



25 YEARS SPREADING PETER DRUCKER'S WISDOM AROUND THE WORLD

by Frances Hesselbein

Can you believe we are celebrating our 25th anniversary? The 25th year of our Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management. After Peter died we gave his name back to the family and became the Leader to Leader Institute, and in 2012—after a unanimous board of governors decision (and the only battle I lost)—we became The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute. As our board of governors said to me when they took action, “You have no voice and no vote in this action.” I obey orders.

We can assure you that although my name is on the official letterhead, in our hearts we will continue to be The Peter F. Drucker Foundation and always will be.

What a different world it was in those days—25 years ago—1990. September 11 forever changed our world. Not all the changes were negative.

We have seen that today, more than ever, the doors of collaboration are opening—leaders are crossing sectors, traveling the globe, embracing diversity, and joining forces. Just recently I joined Noel Tichy in a roundtable keynote and dialogue with 40 midcareer executive University of Michigan MBAs from Korea, Japan, China, and Thailand. The goal of the dialogue was to provide this group of international students a deeper

understanding of U.S. businesses in key industries. I left with new energy, as the Millennials I spoke with were eager to tell me ways in which they were moving beyond the walls in such a positive way.

The same week, I served in a very different way. Across the street from our offices on Park Avenue is St. Bartholomew's Church. The pastor, Reverend F.M. "Buddy" Stallings, invited me to join him in a dialogue before the 11:00 am service.

Although I am the granddaughter of the Reverend Orphanus Quincy Adams Richards, who was a minister in the Christian Church—Disciples of Christ, I am not an ordained minister in any church and come from a long line of Methodist ministers, beginning in the late 1700s to early 1800s when our ancestors on the southwest coast of England heard John Wesley speak. Several of these fishermen and farmers were called to become lay preachers and walked several miles from the Sunday service to bring the word of God to those tiny villages that had no chapel, no minister.

I loved visiting my ancestral village in Cornwall, sitting in the pew my ancestors called their own. And I appreciated why one side of the chapel has beautiful stained glass windows, the other side, a blank solid wall.

Why? The great landowners, unhappy that these farmers had left the Episcopal church, would not permit these farmers and fishermen to build a Methodist chapel in the village. They finally agreed on one condition: on one side of the chapel would hang boxes, filled with food for their cattle. So no windows were built on the left side; that is where the cattle were fed.

So there I sat, next to Pastor Stallings for our dialogue in St. Bartholomew's—a special moment, Buddy inspiring his partner, Frances, as much as he inspired the parishioners.

Peter Drucker's Enduring Wisdom

We begin the next 25 years with the same passion we began our institute 25 years ago—spreading Peter Drucker's leadership wisdom across the country and around the world.

"Listen first, speak last."

Our newly published enhanced edition of *Peter Drucker's Five Most Important Questions: Enduring Wisdom for Today's Leaders* is now in bookstores and on bookshelves. This book celebrates 25 years of the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute, sharing the best thinking on leadership and management with our partners in the social, public, and private sectors. Joan Snyder Kuhl, founder of Why Millennials Matter, championed the vision for this new edition and infused her passion for young leaders throughout its development. Our Hesselbein Institute Board of Governors provided the financial seed money to make the book a reality and two corporate sponsors signed on early and immediately, profiling their commitment to corporate social responsibility: Mutual of America Life Insurance Company and TIAA-CREF.

Mutual of America Life Insurance Company was founded in 1945 to serve the financial needs of the nonprofit sector; it is a company that recognizes its responsibility as a corporate citizen to give back to the community it serves. Mutual's sponsorship of this edition is another example of its commitment to serve and support those who dedicate their life's work to caring for those most in need. Founded in 1918, TIAA-CREF is steadfast in its mission "to serve those who serve others." TIAA-CREF's sponsorship of this book is an acknowledgment of the importance of putting customers first. TIAA-CREF enjoys a rich not-for-profit heritage and is committed to providing a range of solutions to enable lifetime financial well-being for those who are devoted to enriching the lives of others.

In this enhanced edition of *The Five Questions*, 12 new contemporary and millennial leaders in business (GE and Salesforce.com), academia (Harvard Business School and Northwestern University), social enterprise (Levo League, Pencils of Promise, and Why

Millennials Matter), and the military (United States Military Academy) who have been directly influenced by Peter Drucker's theory of management share how Drucker's framework and principles have guided them in their diverse initiatives, start-ups, and organizations. Drucker's Five Most Important Questions continue to be the indispensable questions any organization in any sector must ask if determined to serve and be part of the future.

So we continue to share our passionate leadership messages, learned from Peter Drucker: Organizations of the future are *mission focused, demographics-driven, values based. Diversity is never a challenge, only a remarkable opportunity.* Leaders of the future “ask, don’t tell,” “listen first, speak last.”

We are called to serve and proud to serve; the best people in the world, the best organizations in the world. My own slightly exuberant view of the organizations and all of the friends, supporters, those we’ve served, all those we serve with, and those waiting to be served.

Frances Hesselbein is editor-in-chief of Leader to Leader, founding president of the Drucker Foundation, president and CEO of The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute, and former chief executive officer of the Girl Scouts of the USA.

VIEW FROM THE TOP:

UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY AND ACHIEVING RESULTS

*by Father Charlie Fermeglia,
Sister Jeanette Braun, & Debbe Kennedy*

Discovering Common Ground

It seems reasonable to assume most of us think what we do is highly unique—and collectively, we would have to admit that when looking for advice and inspiration for innovation, we, more commonly, are drawn to people and organizations like us versus those who are different. However, there are signs we are changing. For example, who could have imagined a decade ago that ScientificAmerican.com would feature Maya Angelou’s celebrated poem “Human Family” for its “60 Seconds of Science” in May 2014. We turned to the wisdom in her poem as we wrote this article. It served as an encouraging invitation to share with you on common ground: *“I note the obvious differences between each sort and type, but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.”*

At first glance, it still might seem somewhat strange for a parish priest, a former IBMer, and a Sister of Notre Dame to team up to share a set of universal principles for building community and achieving results with organizations and businesses across the world. We pondered this thought ourselves. However, the facts prove that all of us have actually been through a great deal together in recent years. Across all sectors, it hasn’t mattered if you were in business, a nonprofit, a government agency, a school, hospital, or church, or were an individual. We have all shared the same days of reckoning. The harsh realities didn’t discriminate and the struggle to regain our footing, to reengage people—to move beyond uncertainty—has been humbling for the best of us.

We have also shared the experience of renewal, sometimes in collaboration with those we might not have thought about at one time. The lesson quickly learned is that differences are an asset when it comes to getting things done better and faster—and that collaboration outside

*“there is always room for
one more.”*

the walls of the past brings benefits for everyone who participates. We’ve also been lifted by watching the most passionate among us be drawn to pioneer the uncharted approaches for the new era we are creating together.

This article shares one of those stories. It is a simple one that invites us to return to what has always been universally good and true in our respective work. It comes with lessons learned to remind us, actionable ideas to put into practice, and defined pathways to *results achieved* to inform and inspire any organization. Like many innovations, it all started with a *spark*—a *great idea* that ignited between two seemingly unlikely partners.

The Priest and the Wine Merchant

In the fall of 2012, there was no brainstorming or long conversations needed to prompt the *great idea*. It was a simple exchange between Fr. Charlie Fermeglia and Clyde Beffa, co-owner and wine director of K&L Wine Merchants. They stood outside at Clyde’s car in front of the rectory at Our Lady of the Pillar Catholic Church in Half Moon Bay, California. Clyde unloaded some wine as a gift for the priests and mentioned that he wanted to do something special in honor of his mother’s life. Fr. Charlie popped the question, “How about a wine tasting?” Clyde’s answer was “Yes!”—and the rest is history. What followed in less than 6 weeks would engage the parish family and gather people from the greater community. The 3-hour event would also spawn the Table of Plenty (TOP), a weekly supper for struggling families, seniors, and homeless people in our coastal community—and what could be a more moving tribute to Mary Beffa, an immigrant mother,

than to know her son is carrying on the legacy that she taught him at the table, “there is always room for one more.”

