

## **The Leadership Challenge: How to get extraordinary things done in organizations**

*James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner*

### *Summary:*

This article discusses the characteristics of a successful leader and ways of achieving exemplary leadership.

Challenge the process by looking for new ways of doing things.

Inspire a shared vision by looking into the future and communicating the organization's goals to the rest of the group.

Enable others to act by listening and encouraging others to participate.

Model the way by first knowing the philosophy, goals and plan of the organization.

Encourage others to grow by acknowledging and rewarding their accomplishments.

Something I found interesting is that Kouzes and Posner suggest that the one thing that sustains a leader and gives him/her courage is love. "Leaders are in love-in love with the people who do the work, with what their organizations produce and with their customers."

## **The Feminization of Leadership**

*Patricia L. Smith and Stanley J. Smits*

### *Summary:*

Although male and female leaders have similar personal characteristics research suggests that female leaders influence the workplace differently from males and their leadership styles are a result of this difference.

The socialization process of both males and females accounts for this difference. men and women are treated differently in the workplace, thus act differently and vice versa- a circular process.

Findings of the study suggest that women enjoy working for other women and that having more women in leadership roles could inspire and help other women assert themselves.

A synergistic model of leadership would probably be most efficient, one that encompasses a continuum or balance of both male and female strengths.

### *Problems with the study:*

Findings of the study suggest that having more women in leadership roles could inspire and help other women assert themselves.

Although on one hand this could possibly be true there are potential problems and/or biases with this study.

The study compared sample of female small business owners in industries traditionally dominated by males.

Here they do not specify how many females. Was it five, six or one hundred? The experimenters could have very well generalized their findings from a very small number of participants. Similarly, the study does not say whether these participants were randomly sampled (if used a method for selecting participants where every person in the population has an equal chance of being selected into the study). If the researchers themselves picked the participants, experimenter bias (experimenters interpret ambiguous behaviors in ways that are consistent with their expectations) could affect the responses the participants gave. The researchers seem to be generalizing their findings from a very small geographic area to organizations in all areas.

The study suggests that female small business owners as opposed to males had better track records for hiring women. The researchers are making a very general statement here. How was this measured? Maybe there just happen to be more women than men in this geographic area and thus more women apply for these jobs. Female small business owners hired more females (42.6%) than did their male counterparts (22.9%). We do not know how the researchers arrived at such percentages. This again relates back to the sample size. If these percentages are from a group of not even 10

participants then they cannot be that valid but if they were from a much larger sample of maybe 30 or more then perhaps we can take the percentages more seriously.

Many of the participants in this study said they opted out of large corporations to start their business. This suggests that all the participants in the group are quite similar. They have opted out from large corporations for certain reasons. Maybe large corporations in their geographic area have a bad reputation or these people have had bad encounters with large corporations. Does this mean that small business owners have better track records for hiring women (as the study suggests)? Or is it just bad luck with large corporations on the participants' part? Again the researchers seem to be interpreting ambiguous information in ways that are consistent with their belief that women in small businesses hire more women.

The researchers argue that the employees in female owned businesses understood policies more clearly than employees in male owned companies. This finding does not seem to be very valid because we as readers do not know how this variable was measured.

The results of the study suggest that women and younger better-educated males enjoy working for other women. Again how did the researchers measure this variable that they were able to arrive at such a statement? There is no description of the methodology that was involved to carry out this study. In addition, how did the researchers differentiate between better educated and not so well educated? We do not know what criteria differentiated the two categories.

On the surface this study appears to be well researched and has some fairly interesting findings. However, as the above examples reveal, when you go one step beneath the surface and critically evaluate some of the very general statements and findings you realize that there are quite a few discrepancies. The authors of this article conducted this study themselves and brought with them a lot of their own biases. Their findings confirmed their expectations, a phenomenon commonly referred to as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

## **Leading Change, Changing Leadership**

*Nan Stone*

### *Summary:*

Although present day leaders may think in terms of empowerment and team building, the fundamentals of leadership are integrating followers and helping them achieve the organization's common goal.

In order for the organization to grow, there needs to be change. There are two things that need to happen in order for change to occur. First, many leaders need to be working together. Secondly, leaders need to break down or abandon the familiar way of doing things. Although this is often seen as the disruptive side of leadership, this process challenges others to go beyond their limits and bring to the organization new and innovative way of doing things.

"Change for the sake of change is as dangerous to an organizations health as unthinking loyalty to the past."

## **Empowered Organizations, Empowering Leaders**

*Clay Carr*

### *Summary:*

This article discusses the differences between traditional and empowered organizations. Today more organizations are changing from traditional ways of leading to empowering leaders because empowering leaders value "autonomy as an end itself" which contributes to the overall growth of the organization.

In empowered organizations all levels of people manage themselves but leaders need to ensure that some of the key goals are met:

- Defining a mission and aligning employees with it

- Maintaining trust not only themselves but increase trust throughout the organization

- Coordinating activities to ensure work is done by consulting and playing a team building role

- Communicating and facilitating the flow of information

- Ensuring learning

- Promoting and ensuring creativity because when organizations change only "creative firms survive"

"Organizations can't have empowerment without trust; trust is the soil in which empowerment can bloom"

## **The Conditional Theory of Outdoor Leadership Style: As exercise in flexibility**

*Simon Priest and Robert Chase*

### *Summary:*

This article discusses the characteristics of an outdoor leader, who emerges from within the group and the different characteristics and roles of outdoor leaders.

The history of leadership can be traced back to two phases of theories, the classic theories (before 1938) and the contemporary theories (after 1938). The article discusses these various theories that have emerged through the years, which all emphasize different leadership styles.

Since many of the leadership theories were created for business management strategies, the authors are uncertain if the research done on these various can be applied to outdoor leaders because both business management and outdoor leaders have different primary concerns. With a synergy of all theories a new model can be created, one that can be applied to outdoor leadership and perhaps even business management.