



# Leadership and Organizations for the New Millennium

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## Executive Summary

The development of leadership theory has paralleled the development of organizational theory. The models of laissez-faire, transactional and transformational leadership both explain the old paradigm of the bureaucratic organization and reinforce the new organizational paradigm for the twenty-first century. The bureaucratic organization is analyzed in terms of laissez-faire leadership and the transactional leadership elements of management-by-exception and contingent reward. The new post-bureaucratic organization is analyzed in terms of the four 'I's of transformational leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. Inferences are drawn for the required roles and behavior of future leaders.

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The study of leadership has gained momentum in the past 20 years. James MacGregor Burns' seminal book on leadership was a watershed in our understanding of what makes a difference in leaders' behavior (Burns, 1978). The development of leadership theory has paralleled that of organizational theory. The current organizational revolution and the ascendancy of the post-bureaucratic organization are associated with new directions in leadership thinking. We shall consider how the models of transactional and transformational leadership that have emerged as a result of Burns' ideas may both explain the old organizational paradigm and reinforce the new organizational paradigm for the 21st Century.

### **A New Look at Leadership**

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During the 1980s, several significant leadership events occurred: the decline and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of glasnost in its post-bureaucratic successors, and the rejection of Thatcherism in the UK and Republicanism in the United States. It became harder than ever for leaders to lead, as Boutros-Boutros Ghali, Margaret Thatcher and her successor, John Major, discovered. Leaders have enjoyed (sic) the increased exposure to, and attention of, the mass media. And traditional goodwill and deference towards leaders has quite rapidly declined.

Parallel with these developments has been research (Bass, 1985) stimulated by Burns' fresh look at leadership. Within the model of leadership effectiveness that has emerged are clearer clues to the reasons why some leaders fail, some survive and some go on to transform the groups, organizations and societies they lead to heights of achievement perhaps before only imagined. The challenges of the imminent new millennium require a transformation in organizations and in the thinking and behavior of their leaders, a leadership paradigm shift that matches a shift from a bureaucratic to a post-modernist organizational paradigm.

### **The Promise of Discontinuity**

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There has been no shortage of commentators imparting the view since the 1960s that we have already been witnessing and participating in an organizational paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1962). If bureaucracy represented a normal period of organizational development for the twentieth century industrial age, post-bureaucratic organizations are now in the ascendant.

Evidence for the existence of such a transition is readily available (Bell, 1973). Post-industrialism (Bell), super-industrialism (Toffler, 1980), the age of discontinuity (Drucker, 1968), the information age (Tapscott and Larson, 1993), the post-modernist/post-Fordist organization (Clegg, 1990) and the re-engineered organization (Hammer and Champy, 1993) are some of the metaphors-in-use to describe the future shape of the organizational society. In

Naisbitt's (1982) evocative phrase, we may be living in a time of parenthesis - a time between the bureaucratic age and its successor.

### **The Old Organizational Paradigm**

The twentieth century has played host to bureaucracy while questioning and eventually undermining its central tenets. As Weber (1964) elegantly reminded us, bureaucracy is Janus-faced: it both provides and deprives. Material success parallels psychological deficit. Bureaucracy was founded on a machine metaphor (Morgan, 1986), in Weber's pessimistic words "parcelling out the souls of workers". It connoted the structural simplicity, predictability and procedural rationality of the production line. On this Fordist model of work, hierarchical leadership would ultimately be rendered superfluous by the standardization and systemization of mass production: "industry is management, and management is leadership, and leadership is perfect when it so simplifies operations that orders are not necessary" intoned one of Henry Ford's patriarchal aphorisms (Nevins and Hill, 1954). Moreover, bureaucracy operates with an amputated model of the (alienated) worker ("organization man"), a worker powerless, non-fulfilled, estranged from his own self and emotionally homeless (Blauner, 1964). Bennis (1973) popularized the demotics of bureaucracy. Its death was both forecast and celebrated. Illich (1973) described bureaucracy as the engine of industrialism - itself the very nadir of the human condition. Bureaucratic organizations, to paraphrase Illich, had become "tools of non-conviviality".

