, in reality, pushing one's own agenda to the detriment of everyone & everything else. I stressed the need to examine leadership claims very carefully and to "hold them up to the light" as, under such circumstances, it is possible to see right through cubic zirconia.

For the last eight years many of us have been "holding up to the light" populist leadership practices of politicians, religious leaders, business leaders, etc. We have been largely ignored.

It is critical that the media takes a lead in examining everything that claims to be "leadership". That is a prime role of the Fourth Estate.

War Criminals ?

Closely associated with the Scott McLennan book was the news in Australia on Monday June 2 that briefs have been sent from both the United Kingdom and Australia to the International War Crimes Commission alleging that the actions of previous Prime Ministers Blair and Howard in supporting the invasion of Iraq contravened international law and may have constituted war crimes.

In accord with an election promise, on Monday June 2, the current Australian Government announced the withdrawal of all Australian combat troops from Iraq. The current Prime Minister accused all who promoted the invasion of deception—a claim that has been vehemently denied by the USA's White House .

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For many years I, along with others appalled at the lies which lead to the invasion of Iraq and which are being used to justify the on-going occupation of that country, have raised the issue of war crimes. The facts are clear:

- Iraq was not involved in the November 11 attacks on the USA
- Iraq did not have any weapons of mass destruction
- Iraq was not a threat to any country in the Middle East or elsewhere.

Yes, Saddam Hussein was an immoral tyrant who oppressed his people and

a strong case can be made for removing him from power. But manipulating information so as to justify one's private political agenda or to placate one's international allies is never justified.

Personally I think that, if there is a case against Blair and Howard, there is an even stronger case against George Bush and the cabal in the USA which orchestrated the whole affair.

My sympathies are with the innocents of Iraq who have become collateral damage and with the families of those military personnel in Australia, the UK, the USA and elsewhere who have been wounded or killed.

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Australian Women in Leadership Roles

One of the doctoral students I supervise for Southern Cross University is researching leadership in Australia and how it compares with the USA and UK. The research phase involved interviewing 30 people in leadership positions—today he told me that he was astounded to discover that only 6 or 7 women were prepared to be interviewed and all of these were either from what could generally be called the services sector or were from the not-for-profit sector.

In the early 90's I did similar research and the result was *"Leaders: diamonds or cubic zirconia"* (published in 1998). In that book I write of having had a similar experience—in fact the dearth of women in leadership positions who were prepared to be interviewed

prompted me to write *"the general image of a leader in Australia and New Zealand appears to be that of a male who has available to him (even if he does not use it) significant amounts of positional power."* I went on to argue that the situation needed to change.

Clearly it has not.

When I look around, there are certainly women in very senior leadership roles as company directors, CEO's, general managers, partners in professional practices, police commissioners, etc as well as Australia having one state (Queensland) where the Premier is a woman and the Deputy Leader in each of the governing Labor Party and the opposition Liberal-National Coalition is a woman. Our next Governor General will also be a

woman.

It would be interesting to understand why women were unprepared to be interviewed. When I checked in relation to my research I was told that they were tired of being misrepresented or of feeling that there could be a tokenism aspect to their involvement. Surely that can no longer be the case.

Leadership is not gender specific. We all know that. However, as part of their development, young women today need to be able to read about the experiences of today's women leaders.

It is critical that women be prepared to share their stories and perspectives with researchers if we are to have anywhere near equal gender representation in tomorrow's leaders.