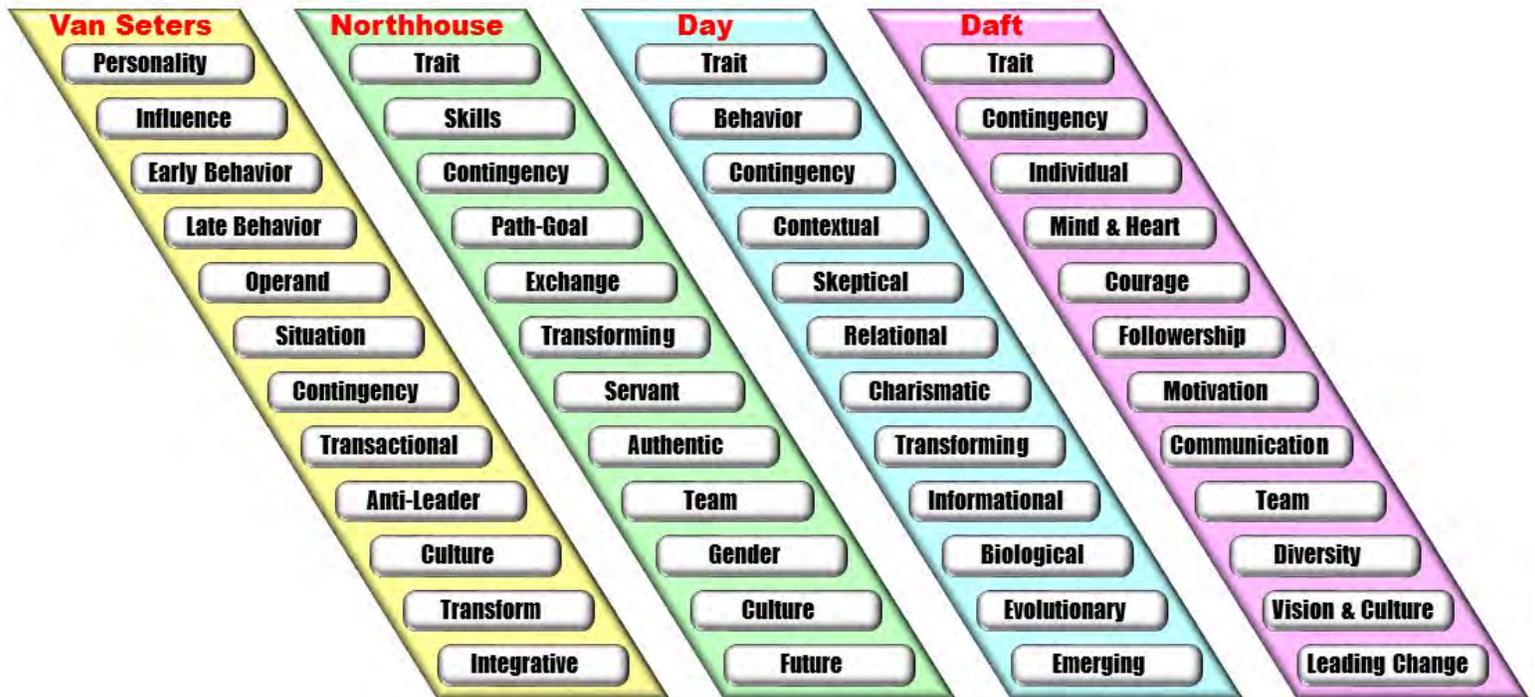# 18 ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL REAL-WORLD LEADERS & LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S HIGH-TECH ORGANIZATIONS

What exactly is leadership? This an age old question that has plagued humankind for thousands of years. As a formal discipline, practice, or theory, hundreds of leadership studies have emerged over the last century or so. Management scientists claim there is no central, unified, or agreed-upon theory of leadership. That is, scientists claim the dimensions and variables of leadership are so numerous, varied, and even conflicting, that experts on the theory of leadership cannot point to a single authoritative, scientific definition of leadership. In fact, many different kinds of leadership have emerged over the last 100 years or so. Leadership attributes include simple as well as complex labels such as trait, personality, skills, behavior, contingency, path-goal, transactional, transformative, etc. In fact, no two leadership experts can even agree on a classification or simple list of leadership attributes.

One of the earliest characteristics attributed to organizational leaders was trait theory. That is, Western managers believed that leaders were born and leadership was in one's DNA. Of course, the period was the 19th century, and it was commonly believed that wealth begets wealth, and white, male, and well-educated millionaires were the only natural born leaders. About that time, professional, middle-class managers rose to power to lead factories, and leadership was often viewed as personality rather than inherited wealth. Eventually, more sophisticated theories of leadership emerged, such as contingency, situational, operand, and path-goal models. By the late 20th century, notions of transactional, charismatic, and transformational leadership arose. That is, leaders were powerful motivators that could influence large numbers of organizational participants to follow them through change.

Van Seters	Northhouse	Day	Daft
Personality	Trait	Trait	Trait
Influence	Skills	Behavior	Contingency
Early Behavior	Contingency	Contingency	Individual
Late Behavior	Path-Goal	Contextual	Mind & Heart
Operand	Exchange	Skeptical	Courage
Situation	Transforming	Relational	Followership
Contingency	Servant	Charismatic	Motivation
Transactional	Authentic	Transforming	Communication
Anti-Leader	Team	Informational	Team
Culture	Gender	Biological	Diversity
Transform	Culture	Evolutionary	Vision & Culture
Integrative	Future	Emerging	Leading Change

Let's dispense with the academic history lesson on leadership theory and examine a simple, dictionary definition of leadership. **Lead·er·ship** (ˈlēdərˌSHip): *The action of leading a group of people or an organization*; *the state or position of being a leader*; or *the leaders of an organization, country, etc.* (*Google*). From this definition, we get the sense that leadership means one or more top-level people who are responsible for the oversight of all of the people in a company, organization, enterprise, nation, or multi-national non-profit function (*such as the United Nations*). In the simplest sense, leaders are responsible for guidance, direction, control, management, superintendence, and supervision. In a broader sense, leaders provide directorship, governorship, governance, administration, captaincy, control, ascendancy, supremacy, rule, command, power, dominion, and influence.

Okay, so we've established that leaders are typically C-level executives such as CEOs, COOs, CFOs, CIOs, CTOs, CSOs, CROs, etc. They are usually a very high level group of executives who are responsible for all top-level company policies, oversight, and ultimately, outcomes and performance. In government agencies or non-profit organizations, they may be directors with the same basic responsibilities as their commercial counterparts. In political organizations like nations or multi-national organizations, they may be Presidents, Prime Ministers, Dictators, or other National Heads of State. However, what exactly are their basic roles and responsibilities? In addition to basic policy and oversight, they are often responsible for establishing organizational goals and objectives, visions, strategies and budgets, organizational designs, and maximizing revenues, profits, or other mission objectives.