Weber himself, however, laid the foundations of a retreat from bureaucracy in his widely reported observation that it could stultify individual initiative. Merton (1952), Gouldner (1954) and other members of the American sociological tradition pointed to the tendency of leaders in bureaucratic organizations to manipulate the rule system in their favor and, in so doing, to encourage organizational dysfunctionality. And in the French tradition, Crozier (1964) depicted bureaucracy as an organization that was unable to learn from past mistakes and, in consequence, engaged in a retreat from reality.

Such morbid conclusions were strengthened by the development of contingency theory - a systems-based view of organizations stressing their flexibility in relation to the environments faced, technologies utilized and (latterly) provenance in the public sector (Pitt, 1980). Organizations operating in fast moving and unpredictable environments - those occupying a particular technological niche - would be uniquely disadvantaged by the retention of bureaucratic structures, working practices and leadership styles (Burns and Stalker, 1969).

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership and the Bureaucratic Organization**

The bureaucratic organization is often characterized by *laissez-faire* leadership, which according to Bass (1985) is really non-leadership. *Laissez-faire* managers avoid taking a stand, ignore problems, do not follow up, and refrain

from intervening. Such managers, suggest Avolio and Bass (1990), do not wish to be bothered; they do not care. Avolio and Bass quote, as an example, Louis XV of France: "*Après moi, le deluge.*" The King anticipated the French revolution but did little to prevent it. And they suggest that *laissez-faire* leaders may call meetings without agendas, agree with whatever is said to them, and be influenced by the last person to speak to them. *Laissez-faire* behavior leads to dysfunctional conflict and a lack of achievement.

Such *laissez-faire* behavior is an example of the way in which bureaucracy deprives. The *laissez-faire* leader's followers or subordinates are left to fend for themselves even when they need help or support. Operations are so simplified that not only orders but also creativity, inspiration, help and support are perceived as unnecessary. Learning, if it takes place at all, becomes a matter of trial and error. The consequence of *laissez-faire* leadership in the bureaucratic organization invariably is alienation.

### **Transactional Leadership and the Bureaucratic Organization**

*Laissez-faire* leadership entails not being actively involved with followers or subordinates: it is 'non-transactional'. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, practise management-by-exception and contingent reward. The passive form of management-by-exception entails setting performance objectives and standards, waiting for problems to arise, reacting to errors, and intervening reluctantly. Such behavior tends to reinforce the status quo. The active form of management-by-exception entails setting performance objectives and standards, monitoring for deviations and errors and then correcting them, and enforcing rules and procedures. Such behavior leads to the avoidance of initiation or risk-taking by subordinates or followers.

The bureaucratic organization may be characterized by the manipulation of its rule system by managers to their own advantage (Crozier, 1964). In this case the transactional relationship between leader (manager) and subordinates as a result of such self-serving manipulation may be based strongly on contingent reward. Contingent reward entails setting work objectives and performance standards and ensuring they are clear, providing feedback on progress towards them or achievement of them, and exchanging rewards and recognition - e.g. money or praise - for such progress or achievement (Avolio and Bass, 1990). In the bureaucratic organization, therefore, the use of contingent reward can, and often does, reinforce conformist behavior or behavior that serves the leader's self-serving purpose.

Furthermore, rewarding followers or subordinates with "carrots" and punishing them with "sticks" may make people feel like donkeys. Not enough consideration is given to people's ideas, feelings and needs. In these situations, corporate benevolence becomes synonymous with commercial logic; in the words of Autry, "love and profit" become one and the same thing (Autry, 1993). Transactional leadership does not explain what leaders do when they raise

motivation and achievement to levels beyond normal expectations. Nor does it empower people or develop people to their fullest potential.

The lack of empowerment, endemic in the bureaucratic organization, may lead to its inability to learn from past mistakes. This is the result of either passive management-by-exception that reinforces the status quo or active management-by-exception that punishes initiative and risk taking (Pitt, Yan and Levine, 1996).