Again at first glance, one might think these two innovators didn’t have much in common. However, the partnership isn’t so surprising once you know that love of family and deeply held values are the common ground. Both are sons of immigrant families. Both love cooking and good food. Both care about their community and the people in it—and were raised by mothers who planted the seed—the one that shapes who we become and how we see and care about the world around us.

From Idea to Start-Up: Six Weeks of Learning

Of course, there were a few quick and hard lessons to learn before all this came to life. Producing a wine tasting event was new to Fr. Charlie—and the notion of the Table of Plenty had not yet emerged; Sr. Jeanette had not yet arrived on the scene. However, there was a great need to bring people together, and tasting wines from around the world provided a fun, community-building opportunity. The work began by forming a small multitalented, cross-disciplinary wine tasting leadership team. Fr. Charlie hand selected a few people known for delivering results. Debbie Kennedy was his first recruit. She knew nothing about wine tasting events either. Together, they faced the first jolting reality 2 weeks into the planning: No one wanted to buy a ticket to the wine tasting. Some hadn’t a clue what it was or why they should attend.

The problem solving began when *necessity* assumed her *motherly* role. The invention of a meaningful purpose for the wine tasting emerged unexpected during a wild drive over the winding road to Half Moon Bay. This time, Debbie asked a question: What have you always wanted to do? Fr. Charlie began rattling off every detail (right down to the meal itself) that he had envisioned about what would become the Table of Plenty, a weekly supper for the hungry. He spoke of the need he knew existed and of inspirations experienced in Half Moon Bay and San Francisco, as well as biblical

stories of Jesus feeding the hungry and helping the needy. “The vision isn’t a soup-kitchen buffet, but a nice sit-down meal respectfully served on tables with tablecloths. It’s exciting to me to think that something like this could be a bridge to communication among people of different cultures, lifestyles, opinions, of faith or of no faith.”

The vision for the Table of Plenty gave everyone something significant to believe in. Clyde Beffa and his daughter Kerri mentored us on how to create a great wine tasting—and the first Annual Wine Tasting Fall Fundraiser had over 300 sets of fingerprints that helped in some way to *set the table* for our first 50 suppers held in 2013 on Thursday evenings.

From the beginning, the whole idea of creating a memorable legacy struck a chord in everyone’s heart. We learned that when you see a need and it sparks the imagination of a community, they will throw themselves into it with love, care, and devotion.

The Table of Plenty: In the Beginning...

The Table of Plenty’s first year as a start-up demanded a lot of hard work from all of us, but it also came with three notable gifts: (1) We raised enough money at the wine tasting in our first year to be a fully funded, self-sufficient nonprofit start-up that learned to live within its means. This gave us independence and it meant that we could focus on creating a strong, sustainable structure and a memorable experience for all our guests. (2) Fr. Charlie hand picked Sister Jeanette Braun (Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur) to serve as our director. She was new to our community and already had a full-time job, but her many talents made her the perfect choice. He asked and she accepted the challenge. Under her leadership, *the view from the TOP* came to life; the initial vision was fulfilled. (3) We were blessed with Table of Plenty volunteers. People wanted to be part of it. Many volunteers helped us create the wine tasting experience, so they were already smitten with the idea and wanted to contribute to its founding. Other people had come to the wine tasting party or read about the event in the newspaper and called to



FIGURE 1. TABLE OF PLENTY’S WELCOME SIGN; IT GREETES OUR GUESTS WHEN THEY ARRIVE EACH WEEK

join the ranks—and parents wanted their children to experience this very special opportunity to learn what it means to serve others.

Leadership Reflections: Four Decisions That Worked for Us

There were many meaningful lessons to learn about people and organizations. Although the Table of Plenty’s mission may be very different from your organization’s, it doesn’t seem so far-fetched that during this great time of turmoil in our world the lessons learned, at their core, do have relevance to the needs of people and workplaces everywhere.

When we served our first Table of Plenty meal, we began with the knowledge of two conflicting facts: The 2012 American Community Survey, prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, reported our county was among the 25 wealthiest counties (with populations

There are many forms of hunger.

over 65,000 or greater) in the United States, whereas the local Second Harvest Food Bank serving our county estimated that one in four individuals is at risk for hunger (vs. one in six nationally). These realities begged a question: In a place of such prosperity, why should anyone go hungry?

We soon learned something we didn't expect: there are many forms of hunger. Some people need food. Others need companionship. Some need a listening ear, a little advice and encouragement. We all like the feeling of being remembered and called by our name. We like being surrounded by beauty; add music and it can lift our spirits. We all want to belong; to feel a part of something that matters—and you can reach us best when we hear your message in our language. These hungers never take a holiday and we all have them.

The following are four early decisions we made that worked for us. Perhaps they will inspire new thinking or a new idea. We also translated what we have learned into a set of universal principles for building community and achieving results that we hope will be useful:

1. Striving to create a memorable experience.

Every week, an empty meeting hall is transformed by Table of Plenty volunteers into a beautiful dining room, complete with tablecloths, fresh flowers, real plates and flatware, and music. Each guest is greeted, seated, and served a warm, healthy meal by our TOP volunteer servers wearing black aprons. Our Table of Plenty badges with our names on them and the black aprons we wear have become cherished symbols of our work together. We assume a special role when we wear them to serve our guests. Sample meal: pasta with meat sauce, garlic bread, organic green salad, freshly baked pie, and a choice

of beverages. Our first guest feedback written on a chalkboard was affirming: “The food was delicious! The pasta and sauce was warm and comforting. I could tell that it was not from a can. I knew it was made with love. Thank you!”

2. Establishing *loving one another* as a core principle.

We honor the dignity of each person and strive to nurture the spirit of kinship. We work to share our lives with our guests. It creates a very different kind of relationship with people when we see them in this light. Our TOP volunteers range in age from 13 to 80+. Whether we shop for food, cook it, serve it, clean up, or greet our guests, our standard is high: We all strive to reflect *loving one another* as each volunteer puts his or her fingerprints on creating a memorable supper for everyone each week. This makes for great teamwork. After serving more than 12,000 meals since we started, it is obvious that we have grown as people. TOP volunteers work together, bringing their smiles, warmth, and kindness to each guest, who may *hunger* for more than food.

3. Collaborating with local community partners strengthens the organization.

We spread a *wide net* to build alliances and find collaborators. There is a scene in the classic film *Gandhi* which describes exactly what happened to us. Gandhi is talking to an Anglican priest, who showed up unexpectedly, wanting to help. He asked Gandhi if he was surprised to see him. Gandhi replied, “Not anymore... At first I was amazed... but when you are fighting in a just cause, people seem to pop up—like you—right out of the pavement.” So they did. We’ve built a network of mentors, supporters, sources of food, volunteers, innovators, and new guests (e.g., from our local organic farm to other community organizations serving the hungry; from the Boy Scouts and the 4-H Club to local restaurants, our high schools, parish classes, and businesses where we discovered common ground we didn’t expect to find).

4. Achieving goals matters. By the end of its second year in December 2014, the Table of Plenty had served over 100 delicious suppers every Thursday

Serving others changed us all.

evening for 80–130 hungry men, women, and children, while achieving its organizational goals:

Building and keeping a TOP volunteer team that is *second to none* and operates with repeatable processes, making it possible to serve our guests with love and effectiveness.

Controlling the rate of our growth, so we deliver excellence within our budget.

Proving TOP consistently operates as a *self-sufficient* nonprofit since its first supper served in January 2013.

In reflection, serving others changed us all. At the end of our first year, Fr. Charlie shared from his experience: “I can see Jesus was a clever guy... He knew that food gathers people. I never fully understood until seeing the Table of Plenty.”

Universal Principles: Building Community and Achieving Results

The following universal principles can be applied to any organization or business:

Creating Memorable “Customer” Experiences

- **Repeatable, renewable processes inspire innovation.** A repeatable process makes you efficient. Creating renewable processes invites ongoing refinements to your initial innovations. It avoids settling for “good enough.” It inspires openness and welcomes the next great idea.