That's a tall order for one person to make top-level decisions for tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, or sometimes billions of people in the case of large nations like China and India. Leaders must be exceptionally bright, capable, and talented in order to control the fate of large sections of the world's population or national-level economies. What are some of the attributes of these so-called leaders? A modern theory of leadership says they create overarching visions, inspire and motivate people, ensure accomplishment of the vision, and coach and build teams to realize their full potential of achieving the organizational vision. Some say that top-level executives are servant-leaders in the 21st century. Well, that's all fine and dandy, but, really, what are the attributes of no-kidding, real-world leaders? Let's examine some empirically-observed no-kidding attributes of today's leaders:

- **VERY ATTRACTIVE**. One of the most common attributes of top-level leadership in traditional high-technology organizations is natural attractiveness. This is especially true at the local, state, and national levels, where natural beauty, handsomeness, attractiveness, or at least politically-correct image is required. One doesn't have to look any further than Hollywood movie actors, supermodels, television anchors and celebrities, the corporate boardroom, or even the projects, teams, and organizations closest to us. New studies in anthropology indicate that beauty, attraction, or political-correctness is a routine part of natural selection, especially in the human species. We select our mates, friends, teachers, doctors, leaders, and even our pets on their attractiveness to us. It's not uncommon for businesses to select leaders that look identical to one another. Historically, executives of U.S. businesses were all male, white, over 6 feet tall, thin, blonde hair, blue eyes, the same religion, and shared the same behavioral characteristics. The world's nations are not far from this model of selecting their leaders in this manner, regardless of what their general population resembles. Even professional athletes, military officers, university professors, governors, senators, and government leaders are chosen in this manner. Humans, as a species, just can't help themselves when it comes to surrounding themselves with attractive people. Ever heard of the saying, "*Don't judge a book by its cover*?" Well, humans just can't help but select their leaders based upon their external vs. internal characteristics.

- **TYPE A PERSONALITY**. Another common attribute of top-level organizational leaders is having an overly-aggressive Type A personality. The three most common characteristics associated with the Type A personality is competitiveness, urgency, and hostility. In reality, they are hyper-competitive to a fault, and sort of like Sith lords to a certain degree and deal in absolutes (i.e., *you're either for them or against them*). They generally walk into every situation and assume they should be in-charge without giving it a second thought. Not only that, but they'll single out the competition and target them for removal, regardless of the other person's abilities, talents, contributions, or abilities. They are always in-a-hurry, especially to get the tasks done that will benefit them directly. They'll enlist the help of other people to accomplish their own goals and harass them to complete them. Once someone else has completed their goals, they have no further use for them. People with Type A personalities are overly hostile, mean, aggressive, angry, volatile, and always-on-the-attack. Offense is the best defense to Type A personalities. They constantly keep other people on their heels, on guard, and on the defensive. From the moment they wake, experience first contact, and end their days, they constantly attack, assault, insult, undermine, and undergird other people, especially their opponents. Their goal is nothing short of total world domination. They do not care if they are the last man, woman, or child standing. They have a sense of manifest destiny as though they were conceived, born, and created to conquer. Everyone else is breathing their air, and they don't care about the needs of a single person on the planet, regardless if there are 7 billion of us.

- **HIGHLY INTELLIGENT**. It goes without saying that intelligence is a common attribute of top-level organizational leaders. Scientists have yet to agree on a common set of characteristics constituting intelligence (i.e., *a unified theory of intelligence*). However, common characteristics include the uncanny, unique, and incomparable ability to quickly learn, adapt, and master complex new data, information, and courses of action under duress, stress, strain, and short timelines. Most humans have the ability to learn new skills, data, information, and actions given enough time (i.e., *days, weeks, months, years, and decades*). However, few have the ability to master complex new skills on the spur-of-the-moment. Thus, intelligence may be described as an unusually quick, accurate, and uncanny process of acquiring, storing in memory, retrieving, combining, comparing, and using complex new contexts, information, and conceptual skills much faster, quicker, and more timely than one's peers. Organizational leaders are smart, knowledgeable, and can assimilate complex new data and information much more quickly than the average person. In the Cattell-Horn-Carroll theory, organizational leaders are described in terms of fluid intelligence, crystallized intelligence, quantitative reasoning, reading and writing ability, short-term memory, long-term storage and retrieval, visual processing, auditory processing, processing speed, and decision/reaction time/speed. Today's leaders are quick-on-the-uptake, fast-thinkers, and can render fast, accurate, and profitable decisions to complex new problems they've never experienced as fast as complex new challenges emerge. As such, they have exceptional oral communication, speaking, and writing skills.

- **PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY**. A lesser known, but incontrovertible attribute of organizational leaders is photographic memory. That is, the uncanny, unique, and rare ability to store and instantly recall large amounts of complex facts, figures, data, and information spanning years, if not decades. It is a rarely discussed, little known, somewhat controversial, and hotly-debated attribute of human beings in-general. It's somewhat, but not entirely related to the age-old debate on how much of our brain humans can access and utilize. In 1907, William James argued that humans can only utilize about 10% of their brains. Albert Einstein boasted he could access 15% of his brain and attributed his uncanny abilities in physics to this idea. Today's scientists fiercely argue that humans routinely access 100% of their brains. The truth is probably somewhere in-the-middle. It's no doubt that some people simply have more talent than others, especially when it comes to how quickly they can store, recall, and reason about data and information to which they've been exposed. Mathematicians, physicists, statisticians, musicians, artists, poets, writers, singers, etc. certainly have far more abilities to utilize their physiological capacities than the average bear. Even engineering students and professionals fall along a continuum resembling the classical Bell (*Normal*) Curve. A small percentage of engineers struggle with basic concepts, the large majority of engineers are only average, and then there are few highly-talented engineers with the uncanny ability to solve complex engineering problems in their heads. Even computer programmers can be rated along a scale of how many software source code statements they can create, modify, and maintain solely in their heads without the aid of formal documentation, diagrams, and other explicit artifacts. As early as the 1960s, mainframe firms noticed that the productivity difference between the best and worst computer programmers was up to 10,000 times. Even the notion of photographic memory is controversial, whilst some claim less than 1% of the population exhibits the ability to quickly store and instantly and accurately recall large volumes of data and information. Some of the world's most successful, profitable, and talented CEOs exhibited the attribute of having a photographic memory (*in spite of evidence to the contrary*).

- **NATURAL BORN MULTITASKER**. The ability to perform extreme multi-tasking is another characteristic of organizational leaders. That is, the ability to work on, participate in, or perform many complex tasks at one time, in a short time span, or in close proximity to one another. The average person with far less mental capacity than an organizational leader prefers to work on one task at a time without interruption. That is, the single-tasker is easily confused, distracted, or loses focus if he or she attempts to perform too many tasks at one time. The single-tasker needs to focus all of his or her mental capacities one task, usually alone,

without interruption, and in isolation, with as much silence as possible. Furthermore, the single-tasker may prefer to perform only one type of task for his or her entire career (i.e., *narrowly specialize in one area in order to hone his or her limited abilities on one type of task*). The organizational leader or multi-tasker on the other hand, can quickly learn, master, and perform many complex tasks. It's difficult to put an exact number on the volume of tasks a multi-tasker can perform, but it may be on the order of 5, 10, 15, 20, or 25 complex tasks in a single day, week, or month. In fact, the multi-tasker has access to so many mental capacities at one time that he or she would be completely bored to death doing exactly one task, especially for an entire career. A multi-tasker may master a completely new complex task in a few hours or days, whereas a single-tasker may take months, years, or a lifetime to do the same. Once again, scientists, mathematicians, and other behavioral scientists are at odds with the theory of the multi-tasker. There is some mathematical evidence to show that the average person can perform a single task faster, and that doing multiple tasks at one time slows the process down. Even project managers say it's better to assign people to one project full-time than it is to matrix them to more than one project at a time. However, the mathematical evidence in favor of single-tasking probably applies to the average human being with limited mental capacity. Organizational leaders have access to more of their mental capacities than the average bear and can easily perform multiple tasks with greater ease, efficiency, and quality. It's a little known fact that C-level executives are expected to perform multiple functions at one time. That is, they must perform the job of 5, 10, 15, 20, or 25 people, whereas lower-level personnel can get away with performing fewer functions. As the Peter Principle goes, "*everyone rises to their level of incompetence*!" Good leaders exhibit competence under far more stressful situations than most. One question is whether this can be learned or whether it's a natural physiological trait?