Acknowledgement is occasionally grudgingly given to the positive legacy of bureaucracy: the provision of taken-for-granted consumer goods and services which define the late-twentieth-century social landscape and its undoubted contribution to the relief of poverty and to the advance of democratization. But its success can be redefined as excess. The Renaissance ideal of progress is now contestable along with its organizational carapace (Almond et al, 1982). Are there grounds for optimism that, if we have perhaps not reached the end of the organizational age, we have at least reached the dénouement of the golden age of bureaucracy? Yet organizations will be needed even more than before, according to Drucker (1997): "Precisely because there will be so much ambiguity, so much flexibility, so many variations, far more clarity will be needed in respect to mission, values and strategy, in balancing long-range and short-range goals, in defining results. Above all, absolute clarity will be needed as to who ultimately makes the decisions and who is in command in a crisis."

If we accept Drucker's argument for the need for such clarity, what does this imply for leadership in organizations of the future? Avolio and Bass (1990) argue that, while transactional leadership may be a necessary form of leadership, it will not be sufficient. Transactional leadership certainly can provide absolute clarity as to who sets the direction, values and strategies, makes decisions and is in command in a crisis. And recent research suggests that transactional leaders invariably are mainly directive in their leadership style (Gill, 1997). However, transactional leadership is unlikely to enable either effective handling of ambiguity or effective flexibility. Something more is needed - transformational leadership, which Avolio and Bass (1990) argue **adds to**, rather than replaces, transactional leadership.

### **Post-Bureaucracy: The Shape of Things to Come**

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The demands of the new millennium and the new organizational paradigm entail organizational change, and change is the business of leaders, not managers. The challenge for leaders to be transformational will take the form of not only how they respond to change but also how they actively and constantly create change. In Champy's words, organizational change is "a journey that never ends" (Champy 1997).

## The New Organizational Paradigm

The portents for a radical departure from organizational orthodoxy are already visible. In fact the deconstruction of the traditional organization is inherent in the emerging notion of the "virtual organization", which itself is testimony to the very shapelessness of future organizational arrangements. Peters (1993) regards the prime functional requirement of tomorrow's organizational world as "permanent flexibility". This notion is consonant with Drucker's account that we are currently moving into a post-industrial information-based age, that organizations are currently experiencing the death of permanence. The implications of this include the redefining of the boundaries of organizations and greater geographic decentralization in large organizations (now permitted by electronic data links).

A basic contrast in this account is that of industrialism and post-industrialism - the first associated with mass production, uniformity and predictability, the latter (post-industrialism or post-modernism) with flexibility, choice and personal responsibility. Hierarchies will be substituted by networks of power and influence and horizontal relationships in place of their vertical (bureaucratic) counterparts. Project teams will be typical. Constant reorganization or continuous organizational change will be needed to meet the pressures of a fast-changing, turbulent environment and will be the norm. Crucially, high-trust relationships will need to be encouraged in situations of change and uncertainty. This implies nothing less than a completely new philosophy of human resource management. As Hastings (1993) has concluded, new organizational cultures will supplant the old, exemplified by hierarchies, boundaries, internal focus, control, and mistake avoidance. New organizational cultures in contrast will be exemplified by teams, networking, external focus, empowerment, mutual trust and supportive action, and calculated risk taking. Enhanced electronic participation will theoretically heighten grass-roots awareness of the strategic decision-making process within the organization and will lead to improved levels of accountability.

A common structural phenomenon of the new organization (a point highlighted by Drucker) is the "law of the disappearing middle". Electronic downsizing will render whole echelons of middle managers redundant. Schumacher's "small is beautiful" credo will be revealed in a process of wholesale delayering.

On the labour relations front, widely envisaged is an end to adversarial relationships. Associational unionism will emerge, recognising the development of an attenuated boundary line between managers and workers in a climate of greater teamwork.