- **Beauty matters.** There is wisdom in the old adage, “It’s all in how it’s presented.” What you do is important. How you do it creates distinction. Beauty most often is created and is reflected in qualities that don’t affect the budget: care, a smile, grace, warmth, kindness, thoughtfulness, creativity, attention to small details.
- **Honoring those you serve.** Consciously honoring the dignity in each person you serve leaves an indelible impression. It doesn’t matter if your service is delivered in the mail, online, on the phone, or in-person with your customer. How you deliver your “goods” reflects the love and care you put into the experience you want your “customer” to enjoy. Remember, there is truth in the saying, “*people remember how you make them feel.*”

Taking Care of Your Business

- **Building a team that is “second to none.”** Who doesn’t like working with an exemplary organization? When there is meaning and value in our contributions, it is fulfilling. This requires (1) creating a strong, sustainable structure with repeatable processes guiding the way; (2) setting high expectations together that clearly defines everyone’s responsibilities—these inspire all of us to reach and achieve the goals we set for ourselves; and (3) taking time to get to know people. Inquiry goes a long way in helping you discern the strengths, gifts, talents, and limitations of each person or partner. This assessment helps you focus on engaging everyone where their strengths and gifts are put to good use, so they experience the joy of contributing their best. The organization benefits from it.
- **Controlling the rate of growth.** However tempting it may be, stay focused on your core mission. If you are a start-up or starting over, what you want most is *stability* while you are developing and refining how to deliver on your promise to your “customers.” Master every aspect of your operation before expanding and diversifying. This gives you an opportunity to develop your reputation for delivering results in an

Stay focused on your core mission.

exemplary way while you refine, perfect, grow, and change. Peter Drucker said it best: “Make your contribution; everything else is a diversion.”

- **Consistently achieving results.** Results helps you reach for self-sufficiency as an organization, which is freeing. It calls for *creativity, innovation, and brainpower to be used as a replacement for money* whenever possible. Develop your great idea, plan it out, implement it and make sure you achieve results every time. Why? Results speaks for itself. Achieving results provides a foundation that makes others want to invest and engage in your success.

Conclusion: Strong Communities Achieve Results

How do you know when you’ve built a strong community? We discovered two reliable signs of progress that can be imagined in different forms in any workplace or organization:

1. **Enjoying one another is apparent.** One evening after the Table of Plenty had been in operation about 6 months, there was a change. It was the distinctive sound of human contentment: we could hear people calling one another by name; real conversations were taking place; it had turned into a comfortable place to be. Most often now, this reality is one of the first things a new guest or volunteer mentions to us—and it is a quality that strengthens community.
2. **Collaborating at a higher level.** How everybody works together provides another reliable sign. For us, we began to see that what took place was often more like a *choreographed dance* versus a working

FORGING A NEW PATH

by Debbe Kennedy

On the first Monday after I left IBM to begin a new business, I started the day by tracing how dreams had come true for me in my 21-year leadership career. At the time, my hope was to bolster up courage to start something new and figure out how to do it. What resulted was a simple poem. It has been used by many trailblazers over the years and has since been translated into 16 languages, which affirmed that its message is universal.

Through our many reflections on the remarkable experience of the TABLE of PLENTY’s beginning and where it is today, it is clear to us that it has followed this universal path of achievement. Where will the path take you?

OUR DREAMS IN ACTION

Dreams give us hope.

Hope ignites passion.

Passion leads us to envision success.

Visions of success open our minds to recognize opportunity.
Recognition of opportunities inspires far-reaching possibilities.
Far-reaching possibilities help us enlist support from others.

Support from others keeps us focused and committed.

Focus and commitment foster action.

Action results in progress.

Progress leads to achievement.

Achievement inspires dreams.

Dreams give us hope.

by Debbe Kennedy

FIGURE 2. FORGING A NEW PATH BY DEBBE KENNEDY

team. For example, at the same time each week, after supper has been served, a group of Portuguese women quietly gathers around a table to roll the flatware into fresh napkins for the following week. It may seem like a mundane task, but it is delicate and done with precision—each one is folded just so and then carefully placed into a handmade wooden box with our TOP insignia on it, created by one of our artisan volunteers. This quality is nurtured when everyone is doing what they do best.



Father Charlie Fermeglia is founder of the Table of Plenty (TOP), a weekly supper for the hungry in Half Moon Bay, California, where he formerly served as parochial vicar at Our Lady of the Pillar Catholic Church. Under his leadership, the enduring foundation for TOP's success was established by creatively raising the seed money and engaging people across cultures and generations to bring it to life. He continues to actively serve as the Table of Plenty's founder, a valued leadership advisor, and a special guest at our annual wine tasting fundraisers. He is the author of the popular series, INSIGHTS with Fr. Charlie at www.ourladyofthepillar.org/INSIGHTS. He currently serves in the Brooklyn Diocese near his family.

It is clear we aren't intended to be alone and isolated. We are created to be in relationship with one another—to serve, to collaborate and innovate together, to build communities that strive to make our world better for everyone. Regardless of our business or organization, when we take time to look for common ground, it makes it possible to learn from each other across all kinds of differences; to build community—and to achieve new levels of contribution and results that we could not accomplish alone.



Sister Jeanette Braun serves as the director of the Table of Plenty. Under her leadership, the Table of Plenty has provided over 12,000 meals to struggling families, seniors, and homeless people in its first 2 years. She has also been instrumental in developing TOP's volunteer team and everything necessary to create a self-sustaining nonprofit organization, meeting all of its goals. She also serves as associate coordinator for the Sisters of Notre Dame (SND), California Province. She has over 55 years of service with SND. www.ourladyofthepillar.org/tableofplenty



Debbe Kennedy serves as a member of the founding volunteer TOP Leadership Team for the Table of Plenty. She is also founder of the Global Dialogue Center and Leadership Solutions Companies, an award-winning enterprise that has specialized in customized, people-focused leadership and virtual communications solutions since 1990. Formerly, she had a distinguished leadership career with IBM Corporation for over 20 years. She is the author of Putting Our Differences to Work: The Fastest Way to Innovation, Leadership and High Performance. www.puttingourdifferencetowork.com

LEADERSHIP CAKE—THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

by Steve Rush

In today's ever morphing corporate world, the focus on and scrutiny of leaders is more prevalent than ever before from the boardroom, shareholders, or team members. Today's leader is much more visible than ever before because of the way we share information and of course social media.

Organizations have invested billions of dollars in the recruitment and retention of their leadership population. Their aim is to ensure not only that their internal effectiveness is maintained but also their leaders' public presence is aligned to the organization's goals and values.

In my work as an executive coach and leadership development advisor, I found many individuals and organizations would surround themselves in intricate psychometric tests, models, and scorecards but were often too close to the business to evaluate themselves effectively and succinctly. I spent a number of years researching the most common attributes of great leaders, what were present and common between them. In doing so I developed a philosophy of leadership that was neither a product nor a model but simply a way of enhancing self-awareness—in a fun, scalable, and transferable way.

The philosophy was born while considering how I would share with a stuffy, dysfunctional CEO that he had some of these essential ingredients, too much of some, not enough of others—at the same time as my wife was baking a cake. As she was calling out her recipe, it dawned on me that the leaders who possessed essential ingredients could also be described as a cake. This CEO loved the concept and it helped him to develop his recipe. It was from here the philosophy of *Leadership Cake* was developed and I was inspired to share this through the book *Leadership Cake*.

The philosophy of *Leadership Cake* explores the principle that leadership is created like a cake; it's a whole creation, born out of a list of ingredients, all of which are essential to create the perfect cake. The cake is a metaphor for you, and the ingredients and construction are you and your style. The recipe will help you focus on becoming a great leader. Get your ingredients, mixing, and baking right, and you are a great leader; get them wrong and your *Cake* can taste awful.

Recipe for “Cake”

When it comes to creating a recipe for leadership, there are about as many ideas as there are cookbooks for cakes, but there are some essential ingredients in your *Leadership Cake* that you can't do without.

All cakes have essential ingredients. Most cakes need flour, eggs, water, and butter; otherwise it's not a cake, right? Just as if you were baking a real cake, you can't leave out the core ingredients in your *Leadership Cake*. We will discuss the *Leadership Cake* ingredients later, but where do we find the recipe so we at least know what to put into it?

I have experienced leadership in action when it works and when it does not. The recipe for success can often be found within our experience and those who were leaders before us.