- **HIGHLY MOTIVATED & ENERGETIC**. Another unique attribute of organizational leaders is unusually high-levels of motivation and energy. That is, they seem to have an unlimited, boundless, and never-ending source of energy, enthusiasm, passion, and excitement for performing their tasks. Whether their activities are routine, mundane, marginally valuable, complex, or far reaching, organizational leaders are always ready to tackle them with renewed vigor, energy, and enthusiasm. They never seem to get bored, run out of gas, or lose steam when it comes to performing their tasks. They pursue each day as if it was their last one on Earth, they are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and they are giddy as school children. Conversely, most people tend to get bored rather easily, lose hope and energy, are exhausted and listless, procrastinate and put things off, and invent a million reasons why performing some other task would be superior to completing the task at-hand. Organizational leaders seem to have Plutonium batteries and their energy levels can power an entire city block if not a whole metropolitan statistical area. They are like the Energizer Bunny, which just-keeps-on-going-and-going, when the rest of us just want to call in sick, quit, or go home. They don't discriminate between tasks and there is no such thing as a routine or mundane activity to them. Their goal seems to complete the task at-hand as quickly as possible as if was going to cure cancer and save the planet, even if it is just dusting off their computer. Their energy is contagious, most people are drawn to them like moths to a streetlight, and they are easily noticed and rewarded for their motivation. They get ahead quickly, are assigned complex new tasks, and often tapped to lead new organizational initiatives, regardless of their qualifications. They are constantly bouncing off the walls, interjecting themselves into private conversations, doing other people's tasks, volunteering to do extra work, boasting about their activities and accomplishments, drawing constant attention to themselves, and basking in the limelight (*even in a room full of MIT-educated physicists*). Their energy and enthusiasm knows no bounds, even if they are the least qualified person in the room. They will often get promoted in days, weeks, and months, while infinitely more qualified people may stay in the same role for years and decades. They are very proactive and don't mind solving other people's complex problems at work and at home. They have a never-ending supply of energy and no task is too small or unimportant to perform, even if it's someone else's task.

- **DRIVEN, GOAL-ORIENTED, & AMBITIOUS**. A major attribute of most organizational leaders is that they are driven, goal-oriented, and ambitious. That's really three major separate concepts, but let's attempt to treat them as a whole. Not only are leaders motivated, but they are driven to accomplish a very specific goal, objective, or task at-hand. Whether the goal is to accomplish today's activities, prepare for tomorrow's activities, or pursue a future yet to be assigned task, each day is filled with the energy and motivation to seek, achieve, and accomplish that goal and objective. Leaders have a driving, singular purpose to accomplish their goals and objectives. Whereas, many people are satisfied just coming to work and looking busy and eventually contributing to some goal, the singular purpose of a leader's day is specifically to accomplish a task, get it done, and move on to the next higher goal. Accomplishing today's mundane tasks, goals, and objectives is merely a stepping stone to tackling higher-level and even greater goals and objectives. It could be to earn the right to perform more complex tasks at a higher-level in the organizational hierarchy, earn the respect to be promoted, or simply to draw attention to the fact that they are the type of person to get things done and be in-charge. Not, just be in-charge of the task at-hand, but everyone in the organization. This leads us to the next, interrelated concept, ambition. By exhibiting a driving behavior to accomplish today's goals and objectives, leaders seek to get ahead, get promoted, get noticed, and take-charge of the situation, task, project, department, organization, or entire enterprise. Today's task is merely in the way of accomplishing the next task or all of the tasks for everyone. It's possible that some people simply want to get things done so they can spend time on performing their favorite tasks or activities, or simply get home to perform some other favorite task or activity. However, leaders are not interested in getting things done to have fun or go home. Instead, their goal is to demonstrate the ability to lead the entire organization. They want to run the race, navigate around all of the obstacles, do it faster and better than anyone else, and be placed in charge of the entire organization by virtue of their unmatched talents and abilities. Leaders are hard-driving, relentless, merciless, impatient, ruthless, and will stop at nothing to earn the right to lead the entire organization. And, when that goal is accomplished, they'll simply go on to lead yet another organization, empire, or industry. They simply "*begin weeping when there are no more worlds to conquer.*"

- **HIGHLY-DISCIPLINED, LASER-FOCUSED, EFFICIENT, & EFFECTIVE**. Yet another major attribute of organizational leaders is they are highly-disciplined, laser-focused, efficient, and effective. This is similar, but not identical to motivation, energy, driven, goal-oriented, and ambition. Instead, leaders use their energy and motivation in a uniquely highly-disciplined and laser-focused way. Few people in today's society, especially organizational workers, are motivated and energized to do anything. Most people are content to be just cogs in the corporate wheel, clocking in and clocking out, performing mundane and inconsequential tasks, paying their dues, engaging in casual, but inconsequential conversations, eating lunch, cordially paying their respect to their

institutions, and eventually collecting a paycheck so they can lead equally mundane lifestyles at home. However, organizational leaders live life for a purpose. They get up for a purpose, they drive to work with a purpose, and they walk to their desk and login to their computer with a purpose. Each breath, each movement, each lack of movement, each thought, and each activity has a purpose. That purpose is to accomplish the goals and objectives at-hand so they can reap the rewards of doing so. Those rewards are moving on to the next task, getting recognition for accomplishing goals, doing a good job, and getting considered for promotion, raises, and aggrandizing more power and status. Nothing is wasted, lost, or misdirected. Hence, each motion is highly-disciplined and laser-focused unlike most people. They are like robots, automatons, conveyor belts, manufacturing machines, and terminators. Leaders "*can't be reasoned with, they don't feel pity, remorse, or fear, and they absolutely will not stop, ever, until their tasks are complete*" (*even if they have to knock you out of the way to get them done*). Everything they do has a purpose. If they go to the bathroom, breakfast, lunchroom, or perform a fire drill, it is to have meeting, complete the task, or discuss the next day's goals and objectives, tasks, and strategies for completing them. They don't know weakness, laziness, procrastination, pleasure, fun, rest, relaxation, spirituality, or idle talk. These are simply ethereal, wasted, and nonsensical human emotions that have no place in the daily lives of organizational leaders. In this sense, they are highly efficient and effective. They are efficient in the sense that there are no wasted motions when achieving their goals as quickly and expediently as possible. They are effective in the sense that their goals are sharply aligned with the business objectives and they get them done with such ease, frequency, and notoriety, while most people are content never to accomplish a single organizational objective. Organizational leaders are so efficient and effective that they will get more work done before breakfast than the average person does all day. Some studies indicate that only 25% of a worker's 8-hour workday is spent productively. However, for leaders, this percentage is not only markedly higher, but the remaining time can be spent on strategic, creative, and even more ambitious activities to help them get even further ahead. Little time is wasted in the life of organizational leaders.