Finally, IT and the emergence of a new culture will empower one of the contemporary organization's underutilized assets - its female labour force. The development of new patterns of inspirational leadership (in place of bureaucratic management) will also enhance the role of women. The information revolution

will have similar effects. If the industrial worker was prototypically male, the information worker is typically a woman (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1990).

A key characteristic of this virtual organization which imparts value to its "relationship holders" is its foundation in paradox (Hickman and Silva, 1988; Handy, 1994). Organizations may become minimalist; unmanaged workers will produce more than managed workers; less control will mean more control. Organizational participants - workers and managers alike - will have to learn to be able to hold competing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.

While the *laissez-faire* and transactional leadership behavior of Weber's bureaucratic organizations appears to "parcel out" the souls of its workers, transformational leadership in the post-bureaucratic age will aim to win their hearts and minds. This "New Leadership" (Bryman, 1992) will characterize the new organizational paradigm.

### **Transformational Leadership**

The transformational leader was first identified by Downton (1973) in his discussion of rebel leadership and revolution. More fully described by Burns (1978), the concept of transformational leadership was later modelled empirically by Bass (1985). Transformational leadership adds to the more effective aspects of transactional leadership and eschews its less effective and dysfunctional aspects. Transformational leadership describes what leaders do when they raise motivation and achievement to levels beyond previous expectations and when they develop people to their fullest potential and contribution. It transforms people's expectations about themselves. Transformational leadership behavior augments transactional leadership. It "...adds substantially to helping individuals, groups and organizations...by helping the followers transcend their own immediate self-interests, increase their awareness of the larger issues, and shift the goals...towards achievement and self-actualization" (Bass, 1990).

This model of transformational leadership describes how leaders go beyond their task orientation and relationship orientation and display sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of followers, are agents of radical change, are strongly articulate, are willing to take personal risks, and are idealistic and compelling in their vision of the future (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders display characteristics and behavior that Bass and Avolio (1994) call the four 'I's: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. We now turn to this model in detail.

### **Individualized Consideration**

This element of transformational leadership comprises identifying and responding to individuals' unique needs and abilities, providing matching challenges, providing opportunities to learn, and delegating, coaching and giving developmental feedback. Empowerment is largely characterized by such behaviors, which lead to a desire among followers or subordinates to improve and develop themselves. Transformational leaders let go, and they help others to break with the past. They allow or make time to work with each individual who needs it. Examples of such leadership behavior, quoted by Avolio and Bass (1990), are Ross Perot's concern and personal intervention when two of his employees were taken hostage during the Iranian revolution and Margaret Thatcher's individualized concern for her fiercely loyal personal staff (if not for her ministerial colleagues).

### **Intellectual Stimulation**

Transformational leaders stimulate the intellect and imagination of their followers or subordinates. They question the status quo, they encourage imagination and creativity, and they use and encourage intuition as well as logic. Intellectual stimulation is clearly part of the process of empowering people.

One of the greatest examples of an intellectually stimulating leader was Socrates (Avolio and Bass, 1990). He was seen as a troublemaker and as disrupting the comfortable status quo. The former chairman of the WPP Group and advertising guru, David Ogilvy, said...

The best leaders...have...unorthodoxy in their character. Instead of resisting innovation, they symbolize it - and companies cannot grow without innovation.

### **Inspirational Motivation**

Transformational leaders inspire people by articulating exciting possibilities. They communicate a clear and rational vision of where we need to be, they align individual and organizational goals, thus making the achievement of organizational goals an attractive means of achieving personal goals, they treat threats and problems as opportunities for learning and achievement, and they use appealing words and symbols: "I have a dream..." (Martin Luther King); "We will fight them on the beaches..." (Winston Churchill); "Ask not what your country can do for you...ask what you can do for your country" (John F. Kennedy). Such inspirational oratory leads to a willingness to exert extra effort, to go the extra mile.