My mother has a recipe for cake that my wife and children use today. It has been passed down over generations and adapted and modified based on experience, access to new ingredients, and the change in one's palate. It's also true that people's taste and expectations may have been modified over time.

Leadership has evolved over time. There has been a visible and audible shift from a more dominant, directive, and autocratic leader to that of today's leader, who is most likely to be better equipped, due to the changing and diverse corporate environment. There are leaders who we may have been viewed as role models 20 years ago who now seem outdated and stale because they haven't updated their ingredients. If you have been dependent on a certain cookbook, it may well

*We are all susceptible to
emotion, thinking, and
feelings.*

determine what your “*Cake*” tastes like. As bakers we want our consumers to enjoy cake. Bakers want to get feedback that their cake was pleasing to the palate. As leaders we want our outcomes and results to be received in the same way, particularly with how we operate or lead our people and businesses.

There are many leaders who have shone brightly in their business and personal achievements—you indeed may have worked with them in your past careers. If you consider any leader that has created the right environment for success, there are some common ingredients.

Is there such thing as the perfect leader or perfect *Leadership Cake*? Of course not! We are all susceptible to emotion, thinking, and feelings, and as such, we cannot be robotic in our actions. When faced with certain circumstances or events in our lives, we react. Our reaction will dictate our outcome to any event, so understanding what ingredients mix well with others is an essential element in baking the right kind of *Leadership Cake*.

Essential Ingredients for Leadership Cake

My mother uses a simple recipe that is generations old. Like all good cooks, she had adapted her cake mix to be the most effective yet simple to follow so she could deliver a great cake experience.

Because today's leaders are challenged by lots of tasks, actions, and people to manage and to lead, I want

to break down the key ingredients. Although these four are essential, they are not the only ingredients; however, without them it's not a *Cake*.

C - Communication

A - Authenticity

K - Knowledge

E - Empathy

Communication

When you look at some of the world's greatest leaders, one common ingredient they share is that they are all exceptional communicators. They have the ability to convey a resonant message and engage deeply and consistently with their audience.

The irony is that it is often the case that we are not taught to be great communicators during our early years. Early communication is a learned behavior taught to us by people around us, such as parents and siblings.

If they were good communicators, there is a likelihood of us being good communicators.

At school, we are taught grammar, punctuation, pronunciation, and vocabulary. If we were confident individuals, we may have been asked to share that in class, but all of these teach us just one approach: communication that focuses on what we do.

The greatest communicators in leadership have a sixth sense that also focuses on what others may do and how they do it while interpreting the reasons why.

I call these individuals "Communication Adaptors." They have the ability in the blink of an eye to adapt their style, pace, or tone to vary the message based not on their message but on the person or group with whom they are communicating.

When I have worked with leaders who were communication adaptors, it was almost certain that they had less awkward or less confrontational experiences and dialogue. This was because they worked their communication skills with their recipient

in mind. By adopting this approach, your recipient is likely to respond more positively.

Authenticity

Communication is essential to helping your authenticity. So is authenticity a choice? Is it a trait? I don't think so.

Authentic behavior in leadership means unique or original. One of the easiest ways to mess up your *Cake* is by trying to sound or behave like somebody else or by mimicking a coworker. Authenticity is another core ingredient in our *Leadership Cake* mixture. Leaders became good leaders and good leaders became great leaders by learning "how to" from all of their interactions with people, in particular those leaders who inspired them.

What makes authentic leaders stand out from others is that everything they do they actually believe in wholeheartedly. They also demonstrate conviction in everything they say. This is all delivered with humility.

When leaders physically demonstrate humility and belief in what they say and do, they create instant trust and belief with their staff, stakeholders, and clients. If their followers didn't believe what they said and did, it would smell like a 10-week-old cupcake.

We are simple and social human beings and we are programmed to smell rotten *Cake* from a mile away.

Direct reports of authentic leaders even put up with their failures for no other reason than that they trust their judgment. After all, your success as a leader is all about them delivering what you expect, right?

Here are some candy sprinkles for your "A" in *Cake*:

$$(s + d) \times B = A$$

If you *Say* and *Do* what you genuinely *Believe*, you are *Authentic*.

Knowledge

In meetings and boardrooms, you may have heard that "knowledge is power." Knowledge is at its most powerful when you or your businesses share that knowledge where appropriate. Occasionally when

A cake without eggs will be heavy, dense, and flat.

somebody has more knowledge than others, it can create a sense of technical hierarchy. In every organization, the broader the distribution of each team member's knowledge, the better equipped the organization can be at responding with agility to different situations and scenarios.

Knowledge is an essential ingredient in your “*Cake*.” As a leader, you don’t have to be the subject matter expert. That is not what leadership knowledge is about.

To be effective, you will need a large range of information and knowledge at your fingertips if you want to improve results.

This means demonstrating to your direct reports sufficient information to be able to fully understand their business and communicate this knowledge effectively to the people you lead. It supports authenticity and empathy and is the perfect balancing ingredient in your *Leadership Cake*. It becomes easier for people to trust someone who understands them and the challenges within their business.

Unlocking this knowledge from your organization will be a byproduct of a well-baked *Cake*. Getting your business to share the collective knowledge pool will help you and results improve.

Empathy

Empathy in your *Leadership Cake* acts as the eggs in regular cake. It binds the other ingredients together. It will come as no surprise to you that without truly understanding the tasks, situations, and the people who create, execute and lead them, your own *Leadership Cake* is not really a *Cake*. A cake without eggs will be heavy, dense, and flat. It will break and crumble easily

and not be very palatable, much like your *Leadership Cake* may taste without empathy. It’s ironic that empathy is an emotion that in past business eras was seen as a sign of weakness. It was seen as an emotion not appropriate in a strong leadership environment but has become a key ingredient in leadership and also in your basic *Cake* mix.

You have heard the saying, “birds of a feather, flock together”? So how do you build and develop empathy? It’s about finding out and understanding as much about the other person as possible. One way to get information is to give information first, such as family hobbies, and then ask, “so what about you?” Your role as an effective communicator is to then identify what synergies exist and share that common ground. The better affinity you have with another, the easier it is to understand and empathize with them.

As a leader, if you get feedback from others and take an educated guess at another’s point of view, your *Leadership Cake* will struggle, as your “E” Empathy ingredients will not be right. The only way to truly understand is by getting in it, leading with visibility and example by demonstrating a desire to truly learn what it’s like for the people you lead.

Before we finish baking a balanced yet basic *Leadership Cake*, don’t take the *Cake* out of the oven too late. If you do, it may spoil. Sympathy is what happens when you leave your *Cake* baking for too long. Empathy is essential; sympathy can be disastrous.

Sympathy ...

Is about when you see a team member in a hole and you jump in with them. Now you are part of the problem.

Empathy ...

Is about throwing them a ladder and helping them out.

Let Them Eat Cake

Although your *Cake* may taste just great right now, you can bet that some other leader’s *Cake* has a nice juicy filling or lovely sweet icing that could tempt your

most trusted and loyal staff away from you and your business. The fruit or creamy filling is a metaphor for personal development and this is in the very center of your *Cake*. Sharing your *Leadership Cake* with your team will help create a great, memorable experience and provide a differentiator between leaders.

Another trait demonstrated by great leaders is that they all are agile enough to develop and adapt in a changing world. Not only are they able to adapt their business acumen to the commercial world they operate in, they also demonstrate an ability to develop their knowledge, skills, and capabilities.

A byproduct of this leadership agility and self-awareness in developing themselves is that they also keep hold of the team of individuals that they lead—their direct reports. Great teams share consistency and longevity as they grow together. They learn from one another about the strengths they each possess. With the same agile leadership, the leader is able to maximize the team dynamics by playing to those strengths and capitalizing on the experience and styles of each team member.

Based on my research and in my experience, the greatest gift any leader can give is the gift of learning.

The deeper and fuller your development ethos (your filling), the more palatable a leader you will be.

The Icing on Your Cake—Your Brand

When you visit an artisan cake shop and you look at the array of cakes on display, you'll find an enormous variety to choose from. Even if you observed a few cakes that looked the same on the outside, there are subtle differences that make them unique.

