1. INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this article is to provide an integrative review of the academic literature on issues relating to effective leader self-assessment/feedback systems. As such, this article is divided into a number of sections, which correspond to one of the four overarching content areas. Section 2 discusses the importance of organizational culture for organizational effectiveness and the reciprocal relationship to leadership. Section 3 reviews the research literature on leader self-assessment/feedback systems. Section 4 employs the model of stages of change from the therapeutic literature and applies it in a leader development context. Section 5 reviews the goal setting literature, which identifies the key components of goal setting for goal achievement. Section 6 integrates these four diverse literatures into a conceptual model and discusses the implications for self-assessment/feedback systems. Section 7 applies the model to the Canadian Forces and highlights the implications. Section 8 translates the implications into specific recommendations for the design and development of leader self-assessment/feedback systems for Canadian military leaders.

1.1 Caveats

It is important to note that this document focuses solely on the relevant aspects of leader assessment and feedback and therefore does not identify the specific competencies or behaviours for effective leadership. The leadership literature is quite extensive on this topic and a review of this literature could easily comprise a complete report in itself. Any references to different leadership models or styles are provided solely for illustrative purposes and thus should not be construed as an endorsement of any particular approach to leadership.

It should also be noted that leadership development here pertains solely to leader behaviours and underlying issues (i.e. personality, ability, experience, situational factors) that relate to those behaviours. In other words, psychopathology is not included within the definition of leadership assessment used here. In fact, most executive coaches would agree that their skills are limited to issues that remain within the control of the individual and do not extend into deeper psychological issues. Coaches will also agree that, on occasion, issues that become identified through leadership assessment/feedback can reflect deeper problems. However, when this occurs, those individuals should be referred to experts (i.e. clinical psychologists) in those issues. Therefore, the use of stages of change theory in this paper reflects that application of the therapeutic concepts for behavioural change to address issues for “normally” functioning individuals and not the use of these concepts for those untrained in psychopathological interventions.

1.2 Importance of Leadership Development

Kotter (1990) distinguishes leadership from management by highlighting the leader behaviours of developing and communicating a vision for the future, aligning people with that vision, motivating and inspiring people to work towards the vision with the outcome that considerable positive change takes place in the organization. Similarly, Locke (1991) defines leadership as “the process of inducing others to take action toward a common goal”. As the importance of leadership has grown, so has the importance of leadership development.
A recent Conference Board of Canada report (2001) reported that over 70% of Canadian chief executive officers (CEOs) considered building leadership capability their most important business priority. According to Day (2001), leadership development is at a zenith as evidenced through organizational survey results, book publications, and research. According to Schein (1985) leadership and organizational culture are intertwined.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

2.1 Overview In the past 20 years, organizational culture as a topic has been a focus of considerable research (Ogbonna & Harris, 2002). Although culture was initially touted as a key component of organizational success (for example see Peters & Waterman, 1982), more recent research has been more cautious with respect to organizational performance outcomes. For example, Denison (1990) stated that both strength and adaptability of organizational culture were important for organizational performance.

Schein (1990) was one of the earliest organizational researchers to identify the importance of organizational culture and to build a conceptual framework for understanding, measuring and exploring it. Culture is often confused with organizational climate, although Schein (1990) sees them as distinct with climate reflecting a superficial component of culture. For example, seeing co-workers interacting in a friendly way towards each other reflects the organizational climate (Schneider, 1990). However, the extent to which this behaviour draws upon deeply held values in the organization (e.g. respect for colleagues) reflects its culture.

According to Schein (1990), organizational culture is an ambiguous construct that may not be immediately identifiable. Culture emerges over time as group members learn from other members (implicitly and explicitly) through their interaction. In other words, “any definable group with a shared history can have a culture and subcultures”.

Culture is specifically defined (Schein, 1990, pg. 111) as the following:

a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

A similar definition offered by Cameron and Quinn (1999, pg. 14) states that organizational culture is:

the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in an organization. It represents the prevailing ideology that people carry inside their heads. It conveys a sense of identity to employees, provides unwritten and often unspoken guidelines for how to get along in the organization and enhances the stability of the social system that [organizational members] experience.

Schein (1990) discusses three levels at which culture is discernable: observable artifacts, values and basic underlying assumptions. These can be considered along a continuum of perceptibility. Artifacts reflect the things that people can easily observe such as: employees’ style of clothing, how employees address each other, the style of corporate documents, and the office physical layout. The second level, values, can explain why things happen as they do. Values are the espoused and documented norms, ideologies and philosophies that underlie the artifacts. The third and deepest level is the underlying assumptions that are taken-for-granted and, often unconscious, drivers of employee thought processes, feelings and behaviours.

Schein (1985) identified seven underlying dimensions of organizational culture: how the organization perceives its relationship to the environment (e.g. dominant versus submissive), the nature of human activity in the organization (e.g. harmonizing versus challenging), the determination of reality and truth (e.g. pragmatic test versus social consensus), the time orientation (e.g. time units and past, present or future focus), beliefs about human nature (e.g. people as basically bad or good), the nature of human relationships (e.g. autocratic versus participative) and group mixture (e.g. homogeneity versus diversity).

Another important aspect is the strength or pervasiveness of a culture (Langen-Fox & Tan, 1997; Weiner, 1988). Although a strong organizational culture can be an asset for organizations (Pettigrew, 1979) it can also be a liability when organizations want to make changes that are inconsistent with the current
culture (e.g. implementing an upward feedback initiative in a top down hierarchical organization). To summarize, Langen-Fox and Tan (1997) identify four common aspects of organizational culture: a) stability and resistance to change, b) taken-for-granted and unconsciously held, c) is derived from organizational members, and d) it incorporates shared understandings.

2.2 Measurement Schein (1999) advocates that organizational culture needs to be measured in many different ways in order to accurately capture the different layers (e.g. easily observable to deeply rooted values). The typical quantitative methods include: interview schedules, q sorts and standardized questionnaires. Qualitative methods include: observations of organizational members, unstructured or semi-structured interviews, and interpretive analysis. Rousseau (1990) argues that different data collection methods are necessary for different levels of culture. For example, unconscious assumptions are best determined through semi-structured interviews with organizational members whereas characteristic patterns of behaviour can be identified through questionnaires. See Schwartzman (1993) for an excellent review of the ethnographic approach to studying organizational culture. For some excellent qualitative case studies relating to organizational culture see Van Maanen (1998).

For organizations interested in assessing their culture, Rousseau (1990) suggest that multiple methods be used that draw on a diverse group of organizational members. An additional consideration is the level of analysis (i.e. individual, dyad, group, department, and organization). Dansereau & Alutto (1990) recommend that the level of analysis chosen to study culture be specifically linked to the theoretical model being used to guide the study. In other words, organizational culture can be studied within different levels of analysis and the appropriateness of any given level depends on the conceptualization of culture being used.

Many different standardized measures of organizational culture exist and are used in organizations today. Although a review of these measures is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that culture can be measured in different ways within different conceptualizations (for a sampling of measures see Rousseau, 1990; O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; and Cameron & Quinn, 1999). According to Schein (1999), standard questionnaires can reveal important information about an organization’s climate but not its culture. To determine deeper cultural assumptions, Schein (1999) strongly suggests using diverse focus groups facilitated by someone external to the organization who is knowledgeable about concepts related to culture.

2.3 Organizational Sub-Cultures Organizational culture is a complex concept. In addition to the levels of organizational culture, small and large organizations can have multiple subcultures. According to Schein (1992), subcultures can exist based on: functional/occupational differences, geographic decentralization, product/market or technological differentiation, divisionalization, hierarchical position (e.g. managers), historical integration (i.e. through mergers), inter-organizational structures (e.g. joint ventures), and structural opposition groups (e.g. unions). In the measurement of organizational culture it is important to consider subcultures, particularly if they deviate significantly from the organization’s culture. The presence of many subcultures in an organization does not necessarily imply that the organizational culture is weak if the main aspects of the subcultures are consistent with the core values of the organization’s culture (Schein, 1999). The point here is to recognize that an organization’s culture can be diverse and incorporate different subcultures, which may have implications for organization-wide interventions.

2.4 Organizational Culture and Leadership There is a strong connection between leadership and culture. According to Schein (1992), leadership and culture are intertwined in a dynamic way through organizational evolution, leadership retention and renewal. In many organizations the particular culture can be attributed to characteristics of the company’s founder (Schein, 1990). Furthermore, leader behaviours are important in the sustaining of culture because culture is learned (Schein, 1990).

Schein (1992) states that organizational cultures reflect three factors: the beliefs, values and assumptions of founders, the learning experiences of organizational members as the organization develops and adapts to its environment, and the integration of values, beliefs and assumptions brought in by new leaders. From Schein’s (1992) perspective, the founder has the most significant effect on the determination of culture. According to Wiener (1988), it is extremely difficult for culture to emerge without the influence of charismatic leaders with whom group members identify. Although developing an understanding of how culture develops when an organization is first created is important for emerging firms, the understanding, maintenance and development of currently existing cultures is a priority for well-established organizations.
Leaders influence culture by clearly communicating their major values and beliefs (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) either consciously or unconsciously (Kunda, 1992). Schien (1992) identified how leaders can directly influence organizational culture: by what they focus on, how they react to significant incidents, through role modeling and coaching of others, through rewards, and human resource activities. Each of these will be discussed briefly.