- **Working-Hard, Long-Hours, & Elbow Grease**. Of course, a significant attribute of organizational leaders is working-hard, long-hours, and good old fashioned elbow grease. Working hard, long-hours is sort of the forgotten, unsung, unheralded, and often unmentioned attribute of organizational leadership. Because leaders are so efficient and effective, they can get 5, 10, or 15 times as much work done in a 40-hour work week as compared to the ordinary employee (*perhaps even more*). Now, if leaders come in earlier, don't take breaks, don't eat breakfast, don't eat lunch, and stay even later in the day, then the multiplicative effect of their productivity is even greater. That is, their productivity can be 30 to 50 times higher than that of ordinary employees. Some studies show that productivity wanes after an eight-hour workday. However, one must remember that organizational leaders have far more energy and motivation than the average employee. Furthermore, they are constantly on the move. They are talking to people, walking around, bouncing off the walls, moving their heads, exercising, noticing minute movements, listening to conversations, micromanaging the work of the people around them, and even performing other's tasks out of boredom and excess capacity to perform even more work. In physiological terms, this constant movement, like a gnat buzzing around a source of food, keeps their muscles and bones moving and healthy, keeps the oxygen flowing from their feet and butts into their brains, stimulates brain cells, fuses neurons, and enables them to extend their productive abilities beyond an ordinary 8-hour workday. Remember, organizational leaders have extra-human machine-like behaviors and don't seem to be subject to the same fatigue, stress, failure, and loss of motivation experienced by ordinary workers. It's believed that the ordinary human should get at least 8 hours of sleep per night in order to live a full and productive day. Well, organizational leaders often get far less than 8 hours a day. They often sleep only two hours per day and some do not sleep at all for many days straight. Military pilots, soldiers, surgeons, athletes, national-level politicians, and other people with global or enterprise responsibilities do their jobs and function at the peak of productivity with little or no sleep. It takes a medical student about 15 years to become a doctor and much of that time is spent without sleeping at all from the time they begin their freshman year. This extends to their residencies, when they are expected to work in emergency rooms 24 hours a day to get the practical experience necessary to become 9 to 5 doctors. Military pilots must often fly 24 to 36 hour missions around the globe, keep from crashing a $200 million aircraft, and drop a 500-pound bomb within inches of its target at 500 miles an hour without missing. Organizational executives and leaders must function with the same degree of precision. They must often lead multi-billion dollar organizations, with hundreds of thousands of employees, and make life and death decisions without error and little sleep. This is the price of admission to becoming an organizational leader and is a lost attribute of organizational leadership.

- **Confident, Self-Assured, & High Self-Esteem**. It goes without saying that organizational leaders are extremely confident, self-assured, and have an unusually high self-esteem. That is, leaders are unusually bold, courageous, fearless, audacious, undaunted, unafraid, and unflinching concerning their skills, talents, abilities, accomplishments, qualifications, and capacity to not only complete today's tasks, but tomorrow's as well, and any future task for that matter. Leaders are often overconfident, have a sense of false pride, an exaggerated sense of self-importance. They are often conceited, arrogant, egotistical, vain, and unrealistic about their own limitations, weaknesses, and faults. Research shows that most human estimates, predictions, decisions, and judgments are wrong. Furthermore, research also shows that the ability to tolerate risk, accept failure, and try and try again until success is ultimately achieved are key attributes of today's leaders. Therefore, audacity, boldness, risk taking, and overconfidence may seem like poor judgement, selfishness, or even insanity to ordinary people. However, everyone would make the same mistake given the same set of circumstances. Therefore, any decision would be the right decision, even if the decision was wrong, something was learned from the poor decision, and a superior correct decision was eventually discovered. Therefore, confidence, self-assuredness, and high self-esteem may seem misguided to the majority of the population, but these are the secret sauce of organizational leaders. They may indeed be blind to their own inabilities (i.e., *the emperor may seem like he or she has no clothes*), but their courage to make a decision, even a bad one, may eventually lead to a positive, rewarding, and self-fulfilling prophecy of success. In other words, they believe they can make the right decision and eventually do. Ask any successful entrepreneur what the key to their success is, and they will most likely respond, "*ability to tolerate many failures in advance of stumbling into one success.*" This risk taking ability of organizational leaders may indeed be what sets them apart from ordinary employees who are dead set on living their whole lives as cogs in the corporate wheel. One question may be, "*how does a successful organizational leader become confident, self-assured, and have a high self-esteem?*"

Some studies show that these characteristics are instilled at a very young age by parents. One study showed that the parents of successful children speak 30 million more words to their children than those of unsuccessful children by age 3. Furthermore, these are not just ordinary words, but positive, reaffirming, and confident words. Successful children hear phrases like, "*I love you*," "*you're smart*," "*I like you*," "*you're funny*," "*you're fast*," "*you're strong*," "*you're brave*," "*you're beautiful*," "*you're intelligent*," etc. by the time they are 3 years old 45 million times. Whereas, the parents of unsuccessful children only speak about 10 million words to their children by age 3. For unsuccessful children, most of these words include, "*you're dumb*," "*you're stupid*," "*NO*," "*you're bad*," "*you can't do that*," "*you're ugly*," etc. These studies asserted that rich parents spoke more positive, reaffirming words to their children and poor parents did not. However, it is possible for a rich parent to speak fewer and perhaps negative words to their children, while a poorer parent may speak more reaffirming words to their child. Other studies show that white students receive more reaffirming words by teachers, coaches, professors, and other societal figures, while minority students receive more negative feedback from their teachers. These studies highlighting negative feedback from parents and teachers probably explain why minorities have higher dropout rates, and why other successful organizational leaders are far more confident and willing to take risks and make bad decisions until the correct decision is eventually discovered.

- **HIGH-CONTACT, EXTROVERT, & THRIVES ON SENSORY OVERLOAD**. Another major and incontrovertible attribute of organizational leaders is they are high-contact, extroverts, and thrive on sensory overload. All three of these concepts are closely interrelated. Leaders are high-contact in that they seek constant interaction with as many people as they can throughout their day. The preferred method of contact is conversation. They will talk to the security guard coming into work, the cafeteria worker getting breakfast, they say good morning before sitting down, and they will often discuss a major personal or professional issue before they sit down to login to their computer in the morning to check their email. They'll immediately seek out group contact, be it formal or informal, and begin discussing a major issue, goal to be achieved, or solution path through the morning, day, week, or month. Research shows that one of the only ways to learn is to speak out, articulate, or manifest thoughts as audible words. This way, people around you can confirm or deny your ideas, give you instant feedback, and you can confirm your thoughts, correct them, or close gaps by fusing the missing neurons. Other people feel they learn by listening, reading, analyzing, or passively participating in the world without directly interacting with it. However, engaging in the world through direct conversation is the far superior method of learning. When extroverts cannot find enough high-contact face-to-face human interaction or have simply exhausted the knowledge they have gained from the people around them, then they will turn to other means of learning. This may include texting, emailing, phone calls, browsing the web, searching and data mining, reading, watching TV or videos, listening to the radio or other audio streams, or other forms of classical analysis. However, this passive information gathering is only short-lived. Once the new information is assimilated, they must immediately seek out human contact to affirm or correct their assumptions, thus gaining real-time feedback, learning, fusing neurons, and increasing their intelligence. This probably gave rise to the old adage of "*management by walking around*," because organizational leaders needed to increase their number of human interactions in order to learn more information each day. In fact, the extrovert may watch TV, listen to the radio, read a book, engage in a conversation, and write a memo all at the same time. They do not consider multi-tasking as rude or inconsiderate. However, they do consider it rude if you don't give them your full and undivided attention upon demand even if they will not give you their full and undivided attention. They are constantly seeking out new human contact like bees pollinating a field full of flowers. The introvert, on the other hand, is hiding, minimizing contact, analyzing, and becoming annoyed at extrovert bees buzzing around their head. Introverts demand fewer loyal friends who will give them their full undivided attention, not gnats buzzing around their head that have infinite divided loyalties to whomever they can speak. Extroverts are constantly on the move, getting up and down every few moments, starting and stopping serendipitous conversations, learning new data and information, trying new things, forgetting and dropping old ideas from day-to-day, and bouncing off the walls like a patient in an insane asylum 24 hours a day. They will not rest unless they can perform a new activity, go someplace new or different, and seek contact with someone else (*even at midnight*). They often sleep with their smartphones, receive texts and emails from dozens of people all of the time, have many different email accounts, and relentlessly engage in a never-ending cacophony of tireless activities. An extrovert will perform more activities in one week than a true introvert will perform in a decade. Extroverts have no time for true introverts and vice versa (*resulting in a bitter, never-ending cold war*). In the end, someone leaves, whether it is the extrovert through boredom or the introvert through anger.