As a leader, it's the subtle differences that make you stand out. It's the same subtle differences that make you more appealing to the eye than other *Cakes* or leaders, and that is down to how you carry yourself and what you want others to see. The icing on your *Leadership Cake* is what is on display. Your boss or potential boss, peers, and coworkers will make a quick

*It's the subtle differences
that make you stand out.*

judgment based on what they see and smell from you and your icing.

So when I refer to icing, I want you to think of yourself as the well-formed *Cake* that has been put together and baked with care and that your icing is what others can see. Let's put it another way: What is it you stand for? What are the visible values and beliefs you display openly? What are you about? What does your icing actually say about your *Leadership Cake*?

The Aftertaste

When you've eaten cake, what's left behind are the crumbs. What was it that made you enjoy it—how it made you feel maybe? Certainly how it tasted. Our taste buds are covered with between 2,000 and 8,000 tiny receptors that tell us if the taste was bitter, sweet, or sour. These receptors send information to the brain and decipher that information to provide us with an experience.

You create the same experience and effect when the people who follow you have tasted your *Leadership Cake*. If their experience was a sweet one, they may use that part of their brain to recall those emotions and feelings to remember your *Cake* and the taste it left behind. It may provide them with thoughts of comfort and indeed shape their own recipe for their *Leadership Cake*.

You create experiences also if the taste of your *Cake* was a bitter or a sour one; the same recall may happen, but this time the taste would have been somewhat different and thus their memory of that time is unlikely to be positive.

You are the master baker of your Leadership Cake.

Conclusion

You have now explored the four essential ingredients in *Leadership Cake*. You also understand that you need to attempt to balance your ingredients: a spoonful too much or too few of these and your *Cake* is not a *Leadership Cake*, even if it may look like one.

Getting this part of the baking process right simply means that you have a great chance of becoming a great leader, but there is still work to do. Getting your filling right is essential to attracting, developing, and retaining great staff too. Your *Cake* may thus be more appetizing than other leaders'; hence people are more likely to choose you to lead them.

The icing on your *Leadership Cake* reflects the ongoing perception of others. Be careful and selective about what that says about you. If there were another you, looking back at you, what would you see?

Careful planning of your *Cake* now will leave a lasting aftertaste forever. You are the master baker of your *Leadership Cake*. How well have you thought through your ingredients? Are you thinking about the present or your legacy?

Good luck in baking your *Leadership Cake*!



Leadership expert Steve Rush is the CEO of Improov Consulting and author of the book Leadership Cake. He is the pioneer of the new global leadership philosophy of Leadership Cake, which includes online leadership 360° assessments, coaching, and training programs. Steve had a successful executive leadership career with several global businesses where he was personally responsible for multimillion dollar revenue and billions of dollars of funds and assets. He now coaches, trains, and develops leaders of all levels including international CEOs of global organizations. Leadership Cake is available in paperback and eReader in most online bookstores. See www.leadershipcake.com and www.improovconsulting.com.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

by Judith Bowman

Interpersonal communication skills are central to the fabric of our society and quickly becoming a lost art. In today's fast-paced frenetic world, timeless people skills are not being taught and as a result, next generation leaders are massively disadvantaged. Timeless "people skills" are required to advance interpersonal relationships particularly in today's "express" and highly competitive global business climate. People don't know what they don't know. My goal in writing the book *How to Stand Apart @ Work* was to create the awareness that there are immeasurable opportunities found in everyday, ordinary business situations to show respect while earning respect and show we know "the difference" while making a difference—all through nuances.

Interestingly, employers seek out and eagerly hire those who have the "it" factor, and clients engage and retain those they like and *trust*. Given the high-ranking quotient for interpersonal relationships and people skills together with the call for leadership these days, it is not only ironic but ill fated that many in the workplace are uninformed about basic rules governing etiquette and protocol or even how to execute a proper handshake. Today's young adults are ambitious and educated; however, they need more than just book knowledge and technical know-how to advance. In an economy where downsizing and mergers and acquisitions are rampant, mental flexibility and alertness are required as companies hire and keep only the best of class. Therefore, those chosen and remaining need to be confident knowing that everything said and done is completely

Mental flexibility and alertness are required.

within acceptable codes of conduct and professional behavior.

The world today needs leaders. There are ways to achieve leadership distinction and exude quiet confidence specifically, through *nuances*. Nuances are the small things said and done that distinguish professionals at all levels. Nuances are explicit, detailed, and deliberate; however, they are intended to come across as subtle and understated, which occurs after practice.

No one is born knowing anything. Once we know “the difference” we can make a difference for humanity. I encourage leaders to consider nuances evident in everyday business situations and leverage them as stand-alone opportunities to show they know “the difference,” while demonstrating the utmost respect toward others. As a direct result, trust is inspired, critical business relationships blossom, careers advance.

For example:

Business Cards:

Ask before assuming anyone wants your card.

Know there is a way to exchange, receive, acknowledge, and even properly place another’s card...

Know to use a calling card versus a business card when moonlighting and/or quietly transitioning in today’s highly competitive global business area.

Forms of Address: ask others how they prefer to be addressed before assuming a first-name basis.

Taking Notes: Ask before taking notes at a meeting or interview.

Shaking Hands: Know what your handshake says about you without you saying one word!

Introductions: The way you introduce yourself and provide introductions for others presents another opportunity to distinguish yourself. Remember, if you forget everything else, always say the name of the most important person first.

Small Talk: Making small talk in order to help place others at ease to advance trust and grow relationships is absolutely essential, and an art.

Sitting and Seating: Be confident selecting the right chair and knowing when and how to sit; e.g., your host is always seated first; you honor the most important person by positioning them to your right.

Hands: Knowing to position hands on the table versus in your lap at the meeting (and dining room) table is important. Note: hands under the table suggests one is “underhanded” and going to draw a weapon/sword! Hands on the table shows one as “above board.”

Space: Consume more space at the table—shows you as more authoritative!

Standing: Knowing where to stand (as the audience views you) with your props when making a formal presentation is important. (Hint: stand to the left of your support materials because we read from left to right.) You want to be the focus, not your props.

Business Dining: Conducting business in a social setting—be confident in being the quintessential

Nuances are explicit, detailed, and deliberate.

The little things get noticed.

guest or host at any breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting where business relationships are either strengthened or shattered ... and more.

The little things get noticed—and others particularly notice when they are missing. These little things have the power to make or break relationships because they (or their absence) can make others feel exceedingly special (or slighted), which is (either) a *fabulous* (or poor) reflection on you. An effective leader is able to motivate others by demonstrating respectful gestures and using basic people skills. In so doing, important tasks are accomplished and everyone gets elevated, recognized, energized!

Doing a good job today isn't good enough and being an effective leader requires extra effort... and we are all overtaxed as it is. However, being a *fabulous* leader is energizing and infectious and is both a lubricant and a stimulant. Moreover, it is also a showcase for work performance and competency. *Fabulous* becomes a state of mind, a form of *being*, and a great way to be! Being *fabulous* holds the competitive edge and is the secret weapon of very successful people. This way to be is not an end or a substitute for accomplishments and expertise—it's that extra "it" factor we exude that transforms something ordinary into something extraordinary, delightfully unexpected, special.

Next generation leaders need to be equipped with essential people skills and *confidence* and know how to:

- Present themselves with *confidence*.
- Interact effectively with *people* (not just IT devices).

- Be a man/woman well met! ("Hail fellow well met" is an English idiom referring to a person whose behavior is hearty, friendly, and congenial.)

The way we conduct ourselves every day, and the way we treat others, is noticed and judged. When we demonstrate more respect, listen more attentively, communicate more effectively, we are more resilient and flexible in a world where others notice. Although we may live in the moment we must not lose sight of the fact that in order to be fully effective we need to be fully *present* in the moment with other people.