The issues to which leaders pay attention provide a strong signal to organizational members as to what is important in the organization. For example, leaders who focus primarily on financial reports send a clear signal that delivering on financial results should be the primary focus of managers, whereas leaders who focus on operational details signal that these are most important.

How leaders react to critical incidents and crises provides additional information to organizational members with respect to their own behaviour. For example, a leader who ignores a crisis of integrity sends a signal that integrity is not a primary concern.

Leaders also influence others through role modeling, teaching and coaching. Leaders who discuss specific customer complaints in management meetings, role model that strong positive customer relationships are important. In contrast, leaders who see direct reports behaving in a manner that is not consistent with the organization’s culture (e.g. verbally abusing another employee) can coach those individuals about interacting differently with their subordinates. Mentorship can also provide specific managers with guidance on how to deal effectively with others in the organization.

Finally, leaders can use human resource activities (e.g. rewards, punishment, recruitment, selection, promotion, and retirement) to support a desired organizational culture. For example, a leader who fires a senior sales person who has achieved significant sales results but alienated customers sends a strong signal to others that sales without customer satisfaction is not acceptable. Moreover, leaders can identify criteria that can be used to recruit, hire, promote and retain managers who will support the current culture (Schein, 1992).

Leaders can also influence organizational culture indirectly through organizational design and structure, systems and procedures, rites and rituals, physical characteristics, stories and legends and formal statements (Schein, 1992). For example, an organization with many levels supports a culture of hierarchical decision making, procurement procedures that require many signatures sends a signal with respect to strong financial control, holding off-site sales meetings in expensive and fun locations sends a signal of the importance of sales representatives to the organization, a CEO with no walls around his/her office sends a signal of open communication, a famous story about a customer service representative who responded to a customer need under extremely difficult circumstances sends a signal of the importance of customer service. All of these things can be established and maintained by leaders and in many cases can be self-sustaining.

Therefore, according to Schein (1992), leaders can both directly and indirectly influence organizational culture. However, despite this positive view, there are several implicit assumptions in Schein’s (1992) statements about how leaders can influence organizational culture. First of all, they assume that leaders know what kind of culture they want to have (i.e. espoused versus reality). Secondly, that leaders are capable of clearly communicating the important elements of that culture. Thirdly, that leaders can demonstrate the behaviours consistent with that desired culture. Fourthly, that other leaders in the organization will behave in a manner that is consistent with the primary leader. These assumptions have particular relevance for the success of organizational change.

2.5 Organizational Change and Organizational Culture For mature organizations the issue of change and renewal is an important one, particularly in rapidly changing environments (Conner, 1992). In the mature organization, it may not be entirely clear if the established culture needs to change. Schein (1992) identifies two factors that may relate to the need for a change in organizational culture: organizational difficulty due to external environmental changes, and/or destructive internal environmental changes, and/or destructive internal power struggles between subcultures. An additional factor is technological change, which can occur both inside or outside the organization. All of these situations can produce both unplanned (and undesired) or planned (and desired) cultural change.

Environmental changes can produce culture change through the adaptive responses the organization makes to the external change. For example, the sudden emergence of a fierce competitor may convert a passive organizational culture to an aggressive one. Similarly, the introduction of a new customer information system (e.g. electronic data interchange) could increase the
importance of customer service as a component of culture. In addition, if an internal power struggle subordinated an organization to one of its subcultures then the organizational culture could change very quickly.

Schein (1992) considers the diversity of subcultures to be a strength for mid-life organizations, particularly as it provides a potential foundation for cultural change. For example, organizations can promote individuals from one of more subcultures as a way of increasing their importance in the organization. However, he also points out that this can be a slow process. Incorporating leaders into organizational change represents one potential approach to increasing the speed of cultural change.

2.6 Organizational Culture, Change and Leadership

The malleability of organizational culture is a hotly debated issue in organizational theory (Ogbonna & Harris, 2002). Some theorists have argued that culture is partially or fully under the control of management (e.g. Peters & Waterman, 1982; Bowman & Faulkner, 1997) whereas others feel that it is completely beyond manipulation (e.g. Anthony, 1990; Gagliardi, 1986). The situation probably lies somewhere in between, which suggests that culture can and does change but not necessarily in the direction that management has intended ((Ogbonna & Harris, 2002).

Schein (1999), states that culture can evolve and be influenced to varying degrees. He identifies several mechanisms that relate to this process: organizational or subgroup cultural evolution through adaptation to the environment, guided evolution through the insight of leaders, subgroup cultural expansion through leader empowerment and support, change through steering committees and task forces, and through new leadership and significant organizational events.

Some examples of the sudden impact that leaders can have on changing organizational culture include: the hiring of a new president or chief executive officer (CEO) with different values, “whistle blowing” as a way of exposing incongruities between espoused and actual culture, and the firing of a visible leader or manager who represented the old culture.

Although a full discussion of this debate is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to realize that organizational culture may not be easily changed and therefore, new programs introduced into organizations may need to fit into the current culture rather than as a way to change that culture. This will be discussed in more detail later. It is also important to recognize that leaders can play a role in planned and unplanned organizational change.

3. LEADER ASSESSMENT/FEEDBACK

Leader assessment/feedback refers to the tools and processes with which organizations assess their leaders. These assessments can be used for administrative (e.g. promotion) or developmental (e.g. skill enhancement) purposes. Leader assessment in the context of job performance has been discussed in detail elsewhere (Newsome, Day, & Catano, 2003), therefore the focus here will be on feedback from those who interact with leaders.

3.1 Overview

Feedback is a critical component for all learning (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Feedback programs can increase productivity/performance (e.g., Atwater, Roush, & Fischthal, 1995; Pritchard, Jones, Roth, Stueberg, & Ekeberg, 1988; Reilly, Smither, & Vasiopoulos, 1996; Walker & Smither, 1999) that may be sustained over time (Reilly, Smither, and Vasiopoulos, 1996; Walker & Smither, 1999). Researchers (e.g., Reilly, Smither, and Vasiopoulos, 1996) add that the continuous administration of feedback may be important for sustained improvements in performance.

3.2 Assessment/feedback approaches

Traditionally, organizational approaches to developmental assessment focused on feedback from superiors as part of the performance appraisal process (Landy & Farr, 1980). More recently, organizations have recognized the value of feedback from multiple sources, particularly for leaders (Day, 2001), which is referred to as “multi-source” or “360º” feedback. More specifically, “multi-source feedback refers to the process by which performance evaluations of an employee are collected from more than one source (e.g., subordinates, peers, supervisor, customers)” (London & Smither, 1995, p. 803). Typically, this feedback captures information related to an individual’s skill, knowledge and behavioural style (Lepsinger & Luria, 1997).

The popularity of multi-source feedback in organizations stems from a recognition of the multidimensional nature of jobs, the different contexts in which people operate (Day, 2001), and the belief that constituents can provide valuable information to guide development and contribute to performance evaluations (Brutus & Derayeh, 2001; London & Smither, 1995; Peterson, Hicks, & Stoner, 2001). Researchers point to the need for more complex measures of performance (Pritchard, Jones, Roth, Stueberg, & Ekeberg, 1988) and list...
an increase in awareness, improvements in work behaviors, and an increase in performance as the possible outcomes of a multi-source feedback process (Antonioni, 1996). Although, 360° feedback has its roots in performance appraisal, many organizations today are using it for leadership and management development (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997; London & Tornow, 1998). In addition, multisource feedback is being implemented in many organizations using the Internet with databases being held by a third party vendor.

When reviewing multi-source feedback, measurement issues (i.e. within and between rater agreement), the feedback source (i.e. self, peer, manager, direct report, customer), the type of feedback (i.e. quantitative and/or qualitative), and the nature of the feedback (i.e. positive or negative) should be considered.

3.2.1 Measurement Issues and Feedback Source Not surprisingly, there has been little consistency in ratings across feedback sources (Furham & Stringfield, 1998; Mabe & West, 1982), which can be explained based on contextual differences between sources (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997). For example, a leader may be more directive with subordinates but more collegial with peers. A meta-analysis by Harris & Schaubroeck (1988) supports this idea as they found more agreement between peer and manager ratings (38% shared variance) versus subordinate and manager ratings (19% overlap). However, surprisingly there has also been poor agreement within feedback sources (Greguras & Robie, 1998). Clearly, there are measurement issues in multi-source feedback, however, the impact of these issues on the effectiveness of feedback is currently under debate. Training (e.g. frame of reference, Keown-Gerrard & Sulsky, 2001; Day & Sulsky, 1995) may improve the consistency and accuracy of ratings, although it is unlikely to resolve all the issues with respect to inconsistency.

