The Praxis of Values-Based Leadership: Aligning Culture, Community & Capability

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Abstract

This paper describes a methodology for values-based leadership praxis directed towards cultural understanding, community empowerment and sustainable dialogue to build capability. It comes out of twenty-five years of independent research by each of the authors in Culture Analysis (CA) and Values Based Leadership (VBL) in frequently hostile, cross-cultural environments. At the heart of the model is a leading change culture assessment tool which is based on historical, sociological, anthropological and psychological conceptual and empirical research. It is the authors' contention that this is a fully functional integrated tool easily adaptable to civil-military-police-community cooperation. Properly implemented, it could enhance the quality of the liaison among civil-military-police-community agencies, while it provides greater perspective to understand the needs of diverse stakeholder groups. This model is founded on a leadership philosophy which builds trust and engenders confidence.

The culture model identifies and defines the major elements of a culture and provides an accurate way to gain insight into its three major components: Values, History, and Folklore. The Culture Analysis is part of a fully integrated VBL process that helps leaders in a variety of contexts. It connects the three integral components of a total leader– **character** (EQ, emotional intelligence), **competency** (IQ, leadership intelligence), and **capability** (SQ, strategic intelligence).

This paper will ultimately provide a useful model for addressing the fundamental 21st century leadership questions of civil-military-police cooperation: what do all parties need to do to engage in meaningful dialogue and what is it going to take to build sustainable community development. The praxis of values-based leadership and cultural analysis provides a process for aligning culture, community and capability.

1.0 INTRODUCTION & VALUE PROPOSITION

The applied research represented in these pages is based on a 20-year journey in leadership development and strategy implementation by both of the authors. In parallel research, each has focused on Values-Based Leadership (VBL). They have independently and collectively identified a gap between what institutions and individuals of rank frequently *say* and what they *do* to achieve results. The results of the present research have helped narrow the "*say-do*" gap at the individual and institutional levels. The leadership process helps build a return on integrity, return on intelligence, and return on investment in relationships. It also inspires people to enhance their performance.

The VBL framework is an integrated process that helps manage the context by connecting the three integral components of a total leader - **character** (EQ or emotional intelligence), **competency** (IQ or leadership intelligence), and **capability** (SQ or strategic intelligence) – to build ROI. The reference to "ROI" can mean three things - return on integrity, return on intelligence, and return on investment. It involves moving from the top line to the bottom line.

The conceptual and empirical foundation of leadership research builds on prior work of Tapscott (paradigm shift, 1993), Porter (competitive strategy,1990), Ohmae (strategic thinking, 1982), Kanter (smart communities, 1995), Senge (learning organization, 1990), Jaques (managing complexity, 1994), Covey (principle-centred leadership, 1990), Kotter (leading change, 1996), Collins and Porras (vision and values, 1997), Litwin and Stringer (organizational climate,1966), DeMarco (organizational culture and executive development, 1984, 1993), and Cox (leadership development, 1993, 1997).

The research in this paper developed rigour in the pilot testing of components of the VBL process with the following organizations/groups:

- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC),
- UN Development Program,
- City of Vaughan,
- York Region,

- CIBC,

- Royal Bank,

- Mutual Group, and

- Fidelity.

It was also used in mentoring in MBA and MA (Leadership) programs in Canada, the U.S., China, Poland, and the Middle East. It builds on parallel work done with General Motors, Nokia, Equitable Life, and Panasonic. The applied research provides a missing component in the theory of leadership. This component entails harnessing both intellectual capital and social capital as collective wisdom to create a success culture which can propel people and performance.

Research findings were compared with leading consultancies' studies on leadership, team-building, and performance (Andersen, Deloitte Touche, Ernst & Young, Economist Intelligence Unit, Alexander Consulting Group, Forum, Gemini, IBM, KPMG), corporate universities and leadership institutes (CIBC, Bank of Montreal, Royal Bank, Fidelity Investments, GM and GE), and government studies (The Road Map to Prosperity: An Economic Plan for Jobs in the 21st Century). Surprisingly, universities with courses in leadership lacked the depth of corporate field research to validate the alignment of specific curricula.