An example of such a leader, according to Avolio and Bass (1990), is Lee Iacocca at Chrysler. He took over when Chrysler was on the verge of bankruptcy and convinced a sceptical Congress, an alienated workforce and a

disenchanted public that Chrysler could succeed. He inspired his workers to make sacrifices in their pay by himself taking a salary of one dollar for an entire year. Two Southeast Asian leaders, while commonly perceived as authoritarian, have projected an inspiring vision for their nations - Dr Mahathir Mohamed, prime minister of Malaysia, with his "Vision 2020" for the country, a vision of full developed-nation status by 2020, and Lee Kuan Yew, former prime minister of Singapore, with his vision in the early 1980s of Singapore as the "Switzerland of the East" by 1999. Winston Churchill, as well as an inspirational leader during the Second World War, was also a visionary leader, in 1945 presaging a European union of nations.

### **Idealized Influence**

Transformational leaders display idealized influence. They express confidence in the vision, extolling its virtues, they personally take full responsibility for actions, they display a sense of purpose, persistence and trust in other people, they emphasize accomplishments rather than weaknesses or failures, and they gain the respect, trust and confidence of others by personally demonstrating extraordinary ability of some kind. Idealized influence is closely associated with charisma. It creates trust in such a leader by followers or subordinates, their identification with the leader and a desire to achieve in order to show support. Admired examples of charismatic leaders who possessed idealized influence are Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Garibaldi.

## **Transformational Leadership and the New Organizational Paradigm**

We now turn to considering how the new organizational paradigm can be understood in terms of the transformational leadership model. We look at how the four "I"s are associated with several characteristics of the New Organization:

- The empowerment of the worker;
- A shift in emphasis from management to leadership;
- Individualization of employment contracts;
- The shaping of new corporate cultures;
- Organizational stability and innovation and flexibility;
- The "learning organization";
- The importance of vision and scenario thinking.

Individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation are evident in the empowerment of the individual and the trend away from "handwork" and towards "headwork" The resistance of workers in the bureaucratic organization, and at

best their compliance, to command and control is replaced in the new organization by commitment based on a shared vision, empowerment and inspiration. Perhaps the most visible change is the shift in emphasis from "management" to leadership. "Lead the people, but let them manage themselves" is the new imperative.

Individualized consideration must not exclude dealing with the individual's insecurity and potential redundancy or with intrinsic conflicts between their personal needs and the goals of their organization that no amount of visioning, empowering and inspiring will resolve. What is needed is a universalist philosophy that translates into satisfying employees' psychological needs both through their pursuit and fulfilment of the organization's vision and objectives and through their self-management. The twentieth-century organization, with its artificial rigidities and disciplines, Champy (1997) says, will be replaced by one characterized by responsibility, autonomy, risk and uncertainty - a very human organization with all its satisfactions and frustrations.

Transformational leadership, through a combination of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, encourages individuals in self-managed and shifting project teams to take the initiative and constantly invent improvements (*kaizen*). The inherently empowering force of transformational leadership will "re-enchant" the workforce disenchanted with the *laissez-faire* and transactional behavior associated with the old organizational paradigm. In the New Organization there may be multiple leadership relationships, but the same people need not always take the lead; in a meritocratic "outcome oriented" organization, leadership is about expertise, influence, persuasion and ultimately collaboration (Rost 1993).

Individualized consideration will be reflected in the individualization of employment contracts to meet individuals' unique needs and preferences. Some features of transactional leadership, however, will remain. Variable compensation policies and performance-related pay have already signalled the end of the age of entitlement and its succession by the age of achievement. The need for individualized consideration will mean that individuals' employment contracts in respect of fixed and variable pay and benefits will relate, within a general context of equity, to individuals' own needs and expectations. "Cafeteria compensation" plans will become the norm, the benchmark, rather than the exception.

The post-bureaucratic form of organization will involve a reinvention of organizational cultures. Transformational leaders will develop a shared vision, will make explicit and challenge prevailing mental models, and will foster more systemic patterns of thinking, focusing on relationships and opportunities for leverage (Senge, 1992). Such leaders create a "learning organization", which "facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself" (Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell, 1991), and in which...