- **SELFISH, EGOTISTICAL, & STRONG SENSE OF ME, MYSELF, & I**. It goes without saying that successful organizational leaders are extremely selfish, egotistical, and have a strong sense of me, myself, and I. The focus or object of worship or affection for today's leaders is not individuals, teams, organizations, customers, or the resulting products and services. Rather, the focus of a leader's attention is directly upon themselves. They'll often form teams, feign belief in teamwork principles, and motivate their subordinates to subject themselves to the will of the team. However, this is just a subliminal ruse to get individuals to do their will, further their careers, make them look good, and help them get further ahead. It's not uncommon for today's organizational leaders to echo mottos, sayings, and adages such as, "*There is no I in we*!" However, it is almost guaranteed that after the first recitation of this rallying cry to circle the wagons that the leader will not only never say "*we*" again, but riddle people with phrases referring to "*me, myself, and I*." They'll go to their superiors, upper management, senior executives, directors, and even C-level executives and say, "*I did this*," "*I did that*," and "*I did the other*!" They'll even recite these offensively selfish "*I's*" to people above them in the organization hierarchy directly in front of their own teammates. Remember, to leaders, their so-called teammates are merely their personal secretaries, who have been talked into, cajoled, or convinced to do the leader's tasks, tasking, deliverables, and activities for them. It doesn't take long for leaders to build critical mass and free up all of their own time to perform strategic marketing-level activities to grow their own careers, status, power, and job functions even faster. So, in fact, they may not even be performing any grunt work once their teams have been assembled. Yet, they'll continue to say to their superiors that "*I gathered the data*," "*I performed the analysis*," "*I designed the product*," "*I tested and validated the design*," "*I presented the idea to leadership*," "*I collected the feedback*," "*I improved the product*," and "*I created the product and service line*!" If you thought you were part of the team, you would share in the glory, and keeping your head down and nose-to-the-grindstone to produce the requisite outputs for the team like a good little soldier might earn one brownie points in front of

your boss's boss, then you're in for a rude awakening. In fact, once your boss's superiors have been convinced that he or she did all of the work, they'll have little need, room, or patience for continuing to fund the remaining team for much longer. Why should they, since your boss did all of the work? "*Me, myself, and I*" is the most important phrase in the leader's vocabulary.

- **STUCK IN BROADCAST MODE, TALKS OVER PEOPLE, & INABILITY TO LISTEN**. A rather annoying characteristic of leaders is that they are constantly stuck in broadcast mode, they talk over people, and they have the inability to listen. It is true that leaders seek out constant affirmation of newly acquired knowledge in order to fuse the neurons and complete the learning process from subject matter experts. However, this is mostly in the form of statements rather than questions. More importantly, when being presented with new, unsolicited information from teammates, subordinates, and other colleague, they will often drown out new information by objecting to people's inputs. This is a rather annoying behavior of most organizational leaders. This often happens in formal meetings and follow-up splinter meetings, where the goal of the leader is merely to broadcast his or her assumptions about perceived reality to the rest of the team. Today's team members are not children and often have decades of experience, along with fine educational credentials and deep technical skills themselves. Teammates often assume a meeting is to share each other's experiences and collaborate on a solution to emerging problems, issues, or customer requirements. However, nothing is further from the truth. Organizational leaders have already devised a solution in their heads, merely want to socialize their solution designs to the rest of the team, and are not really open to new input at this stage. This is not a casual conversation designed to test assumptions, it is a simple platform to broadcast them. Leaders do not test their assumptions in large formal open forums. If a teammate begins offering up unsolicited recommendations to perceived challenges, the leader will simply say, "*I tried that," "we tried that too," "it won't work," and "we have a superior solution*!" Teammates may not even get a complete sentence off, before leaders pepper people rendering unsolicited advice with a list of bullet-proof objections. Once again, teammates are not junior level people and will not take kindly to having their advice ignored, interrupted, or disregarded by the leader talking over their soundtracks. Even if you attempt to feed leaders with new information by email, texting, briefing slides, whitepapers, books, or other forms of materials, leaders will simply ignore them, act confused, and ask you to explain them. This way they can stop you cold in mid-stream, contradict you, express unbelief, or simply correct your misunderstanding concerning your data. Leaders will simply not be confused by facts, figures, and statistics (*even if your data are correct*).

- **POWER & STATUS FOCUS, FIXATION, & BELIEF SYSTEM**. Today's organizational leaders are extremely focused on power and status to the exclusion of almost every other attribute they possess. Management scientists have recognized for many decades that power and status are extremely important attributes of contemporary organizational culture, behavior, and psychology. That is, power and status is a key element of individual success within organizations. Without going into a lot of detail, sub-attributes of power and status may include image, attractiveness, beauty, gender, nationality, ethnicity, color, race, politics, religion, education, breeding, wealth, intelligence, assertiveness, etc. Many of the attributes of both leadership and power and status overlap directly. That is, the more of the attributes one has, the more power and status is gained. Conversely, the less of these attributes one has, the less power and status one has or can obtain (*ever in some circumstances*). However, we are less concerned in how leaders obtain power and status than we are on how power and status affects leadership behavior. That is, power and status are like alcohol, drugs, and narcotics to leaders. Furthermore, unlike their chemical counterparts, leaders are often immersed, affected, and influenced by power and status without any overt or explicit signs. The focal point of a leader's day is to seek out the person with the most power and status and fixate upon pleasing them to the exclusion of everyone else. Other people may employ the Pareto Principle and at least focus their resources on the top 20% of people with the most power and status (*while managing the expectations of the bottom 80%*). Others may be influenced by the principle of "*do unto others as you would have them do unto you*" (i.e., *treat everyone with the same or similar dignity without respect to power and status*). However, to organizational leaders, this is simply a waste of time and they'll have none-of-it. From the moment a leader's day begins, they scan the office, room, floor, organization, and environment in real-time; identify the single person with the most power and status; and seek to serve that person to the exclusion of everyone else. In fact, everyone else is an obstacle, annoyance, and inhibitor to pleasing the singular person with the most power and status. Leaders are so fixated on the person with the most power, that they may ignore, miss, or be endangered by people with more power and status than themselves (*who can bring them harm if not served*). However, since these powerful people are not the top person, they'll simply be ignored and underserved. It's not unusual for successful people in today's organizations to focus all their energies on those with the most power and status (*that's simply called, "kissing up and kicking down"*). It's a simple distilled and innate form of the Pareto Principle. This may be a little disconcerting if you don't have any power and status, because you may be marginalized, treated as invisible, or simply considered a second-class citizen. However, only the top leaders take this principle to the next, higher level. Even the PMI's Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBoK) has a Stakeholder Management Knowledge Area to show people how to manage expectations of multiple people with power and status. However, there is no Pareto Principle or Stakeholder Management to top organizational leaders, because there is only one person or object of their desire (i.e., *the single most powerful person in their hierarchy, environment, ecosystem, or worldview*). In meetings, leaders will scan the room in real-time, identify the person with the most power and status, boldly dismiss those with less power and status, and ignore the rest. In fact, if the person with the most power and status in their ecosystem is not in the room, they'll boldly dismiss everyone, even if there are people with more power and status than themselves (*to their immediate danger*). In decision-making theory, this is simply called "*bias*" (*cognitive blindness and overconfidence*). Leaders are so addicted to the narcotic of power and status that it penetrates their genetic DNA or fabric itself. They are so good at it, that their peers won't even notice it. It often masquerades itself in the form of social or people skills. They'll introduce themselves to as many people as possible, query people on their personal and professional ethnographic characteristics, place you on a mental hierarchy of power and status in real-time, and even tear you down on the spot if you are not the top dog. Not only that, but they will continue to dismiss, deride, and demean people who are lower than the person with the most power. It is a business maxim that companies should focus on good products and profits will come. Well, leaders focus on only serving people with the most power and status and the profits of career success come to themselves. This is not only a highly-effective leadership technique, but a very hurtful one as well.