The need for such an approach to leadership education is evident in Band's (1997) study of 438 publicly traded companies. It distinguished four categories of performance in Canadian companies: "value mirages" 190, "value eroders" 147, "value hidden" 19, and "value builders" 82. The study conducted by the University of Ottawa and Andersen Consulting identified four key variables as critical factors for companies to grow and create value: leadership, strategy, execution, and, the most important variable, culture.

This culture variable also played a major role in the findings of DeMarco's (1993) study of leadership high performance in Japanese and American companies of more than fifty employees in both countries. He not only identified the "threshold profile" of high performing leadership, but, like Denison (1984; 1989), also identified the criticality of an organization's cultural adaptability and participative management style to high performance. This study was conducted with the Japanese Management Association and the Alexander Consulting Group, a major international human resources consulting firm.

The leadership deficit continues to have a profound impact on organizational culture and the mobilization of people and performance. A recent study by Aon Consulting, the successor to Alexander Consulting Group, surveyed workplace issues identified by 2000 Canadian men and women. Only 47% of the sample say they would recommend their company as "one of the best places to work in the community," and only 43% say they would definitely remain with their current employer if another organization offered them "a similar job with slightly higher pay."

The American survey asking the same questions identified a similar result of 54% and 49%. The survey identified the top five factors that affect job satisfaction and employee commitment in Canada, in order of importance:

1. work-life balance,

2. opportunities for personal growth,

3. belief that the company satisfies customers' needs,

4. pay levels competitive with similar organizations, and

5. belief that co-workers are keeping pace with the skills their jobs demand.

At the macro level, a study by OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) ranks Canada behind Turkey and Spain in "outward orientation." In other words, this study measures the leadership thinking and strategic perspective at world-class levels. In recent World Economic Forum rankings of company operations and strategies, which is a national ranking, Canada is currently 15th, the U.S. first and

Germany second. As a response to these findings, future leaders – students in the BBA program at Wilfrid Laurier University and B.Comm and MBA program at University of Guelph – have been taught how to conduct research to assess how leadership, core values, and strategic thinking can increase or decrease overall organizational performance to build shareholder and brand value. The student CEO survey developed by Cox in 1999 studied seven factors at the individual and organizational level over the past years. These included: vision, values, motive, competence, capability, leadership, and performance. The survey

2.0 A SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

Dalla Costa (1998) argues that ethical leadership is becoming the defining issue of our time. The ethical imperative for moral leadership in the modern officer corps is required to rebuild the trust, integrity and confidence needed for knowledge transfer with internal and external stakeholders. The hard lessons of Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq have forced the officer corps to understand the importance of managing information and relationships between the military, media and stakeholders to create understanding of the relationship of the soldier and the state to foster a constituency that supports a military

The leadership challenge is to increase the "intelligence quotient" of the human capital of the organization rather than to assume that it is the domain of senior leaders.

findings continue to confirm the importance of leadership competence to build people and performance.

The traditional approach to leadership learning draws on the military model of managing knowledge and strategic intelligence built around functional specialists who prepare analyses as a basis of senior leadership management decisions on major issues. The emerging model requires leadership competence in knowledge management as a leader-manager responsibility that should become part of a learning culture and leadership behaviour throughout the organization. The value of knowledge comes from harnessing human capital and leadership competence wherever knowledge creation or strategic information is needed in the organization. The leadership challenge is to increase the "intelligence quotient" of the human capital of the organization rather than to assume that it is the domain of senior leaders. In a military culture based on command and control, it will require a strategic learning process to manage the leadership paradigm shift.

founded on defending shared values. The military officer is increasingly involved in operations with allied forces and, at the individual and unit level, is required to self-develop leadership to fit the situational context. Leadership's first commandment is to "Know Thyself." The ancient Greeks referred to this concept as the foundation of all learning. Tennyson (1832) referred to self-development as a "trinity of excellences:" self-reverence evident in leadership character; self-knowledge evident in leadership competency; and self-control evident in leadership capability. These three factors create authoritative leadership. In practice leadership is about life itself.