Regardless of how biased others’ perceptions of a ratee may be, such perceptions constitute an important reality in the socially constructed world of work (London & Smither, 1995). In light of this, inconsistent ratings by different sources should not be surprising as individuals may have different perspectives of the same individual. In fact, raters may behave differently toward different sources. It is these multiple perspectives that multisource feedback intends to tap. Goal-Setting Theory, Control Theory, and Social comparison processes have been cited by researchers (e.g., Brett & Atwater, 2001; Johnson & Ferstl, 1999; London & Smither, 1995; Reilly, Smither, & Vasilopoulos, 1996) as contributing to our understanding of the assessment/feedback process. With respect to the impact of feedback on leader change, research conducted by Hegarty (1974) demonstrates the positive effects of upward feedback. Supervisors, who were provided with feedback reports along with an explanation, improved their performance, as measured by subordinate ratings. The feedback included behavioral statements that were specific rather than general.

3.2.2 Type of Feedback Typically, most multi-source feedback instruments provide quantitative information (i.e. scores on questions using rating scales). Despite the efficiency of this approach, some research indicates that qualitative data can be helpful as a component of feedback. According to Antonioni (1996), feedback receivers want written feedback. Feedback receivers indicated that ratings provide information regarding desirable work behaviors, and that written comments provided additional information to help them target specific work behaviors requiring improvement. In fact, feedback receivers may prefer written descriptive feedback over rating scale data (Antonioni, 1996). Certainly, from an action planning perspective, specific behavioural feedback can help to guide the goals that are set by feedback receivers.

3.2.3 Nature of Feedback Since multisource feedback typically includes self-assessments, the comparisons between how one sees him/her as compared to how others see him/her may provide important insights necessary for change to occur. Self-raters can be referred to as “underraters” (those who typically rate themselves lower than others), overraters (those who typically rate themselves higher than others) and “in-agreement raters” (those who rate themselves consistently with others). From a feedback perspective these relationships amongst feedback sources can provide insight into how the feedback will be received.

The reactions of underraters are generally positive (Antonioni, 1996), however, Brett and Atwater (2001) caution that high ratings from multi-source feedback may not be associated with positive reactions. Underraters tend to be somewhat successful and effective, misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses, make ineffective job-relevant decisions, set low aspiration levels and underachieve, have emotional highs and lows, display low self-worth yet are pleasant to be around, and not pursue leadership positions or realize their full potential” (Yammarino & Atwater, 2001, pg. 216-217). Underraters raised their self-ratings following feedback in a study conducted by Atwater, Roush, and Fischtal
(1995), but subordinate ratings did not differ significantly post-feedback.

The reactions of overraters to feedback can vary from confusion to defensiveness (Antonioni, 1996). Yammarino and Atwater (2001) maintain that overraters “tend to misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses; make less effective job-relevant decisions; have negative attitudes, including hostility and resentment; suffer from career derailment; fail to see the need for training and development; and have high absenteeism, low commitment, high turnover, and frequent conflicts with supervisors and coworkers” (p. 216). However, after receiving feedback, overraters reduced their self-ratings.

When ratees received low ratings or ratings that were lower than expected, feedback was not perceived as accurate or useful, did not increase awareness, and led to reactions such as anger and discouragement (Brett & Atwater, 2001). The reactions of overraters to feedback can vary from confusion to defensiveness (Antonioni, 1996). Yammarino and Atwater (2001) maintain that overraters “tend to misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses; make less effective job-relevant decisions; have negative attitudes, including hostility and resentment; suffer from career derailment; fail to see the need for training and development; and have high absenteeism, low commitment, high turnover, and frequent conflicts with supervisors and coworkers” (p. 216). However, after receiving feedback, overraters reduced their self-ratings and received higher ratings from followers (Atwater, Roush, & Fischthal, 1995).

Behavior and self-ratings did not change following feedback for in-agreement raters in a study conducted by Atwater, Roush, and Fischthal (1995). The results of Johnson and Ferstl (1999) suggest that in-agreement raters tended to have a slight increase in subordinate ratings and a slight decrease in self-ratings over time. Reactions to feedback consistent with one’s expectations are typically positive or neutral (Antonioni, 1996).

For in-agreement ratings, those individuals who rate themselves and are rated “good”, “tend to be successful and the best performers; make effective job-relevant decisions, develop favorable efficacy expectations and commensurate achievement; have very positive job attitudes; tend to be more successful and effective leaders; have low absenteeism, high commitment, low turnover, and few conflicts with others; and use feedback from others constructively to alter their behavior as needed”, while those individuals who rate themselves and are rated as “poor”, “tend to be unsuccessful, poor performers; make ineffective job-relevant decisions; have low KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities), the cause of poor performance (such as ability versus attitude); have high absenteeism, low commitment, and high turnover; and accurately diagnose weaknesses but take few actions to improve their performance (Yammarino & Atwater, 2001, pg. 216-218).

Therefore, the nature of the relationships between feedback sources has important implications for personal change and future use of multisource feedback data. Johnson and Ferstl (1999) hypothesized that the self-ratings of underraters would increase over time and that the self-ratings of overraters would decrease over time. Their results support their assertion that managers would adjust their self-ratings in such a way as to minimize the discrepancy of these ratings with those of subordinates. However, it is unclear whether a smaller discrepancy between ratings indicates greater self-awareness or an attempt at impression management (Johnson & Ferstl, 1999). As indicated by Johnson and Ferstl (1999), research linking behavior change to the upward feedback process is limited. Those who utilize the upward/multisource feedback process generally assume that discrepancies between self-ratings and those of subordinates may lead to greater self-awareness and perhaps a resultant increase in performance on behalf of the ratee (Antonioni, 1996; London & Smither, 1995).
Research has indicated an increase in subordinate ratings over time for overraters after the implementation of upward and multi-source feedback initiatives (e.g., Atwater, Roush, & Fischthal, 1995; Johnson & Ferstl; 1999; Walker & Smither, 1999) suggesting that performance may indeed increase as a result of such initiatives. A finding not predicted by Johnson and Ferstl (1999) was that underraters had lower subsequent subordinate ratings. The researchers are unclear as to why such an effect would occur, but suggest that their performance may have declined because of little motivation to maintain current levels of performance. These results, when considered in conjunction, indicate that an increase in performance following upward and multi-source initiatives may not be expected for all individuals. However, other researchers (e.g., Walker & Smither, 1999) have not found a decrease in the performance of underraters following upward and multi-source feedback, and suggest that such results may be due to regression to the mean (i.e. results moving closer to the average).

These outcomes can be explained to some degree by self-consistency theory (Heider, 1958). According to this theory, individuals desire congruence between their self-perceptions and the perceptions others have of them. However, Johnson and Ferstl (1999) indicate that their results can also be explained through the through the application of goal-setting theory and control theory. Thus, they maintain that the improvement of overraters can be explained as “(a) striving to achieve the goal (goal-setting theory), or (b) striving to reduce the discrepancy between current performance and the goal (control theory)” (Johnson & Ferstl, 1999, p. 295). When referring to social comparison theory, the researchers suggest that decreases and increases in self-ratings may have more to do with the availability of normative information from which it is easier to judge oneself. The researchers cite evidence that more accurate self-assessments are made by individuals who have social comparison information. Clearly, understanding self versus other comparisons (see Higgins, 1987 for a more detailed review) is important to the effective use of multi-source feedback for leader development.

3.3 Content and Reporting Issues Antonioni (1996) maintains that multi-source feedback instruments should be relevant and specific as organizations that design their own instruments may achieve greater acceptance and commitment from employees if the employees have been included in the design process. In a survey of 101 organizations, Brutus and Derayeh (2001) found that multi-source feedback programs instituted within organizations differed widely. The researchers cited poor instrument design as a factor contributing to the need for adjustments in the multi-source feedback program. The feedback report should be easy to understand and written comments should be specific (Antonioni, 1996).

In light of their research findings that suggest an increase in performance may not be the result of upward feedback for all individuals, Johnson and Ferstl (1999) suggest an examination of the method by which feedback is provided. The researchers propose that it may be beneficial to tailor feedback to individuals depending on self-other discrepancies. It has been suggested that with more self-other discrepancies, a feedback method, which increases the salience of the feedback, may lead to perceived goal-performance discrepancies (London & Smither, 1995).

Salient feedback methods and clearer performance standards may lead to a clearer schema of expected behaviors (London & Smither, 1995). In order for learning to take place, feedback needs to be relevant to the individual’s goals and values, clear, credible, and the individual needs to be ready to hear the feedback (Peterson, Hicks, & Stoner, 2001). Moreover, the aggregation or averaging of scores from all sources may not be appropriate given current levels of within and between group disagreement, thus, it is necessary to provide individual ratings in feedback reports (Yammarino & Atwater, 2001). In addition, feedback receives would benefit from training sessions to help them understand their emotional reactions and to provide guidance with respect to interpretation.