- **TECHNICALLY-DEEP, MULTIDISCIPLINARY, & SOMEWHAT OF A POLYGLOT**. Today's organizational leaders are technically-deep,

multidisciplinary, and definitely polyglots. Each new generation or wave of employees has more and more education, training, and technical skills. Most new employees are college graduates and often begin their careers with graduate degrees from top educational institutions. More and more pressure is being placed on Western students to be like their Pacific-Rim and European counterparts. That is, they are asked to have more training, skills, and education in math, physics, chemistry, sciences, engineering, etc. They come steeped in advanced mathematics, statistics, and computer programming skills, as well as reading, writing, literature, psychology, sociology, and other artistic endeavors. Many college graduates come directly into the workforce and are ready to perform heavy-duty corporate tasks of more experienced employees, managers, and even executives. It is not unusual for newly-minted engineers to have more skills, relevance, and value than older engineers with decades of experience. The same is true in other fields as well, including management, administration, accounting, computer programming, finance, and other key corporate functions. A 22-year-old college graduate can design a spreadsheet with a suite of economic equations to analyze a portfolio of multi-billion dollar corporate investments that would baffle the mind of a 52-year-old CFO. The term polyglot means having many languages or being multi-lingual. However, that term has now been extended to having multiple technical skills in math, science, physics, programming, statistics, economics, finance, etc. There is no doubt that today's corporate challenges are more complex than ever before. However, today's college graduates are rising to the challenge and addressing these issues with relative ease and grace. Studies have shown, especially in high technology firms, that experience is not a factor, and 18 to 22-year-olds can perform the work of engineers with far more decades of experience. Furthermore, in the fields of economics and finance, studies have also shown that experience is not a factor when making multi-billion dollar corporate investments either. Not everyone is a so-called polyglot. Truly talented multi-disciplinarians are still in the minority. Not everyone has mastered the ability to tap into multiple, simultaneous academic and professional disciplines with ease and grace. However, true polyglots do exist and are impressive to watch in action. One does not have to look further than Silicon Valley when searching for true polyglots. Just look at the symphony of young multi-billionaire Silicon Valley executives. Not all corporate challenges can be mastered in school, although many can and have been already. Some challenges can only be experienced in the workplace. Corporate leaders also have the uncanny ability to seek out, explore, and master a variety of new multi-disciplinary challenges. This is simply called "*learning.*" Everyone has the opportunity to seek out new learning experiences on purpose or by accident. However, only corporate leaders proactively seek out and master new learning experiences to become true generalists. Specialists on the other hand shy away from new opportunities to become generalizing specialists, which is another way of saying technically-deep, multidisciplinary, polyglots like true 21st century leaders.

- **DRESSES FOR SUCCESS, PUTS BEST FOOT FORWARD, & EXHIBITS POSITIVE IMAGE**. Today's leaders understand the importance of dressing for success, putting their best foot forward, and always exhibiting a positive image. Organizational leaders are always prepared for a new opportunity by wearing their best clothing, being professionally groomed, smiling, and even having a great posture. They never know when lightning will strike and they could end up in the elevator with CEO. Just looking and acting professionally leaves a good impression, even on the ordinary folks around them. This, of course, is just collateral damage or an economic spillover effect. The object of their affection is not their peers or subordinates, but their superiors with greater power and status. The leader's goal is to look like a leader, blend in with the leadership, and be the leader someday soon. That day could be today, so there is no sense in taking a risk by dressing down. Ordinary employees will dress more modestly and only dress up if they must attend an executive meeting. Most of the time, ordinary employees are not prepared for an unplanned visit by an executive. Furthermore, people around them may not have a very good impression of them if they dress in ordinary street clothes. There's an old saying, "*you shouldn't judge a book by its cover*!" Well, unfortunately, it is only human nature to judge a book by its cover. People will make an instant judgement on how you look on the outside. Are you tall, beautiful, well-groomed, dressed up, have a good posture, and are you smiling? If the answer to all of these questions is, "*yes,*" then people will get a good impression of you, even if your answers are wrong (*which most answers are anyway*). Not only will people make a visual judgement of you, in spite of the content, they will make a snap, subliminal judgment of you based upon your appearance. People will ignore correct information from an unattractive person, while recording incorrect information from an attractive one. Security guards and other law enforcement officials are more likely to notice you if you are wearing common street clothes than if you are wearing a suit and tie. Teachers are more apt to award better grades to better dressed students closer to the front of the classroom, than poorly dressed students at the back of the classroom (*in spite of the student's academic abilities*). Being well-dressed will not guarantee that you will become a successful corporate leader, but combined with the other major characteristics of successful leaders, being well-dressed is a requirement for corporate success.

- **SOUND QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, TALENT, ABILITIES, TRAINING, EDUCATION, & CERTIFICATIONS**. Of course, it helps a lot if corporate leaders have sound qualifications, skills, talents, abilities, training, education, and certifications. Academic credentials were not necessarily a requirement for corporate success in the last century. This fails to recognize that most CEOs in the latter half of the 20th century had MBAs from Ivy League schools. However, it wasn't unusual for people to pull themselves up from their bootstraps and become corporate leaders by the sheer will of their natural talent and abilities in the 20th century. However, that has become less and less likely in the 21st century. College degrees have become the basic price of admission into the corporate world. Of course, it helps if you can combine your formal education with deep, natural skills, talent, and abilities. Since humans lie on a continuum of a Normal (*Bell*) Curve of abilities, merely having a college degree may be deceiving (*even from a top Ivy League academic institution*). That is, some people have to try really hard to graduate, some struggle a little bit, and others graduate with extreme ease due to natural physiological talents and abilities (*which may have been instilled at an earlier point in their lives*). That is, the learning neurons of more talented people may have been fused at a much earlier point in their lives. So, corporations don't really know what they'll get when they hire someone, even with degrees from top academic institutions. They may overlook top talent from lower-tiered institutions and mistakenly invest in less talent from higher-tiered institutions. As Forest Gump says, "*Mama always told me, life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get*!" Training and certifications throughout your career will help a lot as well. Lawyers, accountants, and engineers have to be certified. Project managers and information technology workers have to be certified. Teachers, electricians, and other blue collar workers have to be certified as well. Certifications were a nice-to-have in the 20th century for the most part. However,

they are now a basic requirement in the 21st century. It is not unusual for professionals to have upwards of 6, 9, 12, and 15 or more certifications. It helps if the education and training are from top institutions with a lot of name recognition. Ivy League schools are still the gold-standard when it comes to educational credentials. Even top 25 or 50 school names help one a lot. Part of this speaks to confidence and instant credibility. It's a lot more convincing to say, "*My MBA is from Harvard, Princeton, or Yale*," than it is to say, "*I ordered my MBA from an unknown mail-order correspondence school.*" Sound qualifications are the hallmark of successful corporate leaders in the 21st century and must not be overlooked or minimized. Furthermore, if you do have Ivy League academic credentials, never downplay their relevance or worth in today's marketplace.