When leaders face problems, they face life in complexity, not compartmentalized packages of life. Military leaders need specialized knowledge but they also need wisdom which is the ability to make the connection to transfer knowledge and make the best use of it. This has important implications for leadership development that requires both tacit and explicit learning. This means that some of it

can neither be coded nor taught formally. Lt. General Pagonis (2001), who led 40,000 men and women in the U.S. army in the Persian War, emphasizes the pivotal importance of self-leadership in shaping the leadership equation for leadership in a combat zone. Personal presence in leadership is a vital attribute, especially in a combat setting. Pagonis states that leaders are not only shaped by environment; they also take active roles in remaking that environment in productive ways. In other words, exceptional leaders create learning organizations that support the exercise and cultivation of leadership. The work of the leader therefore is both personal and organizational. This can only be achieved through rigorous and systemic organizational development.

see an important role of leadership as dialogue and its importance to creating knowledge transfer within a learning organization.

In dialogical interactions, what distinguishes leaders from followers is the possession by the former of a degree of critical perspective lacking in the latter. The teacher-leader, for example, can educate (literally, e-ducere or "to lead out") only in so far as he or she knows better than the follower the infinite nature of the task of imparting truth. In a learning organization, followers are not locked into followership. The very essence of dialogue (literally, dia-logos or "flow of meaning") consists in mutual perspectives which allows for – and indeed promotes - the movement of followers into leadership roles.

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The military has developed leadership competency in mastering functional expertise such as supply and logistics. New competencies are required because leaders do not operate in isolation. Self-developing leadership to inspire people with a sense of purpose requires more than new leadership training and leadership fads. The Socratic model of leadership requires that we examine leadership in all its human aspects. Leadership serves to create the moral ground for human endeavour and activity. Socrates saw leadership as a moral activity. In so far as leadership is something other than the brutal exercise of power, it must exercise itself in humility to understand followers in the pursuit of some goal. Grob (1984) suggests that leaders without this grounding will find themselves in the service of fixed ideas or causes and thus agents of the use of power in their behalf. No longer nourished by a wellspring of critical process at its centre, leadership "dries up and becomes, finally, the mere wielding of power on behalf of static ideals. Understanding this helps to

Leaders do not command simply by issuing one-way unilateral directives. Instead leadership almost always involves cooperation and collaboration. These activities can only succeed in a culture that is founded on the core values of trust, integrity and confidence.

3.0 IMPLEMENTING VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE

3.1 The New Leadership

The emerging image of leadership is of a leader-manager who is both "hands-on," as a day-to-day practitioner of organizational context, and a "visionary," as the team leader or leader-coach who captures the subtleties of context. The leader-manager develops and uses multiple intelligences to manage as a pragmatist, rule maker, and doer. As a leader, he or she breathes life into the process of organizational success.

3.2 The New Context

Tapscott (1993) identified four paradigm shifts that impact business and support the need for leadership to develop intellectual and social capital as a strategic capability to compete. These are new technology, new business environment, new enterprise, and new geopolitical order. The ever-changing information age is entering a new era which requires leadership that connects knowledge and technology to sustain performance. It's what Tapscott (2006) now calls "wikinomics", using knowledge and technology for mass collaboration.

North American organizations have been slow in realizing that the intellectual capital of the culture can create value. Cox's (1993) survey of 250 companies identified that only 12% of companies had aligned this competency with strategic capability to compete globally. The 12% that had aligned strategic thinking were achieving 66% minimum sales from new markets.