Leaders are conscious of meeting people in the medium of their choice. When clients and colleagues are "e-people" we should strive to become proficient in use of their chosen portal, even though these days that medium may change and transform rapidly. Where are pagers and fax machines today? What happened to MySpace? Blackberries? Instant Messaging? ... and now there are even articles suggesting that "texting is dead"!!! Regardless of how quickly the format or medium may change, there are protocols to behaving online, just as there are in person. We should always endeavor to comport ourselves with thoughtfulness of others and awareness of our own presentation to the world, with the goal of being perceived as our best selves in the business arena. If we pay attention to dressing appropriately and using good table manners in order to *stand apart* in person, we should give equal consideration to our online appearance—invest the time (or hire a professional) to help you write (and proof!!) your résumé, develop or review your LinkedIn or other online professional profile, design your business cards, etc. ... and think carefully before uploading any old video to YouTube, posting wild photos or status updates on Facebook, vulgar (or poorly edited) writing in your blog, etc.

Although it is important to stay current and take advantage of all the technological devices, apps, and software, it continues to be vitally important to know how to interact effectively and *connect* with other people via social media, texting, etc. In fact, most of

the same basic rules of etiquette and protocol apply online as they do in real life; they are just easier for people to ignore, overlook, or forget. Current HR professionals note that many people do not use current technology to their benefit: they check their cell phones during an interview (!), send inappropriate informal texts (or IMs) rather than respond by telephone (or e-mail or personal note), neglect to check their online résumé or e-mails for typos and bad grammar, post racy photos or vulgar texts on open social media sites—and generally behave in ways they never would in person or if they bothered to reflect and consider consequences. Again, this is all *learned* behavior, and if we take the time, make the effort, practice, and prepare, we can truly be a man/woman well met in person or online.

Imagine combining the brilliant technological advances of today with timeless people skills and consider the potential of future generations. The qualities of a true leader revolve around hallmarks of respect and consideration. Whether you are entering, reentering, or transitioning in the world of business or just want to get ahead, consider specific ways to achieve leadership distinction through nuances. And, despite today's extremely competitive global business climate, it is actually easier than ever to *stand apart*, simply by practicing these small nuances because so few people do these days!

Changing jobs and even careers is commonplace today as we are immersed in the most competitive global business climate in history. Companies have no trouble attracting large numbers of applicants, but identifying qualified candidates who not only possess the educational requirements and technical expertise but are also the right “cultural fit” and possess polish, professionalism, and personality is another matter altogether. Companies have “cultures” just as countries have their unique cultures. A “culture” refers to the values and practices shared by members of the same group. Company culture refers to shared values and practices of the company's employees. Company culture is important because it can make or break your company. Companies with an adaptive culture that is aligned to their business goals routinely outperform

their competitors. Some studies report the difference at 200 percent or more.

The fact is, interpersonal communication skills are intrinsic in business and are the spark to ignite business relationships, yet ironically few teach these *people skills*, and they are not found in any textbook.

Moreover, the chances of landing our dream job with the firm of our choice through an Internet website or an ad in the local community newspaper are remote. Most agree that the way we identify and land the position we really want is through other people we know. Leaders should be acutely aware of the opportunity at hand to use finely tuned people skills to cultivate interpersonal relationships, reignite and expand our network of connections, and fortify our business lifelines.

America's future leaders should consider *embracing* everyday business situations and leverage them as stand-alone opportunities to show respect, earn respect, and demonstrate that you know how to lead, motivate others, and advance in your career. The polished professional will know how to confidently navigate the business landscape not just here in the United States but anywhere in the world.

There is a glut of highly educated, qualified candidates in today's workforce all competing for a disproportionate number of available jobs. Employers avidly seek out and hire those who have the “it” factor—*excellent people skills*—because the fact is people do business with people they like and trust.

America's future leaders must embrace every opportunity to personally connect, further cultivate and reignite critical interpersonal relationships to better navigate the business landscape. By demonstrating respect toward others, professionals at all levels will automatically earn respect, lead more effectively, motivate others to get the job done, and advance in their careers.

Today's high-tech toys have given people a false sense of confidence letting them believe they can do just about anything. Technological advances are amazing as they enable connections and have astounding capabilities.

However, it is people who advance relationships, and the world is based on personal relationships. Therefore, *before* we are confronted with this problem, we urge leaders to focus the same amount of time and energy to develop the same proficiency and expertise cultivating interpersonal communication skills.

Connecting with others to form authentic relationships cannot be accomplished by any one medium. Total connection necessitates multiple disciplines and requires forethought and discipline so we don't get stuck.

Consider the total connectivity issue. Employ the same ardor and skill to become a master of the interpersonal communication spectrum and leaders will be able to do just about anything!

Remember, at some point, we will or should meet the person at the opposite end of our instant communications devices—face to face, handshake to handshake, *mano a mano*. How do you look? (Remember, 55 percent of our “presentation” to the world is visual.) How will you be attired? Do you articulate well? (According to Albert Mehrabian and “The Mehrabian Rule,” 38 percent is verbal—meaning it's how we say it.)

When you meet for the first time, will you know to shake hands (receive and interpret the other person's handshake)? Will you know how to introduce yourself and make proper introductions of others? Are you aware of the opportunity you have to use your bearing, carriage, stance, eyes, eye-contact, the meeting itself, sitting, and seating (where, how, and when you sit) to your advantage?

Imagine combining the brilliant technological advances of today with timeless people skills and consider the potential of future generations.

Avoid the perception of being in fast and furious mode making people feel like the object of an obligatory—even unimportant—task, even showing yourself as sloppy and disrespectful. Remember all communication—form and substance—is, however subliminally, judged by others. You may believe that your communications are awesome; however, without

We live in an era of great potential.

realizing it, they may be providing a false sense of confidence.

Leaders should endeavor to fine tune interpersonal communication skills to expand and reignite a person's network of connections, enhance professional reputation, amplify business brand, and achieve the highest standard in business interactions.

Leaders at all levels need to be confident knowing that everything said and done is not just “fine” but “top tier.” They need to be fabulous in terms of codes of conduct and correct behavior, thereby freeing them to focus on people and the business topics at hand while simultaneously positioning themselves miles apart from any competition.

Conclusion

Americans today, more than ever before, crave leadership. We live in an era of great potential. To accomplish your goals, you need to pay attention to your dreams and believe that *your* potential is inside you, waiting to be released. Believe you are about to step into a season of boldness, strength, and open doors. Expect to go places you have never been. Be equipped and empowered to lead and stand apart. Everything we need to lead, succeed, and excel is inside of each of us. No matter what time of the year, believe that this is your season!

When you combine the “extra” with “ordinary” your world becomes extraordinary...(*fabulous!*) and you will stand apart, compete better, advance, and exhibit *fabulous* leadership ability. When we consistently choose to get out of our “where we have always been” comfort zone and into the “I believe in me” zone

we will discover our inner potential and this will be unleashed.

The future is at hand. Live your life well with your unique purpose in mind.



Judith Bowman founded Protocol Consultants International in 1993 and has prospered to become an established business protocol expert. Ms. Bowman is the author of Don't Take the Last Donut (Career Press) and How to Stand Apart @ Work... Transforming "Fine" to Fabulous! (Morgan James). She is an educator, corporate speaker, and renowned authority in the field of Professional Presence including Dining Savvy, International Protocol Awareness. Ms. Bowman provides training, seminars, personal coaching, and speaking services for small and medium-sized companies, as well as Fortune 500 firms. She works with students and professionals at all levels, political leaders, and royalty.

AN EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE FOR INNOVATION AT THE U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE

*by Col. Charles D. Allen (ret.)
and Steven Zeisler*

In a rapidly changing world, perhaps the only thing separating those organizations that can maintain long-term success from their rivals is the quality of their leadership. Top managers and executives must be more than highly competent in the skills demanded by the domains in which they operate; they must be better able to anticipate the global shifts all around them and enable their organizations to innovate faster and with greater impact than their competition. Accordingly, wise executives across public and private domains understand that to maximize an organization's performance they must maximize the potential of their leaders. They must find ways to keep their top leaders better equipped than rival organizations. That is why in many high-performing organizations, leaders tell us that there is a deliberate effort to identify and develop high-potential enterprise leaders in formal and experiential executive development processes. Corporate leaders intuitively know that a company's higher market performance is directly connected to their global leadership program. Although difficult to quantify, this is why leadership development has long been an essential tool for businesses and other institutions that have long histories of success.

A culture of leader development pervades the Army.