- **A Strong, Overriding, and Unimpeachable Sense of Manifest Destiny**. An overriding, but subtle and almost imperceptible attribute of today's top organizational leaders is they seem to have a strong, overwhelming, and unimpeachable sense of highly-unique manifest destiny. That is, they believe they are one-of-a-kind, privileged, very special, and almost aristocratic in-nature. It is though they are long-lost heirs to an unclaimed aristocratic European throne. They believe they are smarter, more intelligent, more attractive or beautiful, taller, holier, self-righteous, and have far better sense-making abilities than the average bear. They tend to look down upon other members of society as if called upon to be our judges, shepherds, guides, leaders, overseers, and managers. They are quick to point out the flaws in other people's character as though it is their unique privilege, calling, and purpose in-life. Likewise, they are often completely blind to their own deeply ingrained character flaws. It can be almost laughable at times when they give advice on how to live, behave, and act, while behaving very badly themselves. A wise man one said, "*do as they say, not as they do*," and that seems to be the only advice one can stomach with today's top organizational leaders. Contradicting, correcting, or challenging today's organizational leaders has no effect, because they tend to have all of the power and status, their cognitive blindness and bias to their own deficiencies is uncorrectable, and you will only alienate them and put yourself at immediate risk of termination. This sense of manifest destiny penetrates the very fabric of their heart, mind, body, and soul, is very hard to detect, and is very subtle. At first, one may be tempted to reason, argue, debate, or correct them over a long period of time using a variety of implicit and explicit personal, professional, and even spiritual examples. Perhaps, you may be tempted to lead by example. Only after a long, painful, frustrating, fruitless, and demoralizing journey, will you realize that you cannot beat their sense of manifest destiny out of them. You are simply wasting your time. They are the heirs to the throne of society, and you are a meaningless peasant who must be dispensed with in the wake of their career success. This driven-sense of manifest destiny may be a key psychological edge to their ultimate success.

So, what's the bottom line concerning the real-world, no-kidding attributes of today's organizational leaders? Well, we've elucidated a number of important points. First of all, organizational leaders are only human, they're far more selfish than the average bear, and they're experts at putting themselves above everyone else. Fanciful notions of servant-leadership, great visions, strategic thinking, influencing and motivating, growing people and teams, listening and learning, and taking a genuine interest in the welfare of individual employees are simply fairytales dreamed up by delusional introverts who are hoping to magically stumble into their Prince Charming or Cinderella and be whisked away to Never-Never Land in a pumpkin pulled along by a couple of mice. Rather, today's organizational leaders most closely resemble Darwin's theory of Natural Selection:

- **Very Attractive**. Handsome, beautiful, tall, fair-haired, fair-skinned, thin, and resemble movie stars or television anchors.
- **Type A Personality**. Heightened, sharpened, honed, and intense sense of competitiveness, urgency, and hostility to others.
- **Highly Intelligent**. Ability to quickly learn, adapt, and master complex new data, information, skills, and courses of action.
- **Photographic Memory**. Rare ability to store and instantly recall large amounts of complex facts, figures, data, and information.
- **Natural Born Multitasker**. Ability to work on, participate in, or perform many complex tasks at one time in short time period.
- **Highly Motivated & Energetic**. Unlimited source of energy, enthusiasm, passion, and excitement for performing their tasks.
- **Driven, Goal-Oriented, & Ambitious**. Drive extremely hard to accomplish a very specific goal, objective, or task at-hand.
- **Highly-Disciplined, Laser-Focused, Efficient, & Effective**. Sharply-focused, waste-free motions for bottom-line results.
- **Working-Hard, Long-Hours, & Elbow Grease**. Strong work ethic to maximize use of each hour per day with little or no sleep.
- **Confident, Self-Assured, & High Self-Esteem**. Bold, courageous, fearless, audacious, undaunted, unafraid, and unflinching.
- **High-Contact, Extrovert, & Thrives on Sensory Overload**. Need continuous interaction with people throughout their day.
- **Selfish, Egotistical, & Strong Sense of Me, Myself, & I**. Focus or object of worship or affection is directly upon themselves.
- **Stuck in Broadcast Mode, Talks Over People, & Inability to Listen**. Constantly talk over people, without the ability to listen.
- **Power & Status Fixation, Focus, & Belief System**. Intense focus on people with power, aka, kissing up and kicking down.
- **Technically-Deep, Multidisciplinary, & Somewhat of a Polyglot**. Tap into many technical disciplines with ease and grace.
- **Dresses for Success, Puts Best Foot Forward, & Exhibits Positive Image**. Always prepared to make the best impression.
- **Sound Qualifications, Skills, Talent, Abilities, Training, Education, & Certifications**. Impeccable credentials and skills.
- **A Strong, Overriding, and Unimpeachable Sense of Manifest Destiny**. Incorruptible belief that they were born to be leaders.

One of our goals was to "*separate the wheat from the chaff*" when it comes to describing the practical, no-nonsense, and no-kidding attributes of today's leaders. The real-world is hard, unforgiving, relentless, tireless, and a vicious battle at times. It most closely resembles an Apocalyptic battle between good and evil. Humans have the ability to be so good, yet be so bad. Leaders exhibit Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personalities a lot. The good side of them wants to be compassionate, empathetic, and social, with a desire to do good for the sake of their neighbor. The evil, selfish side exhibits a take-no-prisoners, winner-take-all, and dog-eat-dog attitude that would make Charles Darwin blush. It would be a disservice to sugar coat the attributes of real-world leaders for those entering the workforce or struggling to come to terms with the chaotic, confusing, debilitating, and degenerative workplace.

Models are emerging in droves to disarm traditional leadership, which give absolute power to a few corrupt dictators. On the basic side, leaders are asked to establish visions, goals, objectives, and strategies, and then motivate, energize, and resource people to

accomplish these. On the next level, there is emphasis upon delegation, employee ownership, empowerment, egalitarianism, self-organization, participation, openness, trust, transparency, and cooperation. Even further down the line are concepts like lean thinking, business agility, holacracy, and employee ownership. In these latter models, workers define the organization's purpose, vision, goals, policies, and are given the freedom to pursue creative endeavors that benefit society, humankind, and themselves. They self-actualize through personal mastery of their own destiny, free from the rule, direction, and oversight of traditional leaders.

AGILE - 2005 -	EMPLOYEE - 2009 -	RADICAL - 2010 -	LEAN - 2010 -	LEADERSHIP 3.0 - 2011 -
• Organic Teams	• Autonomy	• Self Org. Teams	• Talented Teams	• Empowerment
• Guiding Vision	• Alignment	• Communication	• Alignment	• Alignment
• Transparency	• Transparency	• Transparency	• Systems View	• Motivation
• Light Touch	• Purpose	• Iterative Value	• Reliability	• Scaling
• Simple Rules	• Mastery	• Delight Clients	• Excellence	• Competency
• Improvement	• Improvement	• Improvement	• Improvement	• Improvement

However, one thing is for sure, the further one ascends the structure of power and status within the organizational hierarchy, the harsher life becomes. It's probably at the mid-point in most medium to large sized administrative organizational bureaucracies that the harsh, Darwinistic worldview is first experienced. If one spends their career at the bottom of the hierarchy, then this realm can only be experienced in textbooks, the halls of academia, or perhaps even Hollywood movies. However, when visited in-person and up-close, then the unforgiving world of organizational leadership becomes readily apparent. The middle management realm is a staging ground for ascension to the upper executive levels. This world is conservative, exacting, straight, and very narrow. Little variation in behavior is tolerated. In spite of these realities, few people will ever have the chance to make the final ascent.

This begs the question whether 21st century egalitarian visions, dreams, and models exist or can co-exist at all. Are egalitarian models merely pipe dreams imagined by people at the bottom of organizational hierarchies or simply in the halls of academia? The further one ascends the organizational hierarchy, it seems like egalitarian notions are silly, misplaced, or simply wrong. Maybe the future doesn't lie in the ascension of egalitarianism, but in the descension of the upper realms of the administrative bureaucracies themselves. True lean and agile values, principles, and practices lie not in converting authoritarian despots into nice people with true social skills (*versus just feigned smiles to steal the authority of those with power and status*). That is, maybe the future lies in smaller, flatter, leaner, and networked (*holacratic*) organizations, where egalitarian principles may be applied.