3.3 The VBL Process

3.3.1 Step 1: Identifying Cultural Imperatives for VBL Competency Modelling

For our purposes here, we define "competencies" as *discreet, measurable, observable, and attainable behaviours that lead to institutional/work-unit high performance*. For organizational effectiveness, competencies need to be linked to goals. However, years of experience have demonstrated that creating a competency model without first identifying the institution's cultural underpinnings will leave far too much to chance and minimize the likelihood of creating a sustainable model. Competencies tend to be very culturally dependent.

A successful culture model requires a multidisciplinary approach to the subject (DeMarco, 1984). Edgar Schein wrote that organizations are increasingly being studied with explicitly interdisciplinary models in mind. By looking across the fields, one sees connections that need to be made explicit (Schein, 1990). Fields of study as disparate as industrial & organizational psychology, sociology, political science, history, business, leadership, arts, literature, and anthropology are all integrated into the VBL Culture Model and Audit.

The model below (Figure 1) defines culture as "*the sum of the Values, Folklore, and History that, taken together, make up the unique identity of a society at a given point in time*."
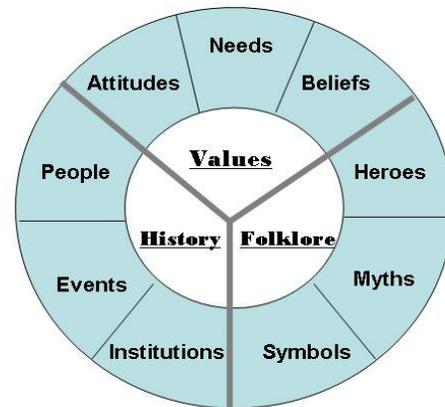
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Figure 1: VBL Culture Model

At the core of the VBL Culture Model circumplex are Values, Folklore, and History. We define each of them in the following way:

- *Values:* The unique blend of perceived **beliefs, needs, and attitudes** that live in the behaviour of most members of the society.

- *History:* The **people, events,** and **institutions** that collectively impact a society's unique identity.

- *Folklore:* The body of knowledge concerning what the society stands for, has been handed down from one generation to the next in oral and written traditions, and lives in the society's **heroes, myths, and symbols**.

This model has evolved over a quarter century of research. Culture audits, built on this model, have been effectively used in competency-based leadership development processes in over fifty major companies/institutions globally (DeMarco, 2007). It builds on the uniqueness of each individual and society of individuals as well as characterizes culture as both "being" and "emerging." It simultaneously engages and challenges leaders with an eye towards building sustainable capability based on what is embedded in the culture's genetic memory.

James MacGregor Burns (2006) commented on these very cultural issues when he recently wrote about the impact of the Western Enlightenment on contemporary American values: "...I have found

• What are the society's needs that must be addressed before culture, community and capability are aligned?

The answers to these and similar questions are why the VBL framework begins with a culture assessment. We call this the "Culture Audit." The Culture Audit is part of a true leadership development system. It creates context for building a company/work-unit and goal-specific competency model. It identifies the true core values of an institution that are obvious in the here and now. It also points to the core values that are locked away in cultural memory of the institution. This is a major step and requires both the endorsement of senior management and strategic thinking of personnel at multiple levels. In most instances,

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transcending values that relate closely to people's wants and needs...ideas that influence people's every day lives...These are not exotic ideas but human beliefs that for centuries have motivated leaders and followers who had only the vaguest notions that they were children of the Enlightenment."

Our culture model attempts to unlock what is embedded in a culture's genetic memory to help align culture, community and capability. It asks the important questions:

• What does a society truly value;

• How have those values manifested themselves over time;

• Where's the narrative that embodies those values;

• Who epitomizes the best in what the society stands for; and

the Culture Audit builds grass roots support for the leadership behaviour that supports high performance. In our experience, the culture audit is a major differentiator from most competency modeling processes. It enhances the likelihood of success while minimizing the tendency to over-engineer the competency modeling process.