The Business Case for Army Leader Development and Education

This focus has been rigorously applied and studiously maintained for over a century at the U.S. Army War College where, since 1901, it has contributed to the education of world-class senior leaders with the expert knowledge and competencies to address the strategic issues of U.S. national security. Its student body is composed of highly successful officers (lieutenant colonels and colonels) from across the military services and senior government civilians who, based on demonstrated performance and future potential, have been board selected for this 10-month educational program. As with important promotions in rank and assignments to key senior positions, each year the Army convenes a special board of senior officers to evaluate and select high-potential students (this year the top 9 percent of the officer cohort) to attend senior-level college programs like the Army War College.

A culture of leader development pervades the Army, whether in operational or institutional settings, such that each individual has an obligation to lead or share in leadership as circumstances dictate. But the focus of this article is on the *climate* that supports one pillar of leader development, education, for our high-potential students at the U.S. Army War College.

Insights from the work at this institution have relevance and power when considering civilian leader development programs, especially those that focus on the development of executives and enterprise leaders.

Thus, we define a specific climate—for innovation—and present analysis that compares the War College with other learning institutions using a well-established instrument and a substantial research base. Our analysis supports the assertion that the educational setting of the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) provides the climate for innovation to enable the development of its graduates as contributors to innovation within the U.S. military.

Executive development in any sector will benefit by incorporating a focus on climate. As with our national institutions of higher learning and in corporate leadership institutes, U.S. professional military education (PME) has been under scrutiny and, in some cases, assault. Critics have come from within and outside of the profession of arms on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the education of senior officers, especially with the challenges of the 21st century. Facing challenges of fiscal realities and demands for measures of performance on the bottom line, the persistent question that drives all professionals in training and development is, “What is the return on investment (ROI) for leader development?” Three aspects have been touted as most important to address: the rigor of the PME curriculum, the quality of the faculty, and the development of students who undergo this educational intervention. These three aspects interact within the totality of the standard educational process with the expectation that the graduates will emerge as more informed and competent strategic thinkers. An important and missing element is the climate in which education is conducted.

What is the return on investment for leader development?

For the U.S. Army, leader development is supported by three pillars: training, experience, and education. The Army develops its leaders through standardized programs of operational assignments that provide on-the-job experiences and periodic stints for training and education in institutional settings (like PME) and sets an expectation of self-development for individuals. This approach has parallels in corporate leadership development efforts in the past decade or more that follow a 70-20-10 model (70 percent experience, 20 percent feedback and coaching, and 10 percent formal education and training) conceived at the Center for Creative Leadership.

From its mission statement, “The U.S. Army War College educates and develops leaders for service at the strategic level while advancing knowledge in the global application of Land power.” Its institutional charter is to “provide high quality Professional Military Education at the strategic level that further develops accomplished officers and civilians, both graduates and faculty, who depart our institution armed with the right balance of theory, history, practice, and communication skills to clearly articulate options for solutions to complex strategic problems and immediately be of value to any organization.”

The imperative in the business world—and in the military—is to develop leaders capable of bringing strategic and creative thinking to the challenges and opportunities they face, of nurturing creativity in others, enabling innovation throughout their organizations, and guiding others to deal effectively in times of turbulence and constant change.

For Education AND Innovation, Focus on Climate

Typically, leadership development efforts focus on three areas: WHO—the high potentials on whom the development efforts are targeted; WHAT—the curriculum with content for training and education; and HOW—the processes including classroom, experiences, and on-the-job development efforts. In addition to these three, at the USAWC we’ve added a fourth area of focus: the prevailing atmosphere

Although leaders may be transient, culture endures.

or climate in which students experience PME. In addition, our work at both the USAWC and Zeisler Associates strongly supports the premise that a primary focus on culture has low return on investment. Culture is the organization-wide, historically based, and deeply held philosophy, values, and beliefs that bind an organization together and is, therefore, most resistant to change. Scholar Edgar Schein stated that culture can outlast products, services, and all the other physical attributes of an organization as well as the founders and its current leadership. Although leaders may be transient, culture endures. Quality guru W. Edwards Deming confirmed the intransigence of culture when he remarked that culture change can take a generation or longer. Former IBM CEO Lou Gerstner conveys in *Who Says Elephants Can’t Dance* the time and monumental effort it took to effect a new culture in a well-established and at-risk corporation.

Theory and Research on Climate for Innovation

In contrast to culture, climate is what people in a specific part of an organization experience: the patterns of behavior and the perceptions that characterize day-to-day life in the organization. Climate plays a key role in determining the outlook or likelihood of creativity, innovation, and change occurring in a particular situation. Because climate can vary throughout an organization, it is localized and much more susceptible to the influence of and change by local leaders.

Particularly at an institution like the USAWC, it is important for us to focus away from culture, over which local leaders have little control and influence, and turn

Challenge and Involvement:
The level of engagement members of an enterprise have to contribute to its goals, operations and success.
Freedom:
The independence people have in carrying out their work, roles and responsibilities.
Trust & Openness:
The emotional safety in relationships and whether people show respect for and are open and frank with each other.
Idea Time:
The amount of time individuals devote to creating new and elaborating on existing ideas.
Playfulness & Humor:
The amount of spontaneity, ease and light-hearted humor displayed in the workplace.
Conflict (the only negatively-rated dimension):
The presence of personal and interpersonal tension in the workplace.
Debate:
The amount of positive exchanges among those persons with different perspectives, ideas, experiences and knowledge.
Idea Support:
The degree to which new ideas are solicited and the positive ways they are treated.
Risk-taking:
The level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguous outcomes, and the willingness to try the unproven and new.

Source: CPSB, Inc.

TABLE 1. CLIMATE FOR INNOVATION DIMENSIONS

our attention instead to the climate for innovation. We recognize that USAWC is embedded in the larger Army and U.S. defense enterprise, which have their own insitutional cultures. Climate, not culture, is the real leverage point for leaders within organizations. It is climate that presents the true opportunity for leaders to shape intentionally the day-to-day atmosphere that enables individual and organizational performance.

In order for leaders to develop and hone their skills at leading innovation in their organizations, the day-to-day setting at the USAWC must be one that nurtures their development of these skills and establishes a benchmark for them for what such a climate is like, as experienced by those within it.

Research into climate for innovation, especially that of Dr. Göran Ekvall at the University of Lund, Sweden, clearly demonstrates that organizations that can innovate consistently and successfully have significant differences in a climate for innovation than those companies with a poorer track record of innovation. His research identified nine dimensions of

a climate for innovation (Table 1) and an instrument for measuring them. We can assess the results of these dimensions against the results of organizations previously identified as “innovative” (industry leaders as determined against a range of innovation metrics) and “stagnated” (industry laggards assessed against the same metrics). We can also compare data from other learning institutions, including universities and corporate leadership development groups, that focus on executive development.

How Does the Army War College Compare?

In Table 2, we compare aggregated data from the USAWC consisting of 241 respondents over several years (since 1999) with 741 respondents from four advanced learning institutions as well as innovative and stagnated organizations. Although the USAWC respondents are students enrolled in the elective courses “Creative Thinking” and “Creative Leadership,” cohorts from over a decade report fairly consistent perceptions

	Innovative Organizations	USAWC	Learning Institutions	Stagnated Organizations
Challenge/Involvement	238	237	228	163
Freedom	210	195	176	153
Trust & Openness	178	207	190	128
Idea Time	148	190	148	97
Playfulness & Humor	230	200	182	140
Conflict*	78	67	76	140
Debate	183	213	197	108
Idea Support	158	241	200	105
Risk-taking	195	183	166	53

Range: 0 - 300 Statistically significant difference = 25 pts.
 * n.b. Conflict is the only negatively-rated Dimension

TABLE 2. CLIMATE FOR INNOVATION DIMENSIONS COMPARED

of the climate across the years. It is clear that along these salient dimensions USAWC students experience a climate for innovation that is comparable with innovative organizations across varied domains and is arguably at least as supportive as other learning institutions in the research database. This may be surprising and counterintuitive, given the prevailing stereotype of military bureaucracy and rigidity.