3.4 Role of Coaching Organizations employing multi-source feedback may increase the benefits from their investment with the use of a facilitator or coach (Brett & Atwater, 2001; Dalton & Hollenbeck, 2001). Antonioni (1996) expresses a consistent view when emphasizing the need to train raters, ratees, and supervisors who may function as coaches. In addition, Olivero, Bane, and Kopelman (1997) found that coaching coupled with training led to an 88% increase in productivity. The focus of the coaching included goal setting, collaborative problem solving, practice, feedback, supervisory involvement, evaluation of end results, and public presentation. The researchers believe that goal setting and public presentation were the most beneficial in improving productivity. Yammarino and Atwater (2001) suggest that...
counselors or facilitators could be helpful in the multisource feedback process. Organizations may want to focus on the coaching process as feedback sessions can have beneficial effects for ratees (Antonioni, 1996; Walker & Smither, 1999). Research results indicate that managers improved more in years when feedback sessions were held than when feedback sessions were not held (Walker & Smither, 1999).

3.5 Links to Leader Development

The degree of self-other agreement may provide insight into the level of an individual’s self-awareness, which is important for leadership development (Yammarino & Atwater, 2001). After being provided with multi-source data, ratees tend not to develop specific goals and action plans (Antonioni, 1996). London and Smither (1995) maintain that greater self-other discrepancies and smaller discrepancies among raters may cause ratees to focus more attention on these differences and may cause them to feel a need to provide an explanation for such differences. Yammarino and Atwater, (2001) suggest that ratings can be used to determine the nature of leadership development and training, enhance self-awareness, and provide constructive feedback.

When presented with an undesired change, people react with many emotions and feelings that will impact on how they ultimately respond to that change...The extent to which they can deal effectively with these emotions and become motivated to address the feedback will be critical to their successful development.

London and Smither (1995) suggest that self-image, feedback seeking, and self-monitoring play critical roles in perceptions of goal-performance discrepancies. More specifically, the researchers propose that self-other discrepancies and discrepancies among different sources are more likely to be associated with the perception of change in goal-performance discrepancy when the ratee’s self-image, feedback seeking behavior, and self-monitoring are high. In addition, the researchers suggest that perceived goal-performance discrepancies and clearer schemas of expected behavior are likely to lead to changes in self-awareness and self-image, which are positively associated with changes in goals, skill development, behavior, and performance. If one’s performance standards depend on one’s self-concept or self-image, it may bring more related to greater feedback seeking behavior. The researchers suggest that feedback seeking behavior may be beneficial for an organization as employees who seek feedback may become more valuable and credible.

3.6 Typical Multisource Program Components

In their investigation on the implementation of multisource feedback programs, London and Smither (1995) contacted large and medium sized consulting firms and three large corporations. They found that 80% of respondents presented ratings from different sources separately to the ratee, for 80% of respondents, the report format contrasted ratings from multiple sources on the same page, multi-source ratings were usually provided anonymously, the information presented to employees was intended for developmental purposes, and multi-source ratings were increasingly being used for administrative purposes.

3.7 Feedback and Change

Kluger & DeNisi (1996) propose a theory of feedback intervention (FIT) that reflects the following components: behavior is regulated by comparisons of feedback to goals or standards, goals or standards are organized hierarchically, only feedback-standard gaps receive attention, attention is normally directed to the moderate level of the hierarchy, and feedback interventions change the locus of attention and, therefore,
affect behaviour (pg. 261). They provide a comprehensive review and meta-analysis of the relationship between feedback interventions (FI) and task performance improvement (which reflects an aspect of multisource feedback). Although they found that FI improved subsequent task performance by .4 standard deviations on average, they also found that FI reduced subsequent performance in one third of the cases they studied. Although a full discussion of their study is beyond the scope of this paper, several important results will be highlighted in the context of multisource feedback. Firstly, FIs affect performance by changing the locus of attention. Secondly, performance benefited more from FIs for simple than complex tasks. Therefore, multisource feedback should help to focus feedback receivers on the specific areas for improvement but complexity of these tasks may moderate the impact of the feedback.

With specific reference to a multisource feedback program, 10-20% of participants are unlikely to change much, and 10% may exhibit significant change, but such programs may still be worth the effort (Dalton & Hollenbeck, 2001). Dalton and Hollenbeck (2001) adapted a change process framework from Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente’s six-stage change process (1995) which identified the importance of becoming aware, preparing for change and developmental planning, taking action, and maintaining the gain.

4. STAGES OF CHANGE

4.1 Overview The implicit assumption that leaders want to or are ready to change is fascinating in the practice of leadership development. Although some organizations require leaders to request participation in a leader assessment/feedback program, most organizations implement these programs for all relevant leaders without their express desire to participate. As a result, practitioners and researchers do not know what percentage of leaders who participate in programs are truly ready for the change.

The concept of change readiness was first introduced by Kurt Lewin (1951) through his concept of unfreezing. The term was used to identify an organization’s readiness for change based on the attitudes and beliefs of organizational members as well as their capacity to change. Resistance to change can be considered the opposite of change readiness.

Conner (1992) discussed the concept of resistance to change at the individual level. He identified eight stages that individuals experience in the presence of a change: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, testing, and acceptance. In other words, when presented with an undesired change, people react with many emotions and feelings that will impact on how they ultimately respond to that change. In the context of leader assessment/feedback, leaders who receive negative information that is not consistent with how they see themselves may experience the same feelings and emotions. The extent to which they can deal effectively with these emotions and become motivated to address the feedback will be critical to their successful development.

Prochaska and DiClemente (1982) developed a stages of change model that related to the effectiveness of different psychotherapeutic processes. This model integrated the process of change and an individual’s stage of change to elucidate the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of different processes in creating change. They identified four stages of change: pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance. Pre-contemplation represents the stage in which the individual is unaware of any problems that require changing or not seriously thinking of changing. The individual at this stage is likely to resist any efforts for change. The contemplation stage reflects the individual’s transition from a lack of awareness or denial to awareness of a personal problem that exists within her/himself. The individual at this stage is likely to be thinking a lot about the problem and what to do about it. As a result of the time and effort put into thinking about the problem the person may be putting together a plan to address the issues (also known as preparation). After contemplation, the individual can actually start to do something about the problem based on the plan s/he has developed. This is the Action stage. After this stage, if the individual was successful then s/he shifts into the Maintenance stage, which is about keeping the change going (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). In some cases, individuals can relapse or fail to meet their change goals with both cognitive and affective implications, which is reflected by the cyclical aspect of the model.

4.2 Decisional Balance An important component of the stages of change model is the issue of decisional balance. Decisional balance refers to a rational decision making process in which an individual assesses the advantages (pros) and disadvantages (cons) of changing their behaviour (Janis & Mann, 1977). Behaviour change will occur if an individual identifies more advantages than disadvantages with respect to the change. Prochaska, Velicer, Rossi et al. (1994)
4.3 Measurement McConnaughy, Prochaska and Velicer (1983) developed the Stages of Change Scales (SOCS) to assess the four stages of change. Applying factor analysis to their initial list of items generated the four factor model that came to represent the stages. The scale consists of 32 items, each measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Eight items measure each of the four stages of change, and mean scores are calculated for each scale. The stages of change, followed by a representative item, include precontemplation (“I may be part of the problem, but I don’t really think I am”), contemplation (“I’m here to prevent myself from having a relapse of my problem”), action (“I am really working hard to change”), and maintenance (“I have been successful in working on my problem, but I’m not sure I can keep up the effort on my own”). These scales were later cross-validated by McConnaughy, DiClemente, Prochaska and Velicer (1989).

Assessing an individual’s stage of change can also be achieved using interview questions that reflect each stage of change. For example per-contemplation can be assessed by asking the person if s/he has ever considered the issue a problem before or if s/he has any intent to change the behaviour in the next 6 months. Contemplation can be assessed by asking the person what they have thought about the issue and if they intend to do something in the next 6 months. Action is determined by asking the person what s/he has done to work on the issue. Prochaska and Norcross (1994) classify a person at the action stage if s/he has successfully altered a problem behaviour (i.e. met a personally set criterion) within the past six months. Finally, maintenance is assessed by asking the person if s/he has resolved the issue. Prochaska & Norcross (1994) suggest that this stage extends from six months to an indeterminate period after the person has resolved the issue. These questions could be augmented by other questions that help to determine the person’s stage of change.

4.4 Stages of Change and Process of Change Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) outlined the relationship between processes of change and stages of change. They found that certain processes of change were more effective during specific stages of change. Therefore, targeting a specific process of change should produce stronger therapeutic outcomes than simply applying any therapy. They describe eight processes that are available to individuals to deal with change.

Consciousness raising focuses on creating awareness about the issue (e.g. collecting feedback from others about it) because the individual may not realize that there is a problem. Self-reevaluation represents a cognitive and affective self-appraisal that captures the advantages and disadvantages of addressing the problem. Self-liberation consists of the decision a person makes (or a choice) to address the problem. Social liberation expands self-liberation to include changes in one’s environment. Contingency management reflects the link between behaviours and outcomes (i.e. positive or negative). Therefore, behaviours can be managed by changing the contingencies attached to the behaviour (e.g. positive to increase and negative to decrease). Dramatic relief can facilitate change by presenting a person with an experience that evokes an emotional response. Finally, helping relationships represent sources of support or therapy that individuals seek out to help them address the issues. Although this is not an exhaustive list of processes of change it highlights the many possible alternatives available to individuals embarking on personal change.