3.3.2 Step 2: EQ / IQ / SQ - Developing the Character of Leadership

What has also been missing is a process to integrate leadership, learning and strategy across an organization to build strategic capability. These are identified in the second step as **EQ** - emotional, non-cognitive intelligence (leadership character), **IQ -** intelligence quotient (leadership competency), and **SQ** - strategic intelligence (leadership capability) to build ROI. As already indicated, "ROI"

can mean three things: ***return on integrity*** *in managing relationships;* ***return on intelligence*** *in managing knowledge;* ***return on investment*** *in managing activities and strategy implementation.* This applied learning framework (Figure 2) has been used effectively in leader-coaching of mid-career professionals in the MA in Leadership Program at the University of Guelph. This process has also enabled the development of communities of best practice through its application to distributed learning systems.

Initially, we begin with an EQ survey of the employees of a company, in its present state. Coupled with the above culture model, the VBL Process provides us with insight into the meaning and potential for organizational leadership performance.

Following the EQ survey, we assess leadership competencies, organizational learning and knowledge transfer (IQ). All of these actions lead to an integrated systems thinking process to mobilize leadership/followership towards optimal organizational performance (SQ).

3.3.3 Step 3: Developing Leadership Capability

The third step uses enabling technology to connect leadership, learning, and performance initiatives across the organization at all levels to strengthen competency, relationships, and capability. The combined knowledge of the culture can lead to savings, responsiveness, and increased profitability. The three-step Values-Based Leadership Process links EQ, IQ, and SQ to build ROI. Trusting in heart, mind, and muscle becomes the norm for inspiring
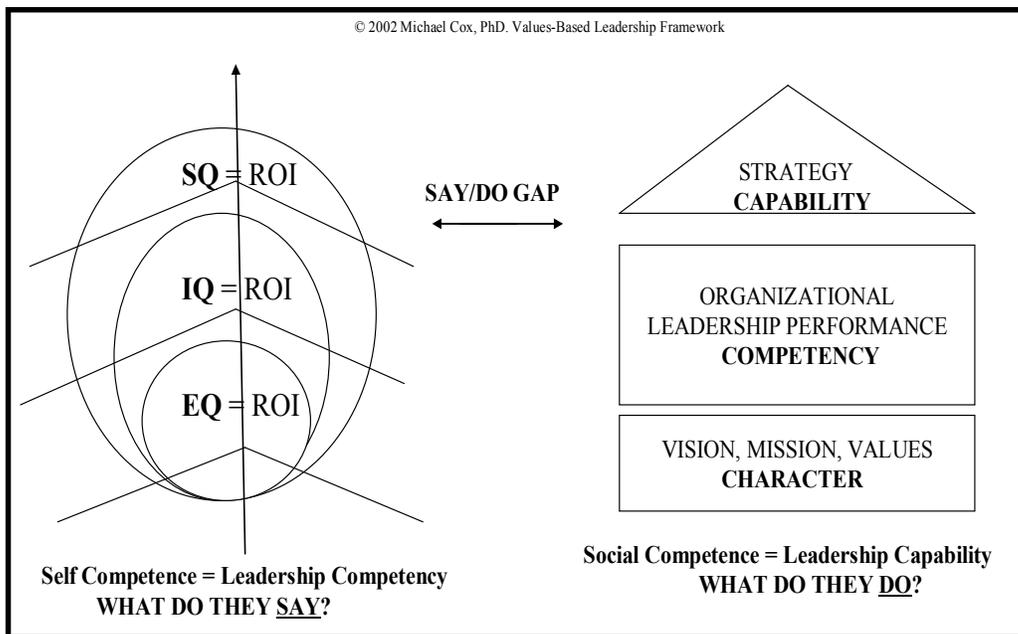

© 2002 Michael Cox, PhD. Values-Based Leadership Framework

$SQ = ROI$

$IQ = ROI$

$EQ = ROI$

SAY/DO GAP

STRATEGY
CAPABILITY

ORGANIZATIONAL
LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE
COMPETENCY

VISION, MISSION, VALUES
CHARACTER

Self Competence = Leadership Competency
WHAT DO THEY <u>SAY</u>?