Although this may not be reflective of the Army and other defense organizations writ large, during the 10-month resident experience at USAWC, its students are deeply engaged in exploring, understanding, and addressing the security issues faced by our nation. Perhaps for the first time in a long while, they have the opportunity to reflect and think strategically about such issues. In the seminar experience, students find that their thoughts are welcomed as contributions to professional discourse. And the climate is psychologically safe where they can try out new ideas and experiment in a setting that promotes learning.

The numerical data are supplemented by written comments from the students that provide additional feedback about the kinds of behaviors, approaches, and mechanisms that support or get in the way of the climate for innovation. Often, insightful students offer creative ideas on how to improve the educational

experience. It is important to note that the quantitative and qualitative data about the climate for innovation are a *description* of the organization rather than a prescription of what to do or a pronouncement of the innovative health of the organization. Leaders must examine the data in light of the purpose, mission, and goals of an organization to determine which dimensions should be addressed and what actions to take. A higher—or lower—number for any dimension on its own does not provide a conclusion. The assessment must be examined within the context of the organization. For example, a higher risk-taking score at a nuclear power plant may not be a target to strive for, but in a start-up company's research and development (R&D) labs, it might.

These comparisons help our USAWC faculty to improve awareness and understanding of our ability to develop and maintain a supportive climate. It also provides participants—our students—with the first-hand experience of what such a climate is like. This may not have been the case in their prior military assignments so it is important to demonstrate the potential that exists for them as senior leaders. In this way, when our graduates return to their field and staff assignments, they are better equipped to put in place mechanisms, behaviors, and tools to

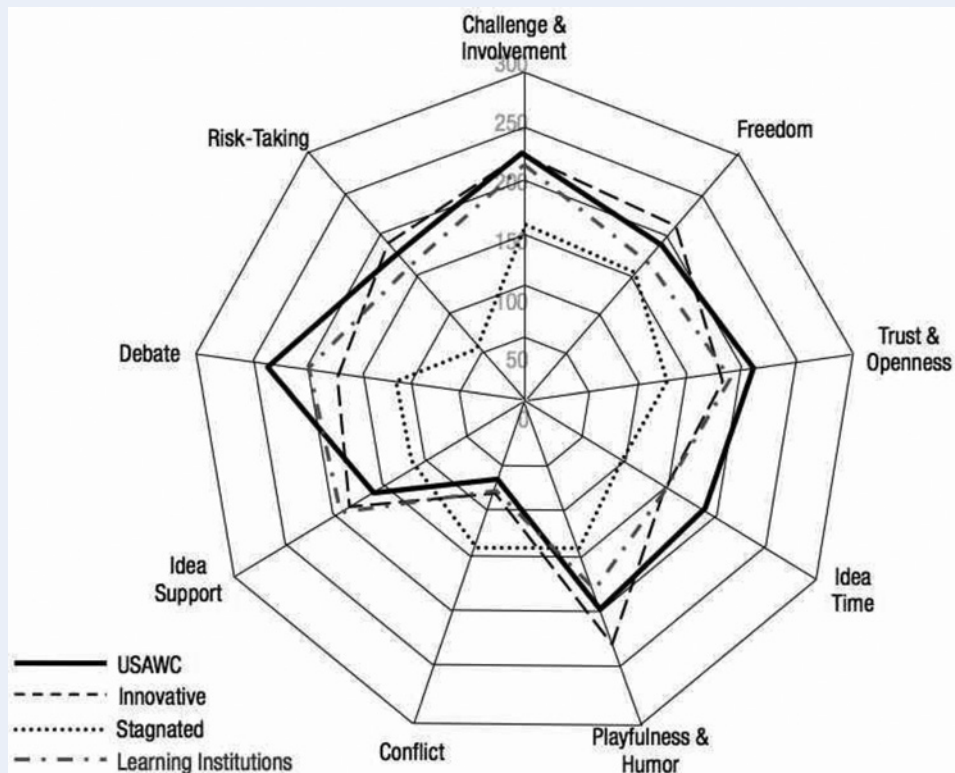


FIGURE 1.

develop and maintain the appropriate climate in their organizations.

Applications Beyond the Army War College

We offer that our work and findings at the Army War College indicate very strongly that a focus on the climate for innovation in corporate leadership development settings will have a similar significant return on investment. Indeed, where we have applied a focus on such a climate in the corporate world, remarkable things happen. We have experienced the power of a focus on climate beyond the USAWC.

- A 50-year-old research and development site of a Global Fortune 100 company had languished for nearly a decade to the extent that executive leadership was considering shutting it down if it could not turn performance around. Various efforts over the recent past had yielded little improvement until we were engaged and brought the focus on
- the climate for innovation. Within 3 months of analyzing the climate and identifying key initiatives that would improve it, executive leadership noted meaningful improvements in the quality and number of new product and process developments emanating from the site. Within 6 months, significant capital investments were made in the site based on recent, highly visible R&D successes, and within 18 months the center had radically transformed itself into a hotbed of innovation, leading all of the corporation's other R&D sites in commercialization of new products and revenues generated by those innovations. All this was accomplished with virtually the same staff as before.
- Senior leadership at a high-performing affiliate of an international industry leader used the climate for innovation to identify where their organization could build on its climate strengths and to locate early warning signs of decline. A climate for innovation survey and analysis were conducted across all functions site-wide. Our findings helped

leadership leverage their existing strengths of challenge and involvement by increasing and adding to its employee engagement strategies. In addition, we identified low levels of idea time and playfulness and humor as areas of concern. Tactics to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings were enacted but even more significant gains resulted from a shift in focus from time management to energy management and wellness. The affiliate has maintained or increased their business performance and innovation success year after year by focusing on what needs to be done to continuously improve key dimensions of a climate for innovation throughout each of their organization's functional groups.

- A support function for corporate innovation efforts avoided being outsourced because a sharp focus on their climate for innovation helped them identify ways to bring more value to the company than would have occurred through outsourcing. Our climate analysis helped them target key activities and behaviors to provide the outstanding support levels their internal clients required. The survey identified needs in risk-taking and idea support and subsequent work with members of the organization identified specific actions and activities that would enhance the value they delivered to internal clients. They built upon their strengths in challenge and involvement and, by implementing suggestions from its members, physically transformed workspace in ways that added to playfulness, trust, and openness.

Senior corporate leaders now have leading indicators for innovation success—the dimensions of a climate for innovation—that drive lagging innovation indicators including shorter cycle times in going from idea to

Organizations must find leverage points for innovation.

implementation, end-user or customer enthusiasm for the innovation, and its commercial success. And, because the dimensions can be measured and compared with other organizations, the usually hidden aspects of an organization are made clearly visible.

Conclusion

Without a focus on a climate for innovation, the best tools, approaches, and behaviors to unleash innovation in corporate settings taught in any aspect of the 70-20-10 model are less likely to take hold. They are less likely to withstand the impacts of cultural inertia (resistance to movement) and the human bias against change. Without the proper climate, the efforts of leaders will be severely diminished. Adding a clear focus on the climate for innovation with the best WHOs, WHATs, and HOWs of professional development will help ensure outcomes aligned with expectations and a higher ROI.

In today's rapidly changing business, geopolitical, and economic environments, organizations everywhere must find leverage points for innovation they can push on with speed. Culture is not that lever; climate is.



Colonel (retired) Charles D. Allen culminated a 30-year Army career as director, leader development, and is currently the professor of leadership and cultural studies in the Department of Command, Leadership, and Management at the United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA. His current research focuses on strategic leadership, creativity and innovation, and organizational change. Fittingly, he teaches a creative leadership elective as well as the core curriculum on strategic leadership. Chuck is a member of the “On Leadership” panel of The Washington Post and is the steering committee chairman for the Executive Development Roundtable hosted by Boston University.



Steven Zeisler is the founder of Zeisler Associates, Inc., an international consulting and leadership development firm that helps enterprises innovate. Since 1994, his company’s efforts have triggered breakthrough and improvement innovations in Global 500 corporations, private firms, public institutions, city councils, and universities around the world worth many hundreds of millions of dollars. Steve is highly regarded as one of the rare experts who “makes innovation happen” in client organizations. He has worked on innovations as diverse as the first “all-aluminum” car, skin treatment products, soluble coffees, ice creams, thermoplastics, fragrances, manufacturing processes, and military defense systems.