...people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

(Senge, 1990)

Transformational leaders will also address the wider issues of the environment, business ethics and gender, reflected in a new emphasis on corporate core values. Building an organizational culture and shaping its evolution are the unique and essential functions of leadership (Schein, quoted in Senge, 1992, p. 85). This is evidenced in a survey of 532 chief executive officers and senior managers in the top 100 companies in 15 countries, from which it emerged that there was a significant global consensus on the need to create learning organizations with people capable of working in agile, continually adaptive, innovative and creative organisations facilitated by empowering leadership (PA Consulting Group, 1996).

Organizations are made up of individuals who have different backgrounds, attitudes, skills, values and needs that require individualized consideration. But a common vision is a way of providing a focus and harnessing the collective energies of all organizational members. To progress towards the vision requires personal commitment on the part of the organization's leaders, a collective will and continuous improvement as a learning organization. The old organizational cultures (Hastings, 1993) characterized by transactional leadership will be replaced by new cultures of teamwork, information sharing, empowerment, trust, mutual support and calculated risk taking, which are part and parcel of transformational leadership.

### **New Roles for New Leaders**

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Senge (1992) maps out the new role of the leader in the twenty-first century in the new organization:

- Designing the governing ideas of purpose (mission), vision and core values;
- Designing the policies, strategies and structure that translate these ideas into business decisions;
- Coaching, guiding and facilitating people in gaining more insightful views of current reality;
- Serving as steward of a higher level of functioning - in line with Greenleaf's (1977) concept that leaders serve first.

Thompson (1992) adds visionary foresight, inspiring managers to implement optimistic visions of their companies, imbuing energy and inspiring the fulfilment of individual potential, integrity, creativity, enthusiasm, open-mindedness, intuition, risk taking, collaboration and diplomacy.

Vaill (1989) describes the treacherous and permanent "white water" we have entered as we approach the new millennium. Korn/Ferry (1989) in collaboration with Columbia Business School surveyed 1,500 chief executive officers worldwide representing companies producing 10% of the Gross World Product. The survey identified the overwhelming importance of visionary leadership anticipating the company's future and its place in global business, setting ambitious corporate goals, and inspiring managers to achieve them. In the words of Thompson (1992), "visionary leadership is no longer just desirable; it is rapidly becoming the cornerstone of corporate survival." Networking and strategic alliances will pose special challenges. The devolution of power and responsibility, the sharing of information and joint working (Hastings, 1993) will require organizations to confront the vision issue of "what business are we in?" The leader's role will increasingly become one of formulating a vision for the organization, often encapsulated in the mission statement, and communicating it throughout the organization in an attractive and appealing way that captures the hearts and minds of its members (inspirational motivation and idealized influence).

In successful organizations, argues Van der Heijden (1996), "scenario thinking" will become the norm for top management and a key leadership competency. An example of intellectual stimulation, scenario thinking focuses on assumptions, values and mental models rather than on tools and techniques. It involves top-level managers in thinking "outside the box", identifying possible, not just probable, future scenarios, and planning contingently for them. Leaders of the future will have to display the arts of lateral thinking and "strategic conversation" (Van der Heijden, *ibid.*), replacing mere consultation and the broadcasting of messages (Champy, 1997) and based on mutual trust.

### **Whither Leadership?**

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Leadership for the new millennium will witness a paradigm shift. It will mean scenario thinking, providing a compelling vision of the possible future, showing the way through rational strategies, truly empowering people through individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, developing their competencies, providing appropriate resources and opportunity, and inspiring people to want to do the things that enable the organization to attain its vision. In this way, the organization can achieve extraordinary performance in the new millennium. Transformational leadership will be the hallmark of the successful organization in the twenty-first century.

With the arrival of the new millennium, we are fast approaching the end of the bureaucratic century. New organizational and leadership paradigms are in the

ascendant. Are we witnessing the end of organizational and leadership history, at least as we have known it (Fukuyama, 1989)? Given the challenges facing organizations and leaders in the years ahead, the words of M. Louise Haskins (1908), penned a century ago, seem to be peculiarly apt:

*I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:  
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown!'*

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