Prochaska & DiClemente (1984) found that individuals at different stages of change used different process of change. For example, those individuals at the pre-contemplation stage spent the least amount of time using any of the change processes. Conversely, individuals at the contemplation stage used consciousness raising. Self-reevaluation was most common at the interface between contemplation and action. The action stage was most commonly linked to helping relationships and contingency management. Finally, counter-conditioning and stimulus control were found most commonly linking the action and maintenance stages.

Understanding how individuals move between stages is an important aspect of the stages of change theory. According to Prochaska and DiClemente (1984), individuals move from pre-contemplation to contemplation because of developmental changes (e.g. moving to a new stage in life) or environmental changes (e.g. becoming a parent). These changes can lead a person to want to change, which is a key requirement for any change to occur and to be sustained (i.e. intentional change).
Moving from pre-contemplation to action requires the person to have a plan in place and to be ready to implement that plan. Often individuals can spend a considerable amount of time in a state of preparation (i.e. high in both contemplation and action) but not quite ready to take action (Prochaska & Norcross, 1994). Setting goals and being committed to them are critical for moving individuals into the action stage.

4.5 Stages of Change Research

The stages of change model has strongly influenced the psychotherapy and treatment research literature. A considerable number of studies have found support for the stages of change model with respect to therapeutic outcomes for smoking (Andersen & Keller, 2002; Otake & Shimai, 2001), alcohol abuse (e.g. Snow, Prochaska & Rossi, 1994), obesity (Prochaska, Norcross, Fowler, Follick & Abrams, 1992), and behavior change more generally such as: healthy eating (Pullen & Walker, 2002; Ma, Betts, Horacek, et al., 2002), and exercise (Plotnikoff, Hotz, Birkett, & Courneya, 2001; Sarkin, Johnson, Prochaska, & Prochaska, 2001). Although a full literature review on the effectiveness of the stages of change model for psychotherapeutic change is beyond the scope of this paper, a few studies will be highlighted as they relate to behavioural change. The majority of articles in the stages of change literature, like other literatures, are cross-sectional and therefore provide only limited information with respect to change over time. Longitudinal research using stages of change is growing but is still limited to only 7 studies.

Plotnikoff, Hotz, Birkett, & Courneya (2001) tested the stages of change model on exercise longitudinally for three periods over one year. A total of 683 participants provided data for all three periods (beginning of study, 6 months, and 12 months). Decisional balance, process of change and self-efficacy (for fitness activities) were used to predict subsequent transitions in stages of change with respect to exercise. Processes of change were placed into two categories: experiential processes (i.e. consciousness raising, dramatic relief, self-reevaluation and social liberation) and behavioural processes ((i.e. counter-conditioning, contingency management, self-liberation, stimulus control, and helping relationships).

They found that self-efficacy increased when participants moved between the stages (i.e. from pre-contemplation to contemplation, contemplation to preparation, preparation to action) and was higher for those in the maintenance stage. With respect to decisional balance, support was found for both transitions (i.e. higher numbers of positives were associated with transitions from pre-contemplation and contemplation) and later stages (i.e. more positives were cited in action and maintenance stages). Although lower negatives were all in the hypothesized direction, they were only significant for action, maintenance and the transition from preparation. With respect to the processes of change, they found that the behavioural processes were more important than prior cross-sectional research (for example see Herzog, Abrams, Emmons, Linnan, & Shadel, 1999) at the early stages of change (Plotnikoff, Hotz, Birkett, & Courneya, 2001). It may be that the importance of behavioural or experiential processes at different stages of change is dependent on the type of problem being addressed. For example, experiential processes have been found to be more important than behavioural processes at early stages of change for smoking cessation (Herzog et al., 1999) but equally important for exercise adoption and diet change (Rosen, 2000).

Another study by Etter and Perneger (1999) studied the impact of decisional balance on smoking cessation both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. A total of 406 smokers provided data at baseline and 7 months later. Although a cross-section, they found that there were more negatives (cons) identified with smoking than positives (pros) for participants as later stages of change, longitudinally they found the cons of smoking to be the most important predictor of transitions between stages.

In the context of organizations, one study by Levesque, Prochaska, Prochaska, Dewart, Hamby and Weeks (2001) utilized the stages of change model in a continuous quality improvement (CQI) initiative for healthcare professionals. One of the key contributions of this article was the conversion of processes of change into an organizational context. Consciousness raising was defined as increasing awareness and information about CQI. Dramatic relief reflected experienced negative emotions associated with failure to change and relief that comes with success. Environmental reevaluation considers how CQI will have a positive effect on the organizational environment. Self-reevaluation considers how one can personally benefit from adopting CQI. Social liberation refers to the empowering impact of CQI for employees. Self-liberation reflects the belief that one can change and commitment to it. Reinforcement management pertains to finding intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for new ways of working. Counter-conditioning captures the substitution of old ways of working with new ways. Helping relationships emphasizes the use of social support to
help with the change. Stimulus control relates to controlling the environment to remove cues for non-participation and to introduce cues for participation. In the study participants assessed the stages and processes of change for the whole organization and found support integrating stages and processes of change at the organizational level. Their study demonstrated that the concepts can translate to organizations and the new definitions provide an excellent conversion of the therapeutic terms to an organizational context.

In summary, the stages of change model represents an effective approach to many psychological and behavioural issues. Despite its prominence in over 20 years of research only one article was found that has been critical of the stage concept (Littrell & Girvin, 2002). It is primarily focused on the cognitive decision making aspects of change, which is insufficient to capture the affective aspects related to negative feedback (Higgins, 1987) and resistance to change (Conner, 1992). However, with respect to the rest of the change process, it has both empirical and heuristic value. Its application to leadership development has been limited, although the conceptual connection should be evident. In other words, individuals can find themselves at any of the stages with respect to their own development and this information is critical for determining the effect that feedback will have and how to effectively encourage individuals to develop themselves based on that feedback. This concept is similar to one discussed by Spencer and Spencer (1993) which is referred to as “self-directed change theory”. Specifically, this theory states that adults will change their behaviour when they are dissatisfaction with an existing condition (moving from pre-contemplation to contemplation), are clear about a desired condition and know the steps to get there (action and maintenance). Goal setting represents an important approach to behavioural change in this process and is discussed next.

5. GOAL SETTING

5.1 Overview According to Locke and Latham (1984), organizations need to find ways to increase productivity. The researchers suggest that goal setting, as a technique, can maximize an organization’s human resources if used effectively. Research results indicate that “people who are given specific, challenging goals perform better than people who are given specific, easy goals, vague goals (such as “do your best”), or no goals” (Locke & Latham, 1984, p. 19). Goal setting has been found to be effective in many different situations, organizations and countries.

5.2 Goal Acceptance and Participation How goals are determined is an important aspect of subsequent goal attainment. The results of research conducted by Renn (1998) indicate that participation, defined as “the perceived amount of influence a subordinate has over a decision regarding the difficulty level of an annual work-related performance goal” (p., 116), was indirectly and positively related to task performance via goal acceptance. That is, participation increased goal acceptance, which, in turn, increased task performance (as determined by supervisor ratings). Participation in the productivity measurement, feedback, goal-setting, and incentive interventions was also found to have beneficial effects in the research conducted by Pritchard, Jones, Roth, Stueberg, and Ekeberg (1988). The goals participants set for themselves contributed to organizational accomplishments in research conducted by Bandura and Jourden (1991). Finally, a meta-analysis by Mento, Steel, and Karen (1987) found that goals, which were participatively set generally led to higher levels of performance than goals that were assigned. Finally, Erez and Zidon (1984) investigated the relationship between goal difficulty and performance. Their findings indicate a positive linear relationship between goal difficulty and performance when goals are accepted. In addition, a negative linear relationship between goal difficulty and performance was found when goals are rejected.

5.2.1 Goal Commitment Goal commitment is another important aspect of goal attainment. Wright, O’Leary-Kelly, Cortina, Klein, and Hollenbeck (1994) recommend that commitment be measured through self report ratings. Commitment is defined by Latham & Locke (1991) as the degree of attachment experienced toward the goal, level of perceived personal importance, determination of attainment, and persistence in the face of obstacles without revision. Generating commitment within individuals requires that individuals believe the goal to be personally relevant, and that they possess the abilities and skills required to attain the goal.

Research has delineated two avenues through which commitment can affect performance. Firstly, increased levels of goal commitment directly and positively affect performance outcomes. Next, goals high in difficulty elicit higher levels of commitment as more effort is invested in achieving the desired goal, resulting in higher performance (Wright, 1989; Erez & Zidon, 984). Goal commitment as a moderator of performance is supported through research documenting a more positive relationship between goal level and performance for high commitment conditions than low commitment.
High commitment is parallel with a high degree of following through with what one says, whereas low commitment is associated with performance not in line with set goals.