Social Competence = Leadership Capability
WHAT DO THEY <u>DO</u>?

**Figure 2: Leadership Competency Development and the
Learning Organization**

people and performance. Such a vision of leadership builds work, wealth, and well-being.

A Major Leadership Project is a great enabler in developing self-mastery by integrating thinking, knowledge, and skills to build ROI. To assess leadership competency across the organization, we use the Cox Leadership Survey Tool called "A.I.M TO W.I.N." (Cox, 2001). The Leadership Survey Tool (Figure 3) provides the mental architecture to measure leadership competency. Using the organizing image of a Greek temple, it is possible to develop a visual image of leadership competency across any organization. This visual image has all the more impact when we reflect on how the Temple at Delphi was inscribed with the first commandment of leadership: "***know thyself.***" The roof of the archetypal building represents the strategy. The "seven pillars" represent leadership competencies. The foundation represents the vision, mission and values of the organization, all integral parts of the institution's culture.
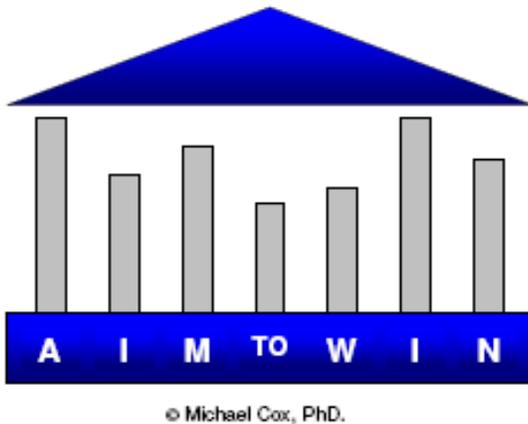

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Figure 3: A.I.M. TO W.I.N. Leadership Survey Tool

3.3.3.1 A.I.M TO W.I.N in Action

- **A**lignment = of vision, mission, and strategy

The vision of Bank of Montreal former CEO, Matthew Barrett, built a $50 million Institute for Learning to transform the bank and guide it into the next century. Collins and Porras (1996) identified that vision-driven companies perform 55 times better than the general market and eight times better than competitors. Further, visionary companies clearly articulate core values and a mission to achieve superior long-term performance. Examples include Hewlett Packard's "HP way" that guides the behaviour of the company; Proctor & Gamble (founded 1837); Motorola (founded 1928); and Virgin (founded 1969) who have sustained growth with leadership strategy founded on core values and core purpose to build performance. Lee Iacocca (Chrysler) recently wrote (2007) on this alignment, when he commented that (societies) are a people and not just a (collection) of factions...they share common principles and ideals, and rise and fall together.

- **I**ntegration = of mission and core purpose

The 3M company (founded 1902) encourages its 7000 scientists and engineers to develop their own ideas. 3M spends $1 billion each year on research and development. Our research identified Al MacDonald, a 25-year Merck Frosst veteran, who said, "We have a corporate memory that allows us to overlay innovation onto what has worked in the past, to improve upon it." Experience and innovation are central to the "Merck Frosst way of doing things."

- **M**obilization = of leadership culture

Hewlett Packard's CEO emphasizes how the "HP Way" guides the behaviour of the company. The "HP Way" is a culture specific competency model. Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993) studied 15,000 managers from around the world and found that receptivity and perspective are essential for leadership and growth. Our research into the economic loss of corporate loyalty to North American business is estimated to be between $60 and $70 billion dollars annually. Companies that codified values as a share ethic achieved a 10.2% growth in profits, compounded since 1953, or 1.5 times the growth of the U.S. GNP for the same period. The U.S. GNP in 1988 was 11.7 times

times greater than in 1953, and the net income of the value-based companies was 24.5 times greater.