Perhaps, the 21st century organization doesn't lie in the conversion of leadership into caring human beings or the flattening of organizations where egalitarianism may thrive. Perhaps, the 21st century lies in the elimination of organizations all together. That is, do organizations need to exist at all? Is it possible for individuals to act alone for the betterment of society without belonging to organizations? One such model is the Open Source Software community. Thousands of computer programmers produce two-thirds of the worlds software, ranging from operating systems to mobile phone plugins without allegiance to a nation, culture, company, or government agency now. Many of these programmers work out of their homes and create the world's most valuable products and services without compensation at all. Furthermore, they don't seem to have a need for someone to lead them.

We've stumbled upon a paradox between the old and new, traditional and contemporary, and autocratic and emancipatory. We're at the crossroads between the old, instinctual desire to embrace the Darwinistic model of leadership and academic ethereal notions of utopian egalitarian bliss and nirvana. Which is right, the old selfish, dictatorial leadership model that has always been? Are we in transition to a new world order, where there is no more pain, no more death, and no more hunger? Or, must we settle for a middle ground, mired in the golden handcuffs of the need for strong leaders to take charge and herd the mindless sheep and the directionless cats into a productive frenzy? Is there room for both? Will organizations always need strong leaders to care and feed for the weak? Or can the weak rise to become their own leaders as ethereal 21st century models of leadership demand?

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CASE STUDIES IN LEADERSHIP

- **From IT Analyst to Corporate Executive**. *This is the case of unlikely young analyst who became an executive in the span of about a decade. The initial decade was the mid-1980s. Although PCs were all-the-rage, mid-range computer systems were in their golden, if not sunset age. A middle-aged high-school graduate rose to become an IT project manager, which wasn't all that unusual for the last three decades of the 20th century. He created a mediocre workflow application to manage project information and rebranded it as a killer-app for large-scale government acquisitions. He used it to successfully win a $300 million government IT project. He surrounded himself by a small team of freshly minted college graduates, who were quick-on-the-uptake, just like himself. One of them, an unlikely hero, was only a support analyst. When the new IT project first began, she was only one of 300 cogs in the corporate wheel. However, she was special, she was bright, intelligent, energetic, articulate, quick-on-the-uptake, and could instantly see patterns across complex solution spaces no one could ever dream or imagine in the 1980s and 1990s. Within the span of six years, she rose to become a key board member overseeing a $25 billion project. The board itself consisted of extremely bright and well-educated engineers, physicists, and other scientists who had single handedly sent space probes across the solar system to orbit distant planets with nothing more than a slide rule, white out, Exacto knife, mechanical pencil, and overhead projector. She instantly commanded the board, described the future state of the world, and personally articulated a vision for the multi-billion-dollar project in her head. The project was completed within three years and she was promoted to vice president of a multi-billion corporation within 10 years of entering the workforce. Most of her contemporaries had either retired, been laid off of work, changed careers, or languished as analysts doing mundane administrative work. The keys to her success were top education, high levels of motivation, exceptional intelligence, extreme confidence, and the communication skills of a multi-national executive. What made her case unique, was that there were not only more qualified and talented people than her on her original team who had the talent to turn water into wine, but that she was one of a handful of female engineers among tens of thousands of male engineers. However, it was her unique combination of super-intelligence combined with unusually high-levels of motivation, energy, goal-orientation, drive, confidence, and unflinching ambition that drove her straight through the gauntlet of thousands of better qualified counterparts.*

- **From Engineer to Vice President**. *This is the case of another young, but highly-talented, super-motivated, and extremely confident engineer. He was from New York City, which already has 10 million over-confident citizens, and he was no different. From his youngest days, he attended some of the top magnet schools, and eventually one of the top colleges in the entire city. He earned a graduate engineering degree, summa cum laude, and wrote a thesis on the future of transportation, years beyond industry norms. He was recruited by one of the top materials sciences firms to design a key multi-billion-dollar spacecraft. From his earliest career, he established himself as one of the top engineers capable of solving just about any problem in the entire nation. A government project comprised of some of the top physicists, scientists, and mathematicians needed a maverick to lead a complex new project to develop a breakthrough capability. The young engineer pole vaulted from sending multi-billion-dollar spacecraft into orbit to leading a team of 150 people to renovate the face of applied U.S. physics. Although the project already had the top physicists on the planet, none were up to the challenge of converting basic science principles into a breakthrough new product. However, the young engineer never flinched and promised not only to lead the project, but succeed and do it with flying colors answering directly to a cadre of top U.S. generals. The hardware complexity was enormous and the young engineer not only led the project, but personally designed the breakthrough microcontroller designs to integrate a cacophony of heterogeneous electronic components. He did so without even breaking a sweat, while the other physicists and engineers stood idly by quaking in their boots. The young engineer bolted to become the executive vice president of one of North America's last remaining computer component manufacturing firms. The engineer, turned corporate-level vice president, exhibited all of the classic traits of real-world, no-kidding leaders. He was handsome, Type A down to the marrow in his bones, uniquely intelligent, and had the rain man-like photographic memory to design complex micro-controllers in his head in a matter of seconds. He was chock full of motivation, he was driven, disciplined, and, of course, he had more confidence than 150 physicists combined. The timeframe was the very early 1990s, just before the dawn of the World Wide Web as we know it today. Although his ultimate solution was an early 1990-era client-server system, he went on to lead one of North America's largest Cloud Computing vendors and his success today still knows no bounds.*

- **From Mailroom to CEO**. *This is the case of one of the most successful CEOs in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He'd started his career in the mailroom of a large U.S. government agency. He slowly rose through the ranks and became a computer programmer in its mainframe application software department. He eventually went to college at one of the top science, technology, engineering, and mathematics schools in the region. He incrementally stepped through the academic ladder, earning a bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degree. He rose to the level of CIO in less than two decades. He eventually transitioned into the private sector as one of the Mid-Atlantic's highest paid junior executives. Within five years of assuming the a highly-coveted position of one of the region's fastest growing medium-sized IT firms, he began increasing the revenues of his employer far beyond what anyone could ever dream or imagine. He increased their revenues almost 20 times, and grew them into a multi-billion corporate conglomerate. Unlike his fortune 500 counterparts, he did it not by traditional means such as mergers and acquisitions, but solely by increasing sales volumes of existing products and services. He was rewarded with the position of CEO. While starting his career as a minimum-wage earning mail delivery boy for a large administrative government bureaucracy, he retired as a very wealthy multi-millionaire. This was something he couldn't have anticipated when he transitioned from the public to the private sector. His company continues to grow through more traditional means such as mergers and acquisitions and delivers some of the most innovative products and services in the Mid-Atlantic. His Type A personality, intelligence, and photographic memory were unequaled for the level of corporate, industry, and market complexity he had to single-handedly endure. His greatest strengths were multi-tasking, his driven nature, and his machine-like laser-focused discipline. If we could pinpoint the key to his firm's phenomenal revenue growth in such a short period of time, it would have to be that he was a high-contact extrovert. Frequent visits to the members of his personal professional network directly resulted in the increased sales volumes. Rising to the level of becoming a CIO was remarkable in of itself to whisk his agency into the late 20th century from old outdated mainframe technologies to state-of-the-art relational database technologies. However, his feat of catapulting the sales of his firm into the realm of billions of dollars in new sales was well-beyond the expectations of anything anyone could ever hope, dream, or imagine, even himself.*