Controversy is pervasive in the goal commitment literature over the differential effectiveness of assigned versus participatively set goals in increasing commitment and performance. Research in this area up to 1990 was dominated by the oppositional findings of Erez postulating support for participative goal setting on commitment, and Latham claiming no statistical difference between conditions. In an attempt to resolve the discrepancy between the two lines of research, a set of four experiments were conducted jointly by Latham and Erez, and mediated by Locke (Latham, Erez, & Locke, 1988). The results, however, equally divided the presence and absence of this effect. Recent research has suggested that participatively set goals may be more valuable as an information exchange for developing task strategies than as a tool to gain goal commitment. Therefore, the current research position on the decision of self-set, assigned, or participation in goal setting is discretionary.

Commitment interacts with goal type. Seijts and Latham (2001) found that learning goals produce greater commitment than outcomes goal when participants require the acquisition of knowledge prior to completing a task. Locke and Latham (1984) maintain that commitment can be achieved by "instruction and explanation, supervisory supportiveness, employee participation in the goal setting process, training to ensure sufficient knowledge, valid selection procedures to ensure employee capability, and the use of incentives and rewards." (p.41).

5.2.2 Goal Difficulty In their study of goal acceptance, goal difficulty, and performance, Erez and Zidon (1984) discuss the superiority of specific and difficult goals over more general goals. Mento, Locke, and Klein (1992) indicate that individuals with high standards must accomplish more in order to achieve satisfaction than those with lower standards. Thus, when construing self-satisfaction as a meta-goal, those who have higher standards will do more (Mento, Locke, & Klein, 1992). In addition, meeting higher standards is typically associated with greater practical rewards (Mento, Locke, & Klein, 1992). Mento, Steel, and Karren (1987) conducted a meta-analytic study on the relationship between goal difficulty and performance. Their results reveal a strong influence of goal difficulty and performance, thus providing support for the dramatic effects setting difficult goals can have.

5.2.3 Goal Specificity One of the earliest organizational studies of goal setting (Latham & Baldes, 1975) illustrates the positive effects of setting specific difficult goals. In their study, setting specific difficult goals lead to a substantial increase in performance than a “do your best”/general goal. Performance was determined by the net weight of 36 logging trucks in six logging operations with a higher net weight translating into higher productivity. Latham and Baldes (1975) ruled out the possibility that the increase in performance may be due to (a) employees having knowledge of their results, (b) intergroup competition, (c) social facilitation, or (d) the “Hawthorne Effect”. They concluded that specific difficult goals led to greater performance because such goals make clear what it is an individual is to do. Results of a meta-analytic study also reveal that specific difficult goals are strongly related to task performance (Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987).

5.2.4 Proximal versus distal goals Proximal and distal goals reflect the time horizon with proximal goals being short term oriented and distal goals long term oriented. Seijts and Latham (2001) found that a greater number of task-relevant strategies, which correlated positively with performance, can be obtained by setting both proximal and distal learning goals. Therefore, when distal goals are long term, proximal goals may help to maintain focus and to provide feedback on progress.

5.3 Feedback A meta-analytic study investigating the effects of feedback coupled with specific difficult goals revealed that the presence of feedback had a considerable impact on performance (Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987). In the research conducted by Earley, Northcraft, Lee, and Lituchy (1990) on the relationship between goal setting and task performance, process feedback interacted with goal setting to strongly impact the quality of task strategy and information search. Outcome feedback interacted with goal setting to impact effort and self-confidence. The “highest mean level of performance was associated with the combination of the specific challenging goal and both forms of specific feedback, suggesting that the effects of the two types of feedback may be additive” (Earley et al., 1990, p. 101).

5.4 Incentives Pritchard, Jones, Roth, Stueberg, and Ekeberg (1988) sought to determine whether goal setting and incentives would lead to greater increases in productivity than feedback alone. Their findings indicate that goal setting does indeed add to the effects of feedback on productivity.
but that incentives do not increase productivity beyond feedback plus goal setting. However, the researchers suggest possible explanations for the failure of incentives to add to productivity and believe that incentives probably play an integral role in increasing productivity. However, the explicit role of incentives has yet to be determined.

5.5 Self-efficacy Efficacy refers to the “confidence in one’s personal ability to perform” whereas “task specific self-efficacy refers to a person’s appraisal of his or her ability to execute appropriate courses of action to deal with prospective, specific situations” (Gibbons & Weingart, 2001). Gibbons and Weingart (2001) found that people who were more confident about prospective performance on a task tended to set higher personal goals, which resulted in higher task performance.

In their study investigating social comparisons, Bandura and Jourden (1991) provided participants with comparative performance information. Participants were informed about their performance at several points in time and changes over time in relation to other’s performance. Comparative decliners experienced a decrease in their self-efficacy and analytical thinking, and were self-critical. The comparative masters (i.e. improved over time), on the other hand, experienced an increase in their self-efficacy and analytical thinking, and their affective self-reactions provided motivation. The performance of comparative decliners tended to decrease whereas the performance of comparative masters increased. The researchers conclude that “perceived self-efficacy, quality of analytical thinking, personal goal setting, and affective self-reaction operated as significant determinants of performance attainments” (p., 949).

According to expectancy theory, “individuals will choose that level of effort with the greatest motivational force – with the motivational force for a particular action being a function of expectancy (the likelihood that a particular outcome will result from that action) and attractiveness (the affective orientation towards that outcome)” (Klein, 1991, p. 230-231). Self-set goals were found to mediate the relationship between expectancy theory and performance (Klein, 1991). A significant positive correlation between self-efficacy, task performance, and goal commitment was found in the research conducted by Seijts and Latham (2001). In addition, learning goals increased self-efficacy, whereas self-efficacy decreased when participants lacked the knowledge to attain an outcome goal. The researchers maintain that when participants perceive tasks to be complex, increases in goal commitment and performance can be achieved by increasing participants’ self-efficacy. Seijts and Latham (2001) also found partial support for the assertion that high self-efficacy leads to the discovery and implementation of task-relevant strategies, which affect subsequent performance.

In summary, goal setting provides an excellent tool to support behavioural change in general and leadership change more specifically. The approach is strongly supported empirically, clear and easy to understand and easy to implement as part of an action planning discussion.

6. INTEGRATION

6.1 Overview In the four literature reviews on organizational culture, leader self-assessment/feedback, stages of change and goal setting discussed in this paper there are several concepts that are important across areas. One of these is self-efficacy, which is considered to be important for both goal setting and stages of change. Another common issue is the concept of commitment, which is important for culture change in organizations, goal setting, and stages of change. Moreover, goal setting is a specific technique for taking action. Despite these obvious inter-relationships, these four theories/concepts can be integrated in a much more detailed manner. This has been accomplished in two ways. First, a model that broadly integrates the concepts has been developed. Secondly, the stages of change model has been specifically integrated with the different aspects of goal setting.

Figure 1 outlines the relationships between organizational culture, stages of change and leadership assessment/feedback.

As is evident in the model, organizational culture permeates all aspects of the leadership assessment/feedback process from data collection to leader development outcomes. Each of these will be discussed.

6.2 Feedback Process The feedback process refers to all aspects of leader feedback from the administration of data collection methods (e.g. questionnaires), to reporting issues and interpretation.

6.2.1 Feedback Collection Process The feedback collection process refers to the information sources used (e.g. self, superior, direct report, peer and/or client) for the feedback (referred to as feedback givers), the instrument content (e.g. values, competencies, behaviours), the rating scales (e.g. frequency, performance, behaviourally
anchored scales, behavioural observation scales), inclusion of qualitative information, and mode of administration (e.g. paper, scannable document, computer based).

Organizational culture can impact on the use of information sources because organizations that are very hierarchical (i.e. top down) will most likely not want to include direct report feedback as this would not be valued by leaders. Moreover, direct reports would not be willing to provide feedback if they felt it would be poorly received by leaders. Moreover, if trust is low in an organization then the data collection process will have to be anonymous. Instrument content is an important component of leader assessment/feedback tools. Organizations that are performance focused would most likely prefer to focus on competencies and behaviours than values whereas organizations that are strongly values based would incorporate these in leader assessment tools. Rating scales can reflect culture as well with respect to their specificity (i.e. organizations with a high need for precision would be more likely to use behaviourally anchored or behavioural observation scales). Finally, the acceptance of technology in an organization would facilitate the use of computer based data collection methods. In sum, it is critical for organizations to consider their cultures before developing or purchasing a leader assessment/feedback system.

6.2.2 Feedback Information Received Feedback information received refers to the type of feedback (i.e. positive, negative, or balanced), the quality of information (e.g. accurate), the consistency of feedback (e.g. across time, within rater groups and between), and the style of reporting (i.e. graphical information, numbers, use of statistics, use of norms). Organizational culture plays a role in all of these.

Organizations that are particularly critical will provide more negative feedback whereas those that are optimistic in orientation will be more positive. Balanced feedback will come from organizations that have a well-established feedback culture and understand that this type of feedback is the most effective. Furthermore, the negative feedback needs to be constructive in style and orientation (i.e. focused on behaviours and not traits, as well as...
solutions rather than just problems).