- **T**otal Organization = learning effort

An excellent example of working toward a total organizational effort is the Canadian Forces values-based leadership framework where integrity and leadership are the value domains at the core of a military ethos. This ethos is focused on mission success, member well-being and commitment, and external adaptability and internal integration. Moving toward a horizontal and process-driven total organizational effort to align people, knowledge and strategy requires that the values-based leader develops a mindset to navigate seven areas: culture, competency, champions, commitment, communications, change and capability. It is essential that when the leader casts off that they are obligated to ride the storm and complete the change process.

As Johnson and Harper (2005) suggest, values-based leadership requires a triple vision:

1. Create a vision of self and this sometimes hurts.

2. Create a vision of followers and delivering on that vision.

3. Create a unit level vision. This requires incorporating the corporate vision at the unit level to play to the strengths of both the leader and followers.

- **W**orking Wisdom = in mentoring

The National Center on Educational Quality of the Workforce (U.S.) studied more than 3000 workplaces seeking a relationship between investments in education and ensuring productivity. The return on investing an average of 10% in employee education versus capital equipment gave a company an 8.6% gain versus a 3.4% gain. Training costs have jumped to five times what it cost to train new workers in 1985, from $2,000 to $10,000 (U.S.). Daniel Yankelovich, the public opinion scholar who recently completed a survey on the tactics of reorganization used by top executives, states: "Most management don't have as firm a hand on the human aspects of restructuring as they do on finance and technology."

- **I**nnovation = and leadership

Our research identified J.P. Bryan of Torch Energy Advisors Inc., Houston, Texas, as a leader in the oil industry, who recently talked about the importance of leadership in conducting business. According to Bryan, "Great leadership would be preferable, but almost any leadership would be better than management which is a hollow substitute." In his view, visionary leadership would encourage innovation, imagination, and talent across the organization. Instead, what we have had for more than 50 years has been a managed system of controls, memos, meetings, and thinking by committee. Bennis (1989) believes that the difference between leaders and managers is that leaders master the context, while managers surrender to it. It's an attitude at the heart of the organization.

- **N**etworking = leadership to build ROI

GE's Jack Welch (2002), an exponent of visionary thinking, says it's time to go beyond training seminars to a fundamental rethinking of how management works. Jim Channon, formerly a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Task Force Delta, says three things are missing from almost every organization he has been involved with: "A sincere desire to love each other in a brotherly way, an ability to incorporate spiritual values in their work, and an ability to do something physical together." The sentiments may seem threatening and alien, even pointless. However, if leadership education is about building for the new paradigm by treating people with dignity and valuing integrity in relationships, these are the core values that need to be embedded in the leadership curriculum of the emerging organization.

The Leadership Survey findings provide an archetypal methodology to help the leader and senior management team start the dialogue and provide the guiding

coalition across the entire organization to build a success culture. We started our research to find out how the world's best companies lead to build people and performance. They are still a minority. We need to rethink how to develop the leadership to build people, pride, and performance that will sustain work, wealth, and well-being. The alternative, as Gates (1999) states, is business moving at the speed of thought. These pages seek to provide an applied framework in which to create a vision and a strategy for Return on Intelligence, Return on Integrity, and Return on Investment – the 3 R's for leadership education – to revitalize the emerging organization in the knowledge-based economy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The concepts described in these pages are not new. Some of them go back to the time of the ancient Greeks. What is new however is the iterative process of the Values-Based Leadership Framework. It calls for vision, focus, and commitment. It builds on the living culture that all nominal leaders are a part of. It recognizes that we have all been part of a **confederation of the mind** where management of heritage, legacy, silos, and scarcity have been a recurring mindset. Values-Based Leadership calls for a new paradigm, which we describe as a **commonwealth of the mind**, known for visioning, innovation, creativity, learning, and journeying. The authors call for transformational leadership at multiple levels:

- leaders who know what they and their organization stand for;

- know where they are going and how they plan to get there; and, most importantly,

- they act accordingly.

We believe that closing the "say-do" gap should be a lifestyle rather than a concept. These pages illustrate one way to do just that.

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