The quality of information pertains to the amount of trust participants have with respect to the process and the organization. In other words, if they feel that there is a hidden agenda that may impact on them negatively then they may choose to not respond or to provide inaccurate information. In organizations for which there is low trust, this can manifest itself in low response rates or inflated data. Differential levels of trust can also reduce the consistency of results across rater groups (thus creating even more between group variability) as some groups will provide accurate information and others will not.

Finally, organizational culture can impact on how data is reported. Companies that are concerned about how they compare to other organizations will want normative data for comparisons. Organizations that are highly internally competitive will want internal benchmarks for comparative purposes. In addition, organizations that are highly numbers focused will want to see statistical information (e.g. standard deviations, standard errors of measurement, etc). The type of information received has direct consequences for the feedback interpretation process because it provides the information that is used as the basis for that process.

6.2.3 Feedback Interpretation Process The feedback interpretation process reflects the organization’s approach to providing the reports to feedback receivers, how the feedback receivers will receive the information psychologically, and the extent of support provided in the interpretation process. Organizations that believe strongly in self-development and initiative will simply provide reports back to feedback receivers and expect them to deal with the information and to find their own ways to address issues. Feedback receivers who do not value the feedback process and are not required to develop as part of their roles will not invest the time to review and interpret their results (i.e. also known as the “binder on the shelf” phenomenon). Supportive organizations will provide resources to facilitate the interpretation process either through training, coaching or both. An effective report interpretation process is critical to action planning for at least two reasons. First, if the interpretation process is not taken seriously then no action scan be developed. Secondly, and potentially more serious, is incorrectly interpreted report which lead to the wrong actions being taken.

6.3 Action Planning Process The action planning process is probably the most important aspect of leadership development because it reflects what leaders do in response to the feedback that they received. If the organization values openness and allows leaders to publicly share the areas for which they need to develop then leaders can share their results with their peers and direct reports. Organizations that use goal or objective setting processes can use this approach effectively in dealing with behavioural change. These organizations will already be familiar with the critical elements of effective goal setting, how to write good objectives, how to develop specific action steps and how to stayed focused on the goals over time. Organizational culture can also influence if there will be any follow-up on action plans and, if so, when that might be in terms of time frames.

6.4 Leader Development Outcomes Leader development, or any positive changes that result from the assessment/feedback process, is contingent on a strong, supportive organizational culture, an effective assessment/feedback program and a willingness/commitment to personal change. As Schein (1985) correctly pointed out, leadership and organizational culture are closely intertwined. Therefore, as organizations implement leader assessment/feedback programs and leaders change then organizational culture will change over time. Also, when leadership assessment is integrated into an organization’s annual Human Resource planning cycle then leaders will know if their progress is being seen by their colleagues.

6.5 Cultural Change and Leadership Development According to Schein (1985) leaders at the top of the organization create, support and change organizational cultures. Within this perspective, leaders who support leadership development by creating programs and by being the first to participate can send a strong signal to other mid-level leaders that development is important (i.e. role modeling). Dalton and Hollenbeck (2001) state that organizational change from a multi-source program cannot be expected unless it is rewarded and supported by the organization to which the individual belongs.

Leaders can also support leadership development of other primary and secondary reinforcers (Schein, 1985). An example of primary reinforcement is promoting leaders who have invested time and effort into their own leadership development. An example of a secondary reinforcement mechanism is placing leadership development as a value in formal documents. Therefore, organizations that want to create cultural change need to have this change led by the top leaders and then cascaded down throughout the organization. As leaders “buy in” to the new way of doing things
then they will reinforce those things with their direct reports and so on. Moreover, leaders who do not “buy-in” will leave and be replaced by new leaders who fit with the culture (this refers to person-organization fit, see Kristoff, 1996 for an excellent review). Over time (and this can take some time for a large organization) the culture will change.

In summary, organizations need to be aware of their culture in order to design a system that will be effective in that culture and to prepare for issues that emerge as a result of the culture. They also need to be aware of the impact the leadership development can have on changing an organization’s culture. The integration of these concepts is targeted at the macro or program level of leader assessment/feedback systems. The second level of integration pertains to two issues: first, the specific link between stages of change and leader assessment/feedback (the shaded area in Figure 1, second, the link between stages of change and goal setting. It should be noted that these linkages are theoretical as research has not been conducted, as yet, to demonstrate them empirically.

6.6 Stages of Change and Leader Assessment/Feedback The stages of change can be mapped along the leadership assessment/feedback process. When leaders receive their feedback they can be at any of the stages of development. Leaders who are in the pre-contemplation stage are likely to be surprised about the results and may be defensive and emotional (i.e. due, in part, to self-other discrepancies, Higgins, 1987). Leaders at this stage will be the ones who are least likely to accept the results and use them as a foundation for personal change. Leaders at the contemplation stage of change are likely to embrace the results, particularly if they are congruent with their own reflections. Leaders in the action and maintenance stages are likely to respond more positively to the feedback, although may not completely agree with the results given their effort to change or to avoid relapse.

6.7 Goal Setting and Stages of Change One way to integrate goal setting and stages of change is to determine the stage of change that goal setting relates to most effectively. This can be achieved by reviewing the processes of change as they relate to each stage and goal setting. Based on the processes described by Prochaska and DiClemente (1984), goal setting appears consistent with self-liberation (the individual choosing to make a change), reinforcement management (individual behavior is connected to positive or negative outcomes) and helping relationship (a therapist or external person assisting in the process of change). All three of these processes are most strongly related to the action stage of change.

Another approach to integrating goal setting and stages of change is to identify the most effective goal setting elements for each stage of change. Integrating the two concepts in this way allows for goal setting to be used effectively regardless of the leader’s stage of change. Table 1 presents this integration (it should be noted that these links are hypothetical and need to be supported through empirical research).

6.7.1 Goal Setting and Pre-contemplation The key challenge at the pre-contemplation stage is the issue of resistance to change and the potential emotional upset that leaders may experience when their self schema is inconsistent with how others see them. The goal at this stage is primarily to get the leader to recognize that the assessment information is valid, relevant and reflects others’ legitimate perceptions of their behaviour. Goal setting can be used to facilitate this process by clarifying the appropriate goal at each stage and the most effective goal setting components. At this stage it is critical that leaders accept the feedback they have received, therefore, the goal is consciousness raising. In order to achieve this, leaders need to be a full participant in the interpretation process and

Table 1: Integrating Stages of Change and Goal Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Setting</th>
<th>PRE</th>
<th>CON</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>MAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance/Participation/Commitment</td>
<td>Acceptance/Participation</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Medium/Hard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximal/Distal</td>
<td>Proximal</td>
<td>Proximal → Distal</td>
<td>Distal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning/Outcome</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
need to accept the goal of investigating the feedback further (e.g. ask trusted work or personal colleagues about it) in order to confirm or disconfirm the feedback that has been received. The difficulty level of the goal at this stage should be easy so as to not derail the leader but also very specific and proximal so that the leader cannot derail him/herself. Feedback should be outcome focused because learning will occur in the contemplation stage. Furthermore, the goal should be outcome focused as it is sufficient to expect the leader at this stage to participate more out of compliance than self-directed learning.

6.7.2 Goal Setting and Contemplation At the contemplation stage, leaders have already engaged in some thinking and possibly planning with respect to the issues that have been identified in the feedback. Therefore, since accepting the issue as legitimate is not a problem, the focus is on getting commitment to the goals for addressing it. At this stage the purpose is to encourage the leader to think carefully about the issues and to develop a plan to address them. With commitment, goal difficulty can be moderate to difficult, specificity high, as well as a combination of proximal and distal goals depending on the complexity of the problem. Feedback in the contemplation stage pertains to how the leaders have thought about the problem because the goal is to develop a plan based on the leader’s understanding of the issues.

6.7.3 Goal Setting and Action Once the leader has a plan and is ready to implement it, then the goal setting process shifts into supporting behavioural change. The most effective goals at this stage are: learning and outcome focused, medium to difficult, highly specific, and a combination of proximal and distal. Leaders should be highly committed to their course of action and feedback should be based on both process and outcomes.

6.7.4 Goal Setting and Maintenance When leaders move in the maintenance stage the problem has been solved and the focus becomes avoiding a relapse. Therefore, the goals must be adjusted to reflect this change in focus but continued commitment to maintain the change. Therefore, commitment must remain high with both process and outcome feedback (i.e. how leaders are managing and whether they have started to relapse). The goals at this stage are medium/difficult, of medium specificity, and distal.

In addition to progressing forward along the stages of change, leaders can fall back into an earlier stage. One of the implicit assumptions in leader assessment/feedback is that leaders will embrace the information and use it to make positive changes. The stages of change model raises important questions about this assumption. By incorporating the stages of change into the goal setting process it is hypothesized that leader assessment/feedback programs will be much more effective at creating and sustaining leader development.

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6.8 Coaching with stages of change and goal setting According to Walker and Smither (1999) managers improved more when they had feedback sessions with coaches. Furthermore, Olivero, Bane, and Kopelman (1997) found that coaching coupled with training including goal setting led to a 88% increase in productivity. Therefore, coaching is recognized as an important component in the leader development process. The incorporation of stages of change into this process creates a much stronger argument for the use of coaches. In fact, the coach becomes a necessary component to facilitate the moving of leaders through the stages.

In summary, this section integrated organizational culture, leader assessment/feedback, goal setting and stages of change with the intention of illustrating the advantages of a holistic approach to leadership development. Theoretical linkages and practical implications were explored with the intent of facilitating the incorporation of these concepts for practice and to articulate questions for future research.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CANADIAN FORCES

7.1 Overview A brief review of organizational culture and leadership development in the Canadian Forces (CF) is undertaken here to highlight key issues that relate to the model presented in this paper. This section is not intended to describe all issues that relate to leadership development in the CF but rather to highlight key issues.
7.2 Organizational Culture  Although a full review of the CF’s organizational culture is beyond the scope of this article, a brief summary of the key aspects of organizational culture of the CF is provided (see English, 2001 for an excellent detailed review).

According to Lewis (1994) the military environment is “by definition a paternalistic and conservative one” (pg. 249). CF members give up some of their freedoms as Canadians and must follow a clearly defined chain of command, codes of conduct, demonstrate loyalty to their group and country and be prepared to use force when required. The CF represents the amalgamation of the three services: army, navy and air force and has three primary memberships: full-time military force, active reserve and civilian employees. The management structure reflects a matrix organization with multiple reporting relationships and a complex structure of inter-related units across the country (Lewis, 1994).

The CF, like many militaries, has a long historical tradition, which includes many formal ceremonies (e.g. change of command). These ceremonies are considered important to reinforce the “military ethos” of discipline, group cohesion and “esprit de corps”. Donna Winslow (1998) has explored the CF culture and found it to contain main subcultures, which she felt were counter-productive to certain missions (e.g. Somalia and Yugoslavia). Rather than focusing on overall strategy, English (2001) states that the CF is undergoing a crisis of ethos and that the focus of senior leaders is to “check off” recommendation items from past reports (i.e. implemented the recommendation).

Finally, leaders are overly focused on management issues and “fiscal bottom lines” (pg. 71). In summary, English’s (2001) report suggests that the senior leaders are operating as if the CF is a large bureaucracy rather than a military organization. Certainly this focus makes sense in light of funding issues in the CF (Lewis, 1994), although with recent world events more funding is likely to be made available.

7.3 Change in the Military Context  In order to create change, it is important for leaders to understand both the predominant military culture and that there is a need for that culture to change (Holden & Tanner, 2001). In today’s military decision making is more decentralized and there is a more flexible division of labour, less reliance on formal hierarchy, and greater informal communication between the ranks than in the past (Shamir & Ben-Ari, 2000). To be effective in such an environment, leaders will have to reduce their dependence on formal position power and authority and increase their referent and expert power (Shamir & Ben-Ari, 2000).

7.4 Leadership in the Canadian Forces  It is widely recognized in the Canadian Forces that leadership is a critical issue for its future. In 1997, a Department of National Defence (DND) press release (DND, 1997), improve leadership development was identified as a key component in the military’s action plan. A program titled “Debrief the Leaders” (DND, 2001), which consists of surveys from a large representative sample of officers identified the development of new leadership skills as critical for future success of the CF. In addition, a 1995 survey military and civilian employees stated that they were dissatisfied with the state of leadership in the DND (DND, 1997). These materials strongly suggest that leadership development should be a primary focus for the CF.

7.5 Current Practices in Leadership Assessment/Feedback  The CF provides officer training through the Royal Military College of Canada (Kingston), Canadian Forces Command and Staff College and Canadian Land Force (Toronto) Command and Staff College (Kingston). The training programs offered through these institutions instruct participants on military values and professional standards of knowledge, skill and competence. Formal training appears to be the method of choice with respect to leadership development.

With respect to leadership feedback, the Unit Climate Profile (UCP) provides leaders with key information about how their units are functioning. This approach provides an early indication that subordinates are willing to provide anonymous feedback to leaders (at least in aggregate form). Furthermore, this feedback demonstrated that unit morale and cohesion was influenced by positive leadership practices. Finally, the leaders who have supported the use of this tool in their units indicates that a portion of leaders in the CF see value in collecting subordinate feedback.

In summary, the purpose of this section was to describe the CF with respect to several key aspects of the model. The material presented here should not be considered a detailed assessment of the current organizational culture of the CF nor a specific, thorough list of all the relevant activities that relate to leadership (e.g. training, surveys, leader development). The purpose was to highlight the model in the context of CF issues and operations as a precursor to recommendations. Clearly, more work will be necessary with respect to assessing current programs in the CF, areas for change.
and how these changes can take place.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CANADIAN FORCES

8.1 Overview This section provides specific recommendations for the leadership assessment/feedback in the CF in light of the integrated model presented in this paper. These recommendations focus on research, practice and policy.

8.2 CF Organizational Culture The CF should conduct an organizational culture review that incorporates Schein’s (1990) three levels of culture (observable artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions). This process should utilize multiple methods (e.g. published documents, questionnaire data, interviews) and groups in order to ascertain the cultural elements, strength, and subcultures with the intent of understanding how these will impact on potential future organizational change and future leadership initiatives.

With respect to leadership assessment, the CF should specifically focus on determining if leaders will accept and use feedback from multiple sources in their own development.

8.3 Leadership Assessment/Feedback The CF should develop a model of leadership that reflects its strategic, cultural and operational objectives. This model should form the content of a leadership assessment/feedback instrument that can be used for leader developmental purposes (only). This instrument should contain behavioural statements with rating scales and spaces for specific qualitative feedback (i.e. asking feedback givers for specific improvement suggestions).

Ideally, all sources of feedback should be used in assessing leaders (i.e. self, peer, superior, subordinate), however, if the CF culture does not support leader acceptance of subordinate feedback at this time then this can be implemented in the future. Subordinate feedback is particularly important with respect to leadership in the military. The use of the UCP in several units suggests that (Dobreva-Martinova, 2001) some leaders in the CF are currently willing to gather subordinate feedback. In addition, the use of peer evaluators in program evaluation (Lewis, 1996) suggests that peer ratings are likely to be accepted by leaders.

Information collected should be anonymous for peers and subordinates. Data should be reported to feedback receives separately by rater unless the number of peers and subordinates providing feedback falls below three individuals. All participants in multisource feedback should receive training on the program, leadership model, assessment/feedback process and how to provide ratings (e.g. frame of reference training).

8.4 Leadership Development Leadership development needs to become a key focus for the CF. CF members with leadership potential need to be identified early in their careers and participate in assessment and feedback processes. By focusing on leader assessment and feedback early in their careers this process will become the norm. Furthermore, leader development and training needs to be integrated so that each supports the other. In other words, training can provide leadership models, modes of behavior and technical knowledge for all leaders whereas development can focus on individual leader issues.

Leaders who participate in assessment and feedback programs should be prepared to create action plans to address areas of concern using goal setting and stages of change. Furthermore, coaches should be available to support leaders in the development process. These coaches will need to be well trained on how to coach effectively. Coaches can be peers, superiors or external consultants. The CF will need to determine who can serve as coaches for the different levels of leaders in the organization. In addition, coaches will need to be knowledgeable about issues facing leaders in the CF, effective coaching, goal setting and stages of change.

8.5 Role of Canadian Forces Leadership Institute (CFLI) The CFLI has an opportunity to help facilitate the CFs leadership transformation. By influencing current senior leaders with respect to the importance of cultural change and the role of leaders in creating that change the CFLI can help to initiate the changes necessary in the CF to address current leadership issues.

8.5 Cultural Change in the CF Cultural change takes time and requires constant effort. Champions in senior roles will need to be identified in the CF who can help to make the case for change. Furthermore, any leader assessment/feedback programs will need to be implemented at the top of the organization. This will accomplish several things. First, it should demonstrate to all CF members that the leadership is committed to the program. Second, it will educate the senior leaders on what the program entails so that they can champion it. Third, leaders can experience what it feels like to be coached and learn how to coach others. Cultural change and
leadership are intertwined. Therefore, in order to facilitate cultural change in the CF, senior leaders' role in assessment, feedback and communicating changes to the rest of the organization cannot be underestimated. These factors can contribute to cultural change at the CF and hopefully embed leader assessment/feedback into the CF culture of the future.

9.0 REFERENCES


Authors:

Peter Alexander Hausdorf: Dr. Peter Hausdorf is Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Guelph, where he specializes in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. He is currently conducting research in the areas of internet recruiting, emotional intelligence, career mobility, performance feedback and work/life balance. Dr. Hausdorf is an Associate of the Centre for Studies in Leadership.

Lynda Zugec: Lynda Zugec is a Senior Workforce Strategies Consultant with Mercer Human Resource Consulting in Philadelphia. She has also been a Management Solutions Consultant and Trainer for the U.S. Federal Government. Ms. Zugec has an MA in Industrial & Organizational Psychology from the University of Guelph.